

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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## EDITORIAL

## Walking the talk

SECOND OF THREE EDITORIALS

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

In responding to the charge of Mennonite anti-Zionism from such critics as Zexter Van Zile, Canadian Mennonites should, at the gut-level, refrain from self-righteousness or defensive counter broadsides. As a faith community holding dear the cause of justice as part of the gospel, our responses should walk the talk.

And our skirts, historically, are not entirely clean, either. Long-time readers of *Canadian Mennonite* will recall the painful case back in 1992 of Jacob Luitjens of Vancouver, a Mennonite accused by the Canadian government of concealing his Nazi ties with occupying forces in the Netherlands and the revoking of his Canadian citizenship as a result.

Thus, our first response to the harsh charges of critics like Van Zile should be one of humility and of empathy for a people who, more than us, have suffered unspeakably at the hands of religious and political enemies. There is every reason for us to understand that Zionism took root in Palestine by a people desperate for the security of a homeland.

It is truly sad, though, that today the situation in that part of the world has become seemingly intractable. The debate about whose land Palestine is, is never-ending, the suffering again unconscionable, the oppressed now doing the oppressing. And there is no doubt that Jewish Zionism, essentially a secular movement, has been strengthened over

the past 61 years by the joining of the Christian Zionist movement.

The joining of these two powerful forces happened, in the words of Mennonite theologian Loren Johns, “in the wake of the guilt about the Holocaust experienced by the ‘Christian’ nations of the Allies.” Together they exerted sufficient political pressure to see the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

That mentality, still strong in North America and in Israel, underlies much of the harsh criticism of Van Zile—a construct that is coming apart at the seams even as these darts come at us with such rhetorical force. What Van Zile doesn’t own up to in his impassioned critique of Mennonite Central Committee and Christian Peacemaker Teams is that a majority of Israel’s own people are no longer in sympathy with Zionist goals.

The late Amos Elon, one of Israel’s best-known intellectuals and social critics, insisted that “Zionism has exhausted itself, precisely because it accomplished its aims. The Arabs bore no responsibility for the centuries-long suffering of Jews in Europe,” he wrote, voicing criticism that is common in modern-day Israel. “Whatever their subsequent follies and outrages might be, the punishment of the Arabs for the sins of Europe must burden the conscience of Israelis for a long time to come.”

Van Zile’s critique also fails to recognize the concerns of the Israeli peace

movement, observes my friend Ken Seitz, just returning from Lebanon as MCC’s country representative. “The Israeli peace movement operates out of two concerns: humanitarian, as well as recognition that if Israel persists in its discriminatory practices it will ultimately fail and fall into the dustbin of history. So, although guaranteeing the ongoing status of the Jewish state is not our [MCC’s] goal, nonetheless, justice for all, Palestinians and Israelis alike, does have us aligned with the Israeli peace movement.”

**Meet your board member**

Margaret Ewen Peters of Hanley, Sask., is vice-chair of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) and an appointee to the 12-member board from Mennonite Church



Saskatchewan. She and her husband Gary, farmers together for 32 years, are lead co-pastors of Hanley Mennonite Church. Margaret is also half-time interim pastor at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina. In related church responsibilities, she has been on the pastoral leadership commission of MC Saskatchewan, served on a task force looking at congregation/conference relationships and was the Saskatchewan representative on the leadership commission of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Presently, she is on the vision and wholeness group of MC Saskatchewan. In her second term on the CMPS board, Margaret’s prayer is “that *Canadian Mennonite* is one way we can learn about one another across Canada and this can lead to genuine dialogues about faith, life, church, discipleship and all the other things that are part of being followers of Jesus in today’s world.” She can be reached at 306-544-2633 or via email at: gmpeters@sasktel.net.

**ABOUT THE COVER:**

**In Boricha, Ethiopia, MCC partners with the Meserete Kristos Relief and Development Association on food security programs, including food-for-work projects. Pictured, Gadiso Garsamo, a participant in a food-for-work project, hoes the weeds around a field of chat plants. See story on page 23.**

PHOTO: MELISSA ENGLE, MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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

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

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Today I climbed a 15-foot tree: **CHERYL WOELK**

# Evangelism and ethics in historical tension

*In this, the first of two feature interviews about faith and life within Mennonite Church Canada today, Canadian Mennonite managing editor Ross W. Muir asks Karl Koop, the director of graduate studies and associate professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite University, and a member of First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, about how the church's past has influenced its present. In particular, he is clear that early Anabaptism was defined more by its members' faith in Jesus and their worship practices (especially baptism), rather than its peace stance, which in some ways has now become its dominant identifying feature. In Part II, next issue, Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman reflects on the denomination's five-year relationship with the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.*



**Karl Koop**

**CM:** *In Confessions of Faith in the Anabaptist Tradition: 1527-1660 (Pandora Press, 2006), which you edited and helped translate, we read a lot about Anabaptist beliefs in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and the importance of the Bible. What was it about those beliefs—and the way they were lived out—that put Anabaptists at odds with the state churches and governments of their day?*

**Koop:** Anabaptists got into trouble with governments and state churches in large part because of the way in which they lived out their beliefs.

Anabaptists concluded, for instance, that since devotion to God was more important than loyalty to the state, they could not bring themselves to swear oaths of allegiance. The civil authorities interpreted oath refusal as a sign of disloyalty, and in a period of civil unrest and political instability they feared that Anabaptists might try to overthrow the present civil order. Anabaptists, however, could not bring themselves to swear oaths because they believed that such action would compromise their firmly held convictions concerning the sovereignty of God and the lordship of Christ.

This same kind of thinking held true for Anabaptists when it came to the question of how a Christian should act towards enemies. Since Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies,

ILLUSTRATION FROM MARTYRS MIRROR, COURTESY OF HERALD PRESS



*"In this bloody and perilous time of persecution . . . pious Jacob Dircks and his two sons, Andries Jacobs and Jan Jacobs, fell into the hands of tyrants. . . [They] fell into the claws of the wolves at Antwerp, where the trial of their faith was found much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire (I Peter 1:7); so that they were condemned to be burnt, each at a stake, only for the divine truth and living according to it, and not on account of any crime committed." (Martyr's Mirror, page 724-725; courtesy of Herald Press)*

and since Jesus himself refused to use violence in his mission to overcome evil, Anabaptists concluded that true Christians were called to reject violence and return evil with good.

In a time of political instability and unrest, the civil authorities viewed this kind of theological reasoning as politically dangerous. There were, after all, military threats to be reckoned with, such as the Turks in the east, who were threatening to overrun Western Europe. In this volatile context the authorities wanted its citizens to support military action. By extolling the virtues of nonresistance, Anabaptists were positioning themselves in opposition to the policies of the state and the views of the state churches.

*CM: Compared to statements about the character of God and the nature of salvation, for example, the topic of peace seems*

*to be given little space in many of these confessions, and is completely absent from some. It's hard to believe, given that the Mennonite church today is known primarily for its peace position, that it*

*It is important also to recognize that not all first-generation Anabaptists were pacifists, and it took some time for pacifism to become a standard conviction.*

*wasn't more prominent in the statements of our early Anabaptist forebears. Where exactly did peace fit into their theology and practice?*

**Koop:** Some early confessional statements left out articles dealing specifically with the topic of peace. Most of these confessions were written by individuals who might have been concerned about offending local authorities. Some may have been

preoccupied with a specific theological issue, like baptism or the Lord's Supper, and so they did not get around to addressing other theological issues.

It is important also to recognize that

not all first-generation Anabaptists were pacifists, and it took some time for pacifism to become a standard conviction. Among the Swiss and south German Anabaptists there were pacifists such as Michael Sattler and Conrad Grebel, but there were also just war theorists like Balthasar Hubmaier. In the North German Dutch context, especially among the Muensterites, we encounter an

Anabaptism that was advocating holy war. So at the beginning of the Anabaptist movement, the peace position was not universally accepted.

Eventually it did become the dominant view, and later confessions, especially those representing churches and conferences, began to reflect an emerging consensus.

In the 14 confessional statements that appear in my book, most reflect a fairly strong peace stance. It is not that debates about the church's relationship to the state were discontinued, or that Mennonite views on peace became completely uniform. Nor is it evident that Mennonite individuals or groups in subsequent times always lived according to what they expressed confessionally.

Nevertheless, we can observe an emerging consensus in virtually all major confessional statements. Every confession of faith and catechism that I am aware of, from the end of the 16th century onward, includes a section that rejects warfare and embraces a commitment to non-resistance or peacemaking.

It is worth mentioning that some of the statements that Mennonites wrote in later periods reflect theological arguments that go far beyond simply repeating Scripture passages such as the Sermon on the Mount. For example, in their Short Confession of 1610 (a statement of faith that is actually not that brief at all), the Waterlander Mennonites link their peace position to the

atonement—the work of Christ on the cross. Because of what Christ has accomplished on the cross, the Waterlanders argue theologically, believers are a new creation. They have now “changed their carnal weapons, their swords, into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles. They neither lift a sword, nor teach, nor participate in carnal warfare.”

*CM: Our current Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective also seems to be quite God-centred; with peace, justice and nonresistance summed up in just one of the 24 articles, the 22nd. In Article 10 (The Church in Mission), though, we are called by God “to seek the lost, call for repentance, announce salvation from sin, proclaim the gospel of peace, set free the oppressed, pray for righteousness and justice, serve as Jesus did, and without coercion urge all people to become part of the people of God.” Why do the evangelical aspects of Article 10 seem to be missing in many congregations today, with the emphasis placed more squarely on peace, justice and nonresistance?*

**Koop:** I wonder if there are just as many congregations today that emphasize what you call the evangelical aspects of the gospel while ignoring peace, justice and nonresistance. Be that as it may, I do agree that there are Mennonites—and maybe churches too—that have reduced their understanding of faith to certain ethical values. Or they have come to associate the word “Anabaptism” with a set

of moral values and principles.

*CM: What is the setting in which this form of reductionistic Christianity happened?*

**Koop:** Your question is difficult to respond to in a few brief lines. Perhaps I can offer just two points. First of all, I think the influence of modernity has something to do with it. Since the Enlightenment, people in the West have remained fairly comfortable in talking about ethical issues, but they have become increasingly uncomfortable talking about God. God-talk is a private or personal affair.

We should be aware that we, too, are affected by this modernist impulse to downplay the reality of God. It is much easier, or more comfortable, to talk about ethics—especially if it doesn't cost anything. Of course, in a time of national crisis, the whole situation can change.

After the towers in New York were knocked down, I remember distinctly, while living in the United States, that it was actually quite easy to talk publicly about God, but much harder to speak openly about nonresistance and loving the enemy. Granted, the context was the U.S., but I suspect that the sentiments in Canada during the crisis were somewhat similar.

Perhaps another reason why some Mennonites have tended to focus so much on ethics has to do with the fact that it has provided them with an

## Pontius' Puddle



opportunity to define themselves over against other forms of Christianity. In emphasizing peace, justice and nonresistance, they have discovered, for instance, what distinguishes them from mainstream Evangelicalism—especially the kind that likes to trumpet nationalism and militarism. Belief in certain ethical values, then, has become a simple way of identifying who is a true Mennonite.

Historically, of course, Anabaptism has been a rich variegated tradition with a profound spirituality—something perhaps we have forgotten. Anabaptists held to a faith that was all-encompassing, that could not, for example, separate the doctrine of salvation from ethics, or faith from works.

Hans Denck, a South German Anabaptist, reflects this depth and insight when he says, “But the medium is Christ whom no one can truly know unless he follow him in life, and no one may follow him unless he has first known him” (quoted by W. Klaassen, *Anabaptism in Outline*, Herald Press).

**CM:** *What risks does a church run that makes peace—or environmental stewardship (a hot topic today), or anything other than salvation through Jesus Christ—its primary tenet of faith?*

**Koop:** If our faith is simply reduced to ethics, there is always the danger that it becomes indistinguishable from any other cause that promotes a similar course of action. When that happens, Christianity has really lost its reason for being and it becomes difficult to distinguish between some secular cause and what the church does programmatically.

Increasingly, I think, people find themselves in this space. Perhaps the ethical has become the summation of their religious expression. They have grown up in the church and have become good moral people. They have embraced the values of their parents, their church or an organization like Mennonite Central Committee, but they find it difficult to believe in a divine reality.

They are no longer certain that such a belief in the beyond is plausible or tenable. This kind of reasoning, it seems to me, is quite vulnerable to compromise,

especially in times of crisis or change. Why should we not abandon that which no longer suits us?

Christians, of course, are also guilty of compromise and they often fail miserably. But for Christians, foundations do matter, and a theological grounding makes a difference, in that values have meaning that transcend their own reasoning and existence.

**CM:** *How can the church reclaim such historic tenets and practices of the Anabaptist faith as salvation through Jesus Christ, believer's baptism and communion of the saints, while maintaining our current distinctives? Is it an either/or situation, or both/and?*

**Koop:** Unfortunately, I have no brilliant strategy to offer in terms of how we can reclaim our historic tenets. Perhaps they are not for us to reclaim or possess because they are ultimately a gift that we can only receive with thanksgiving. And

*As Martin Luther understood so well, probably better than most Anabaptists, our ethics and everything that we are must flow from our worship.*

this can only happen when we enter into meaningful worship. As Martin Luther understood so well, probably better than most Anabaptists, our ethics and everything that we are must flow from our worship.

We have become far too relaxed and casual about the significance of worship in the life of the church. In many cases our places of worship are no longer sacred spaces, and the time that we spend in them are no longer sacred moments. Of course we need to think about worship renewal that speaks relevantly to our time and context, but we should not compromise worship for the sake of being relevant. The experience of worship is an encounter with the transcendent in a special way, and I'm not sure that we are always sufficiently aware of this.

I also believe that it is important that we look beyond ourselves and become aware of the way in which the Spirit of God has been, and continues to be, a work in the church that exists around

the world and across time—the church catholic. Theological conversation with other Christians is as important as conversation within our own tradition. Such conversation can help clarify our own convictions and give us a renewed sense of direction and commitment. Not only do we have something to offer to other Christians in other denominations, they also have something to teach us.

**CM:** *Our forebears were known for putting their lives on the line for their faith by challenging the powers of their day (both church and state), which often led to their death. Would Menno Simons understand our current passion for dialogue with those who disagree with us?*

**Koop:** I don't think that we should be too worried about what Menno Simons actually thought. He lived in a time very different from our own, and he had opinions that we should not always necessarily emulate. He was fallible like you and me.

Indeed, Menno Simons had a reputation for being very sure and unmoving about his convictions, but in this respect he was no different than others of his day. In the 16th century very few people would have had experience with cultural and religious diversity, and the general wisdom of that time was that society, or the church, would collapse unless everyone held to the faith in perfectly uniform fashion. Even within the Christian context it was difficult to imagine that there might be several equally valid expressions of the one faith.

This reality, however, did not stop Menno Simons and other Anabaptists from conversing with others. Menno often entered into conversation with other religious leaders and even challenged state authorities to live out their Christianity with greater integrity. Religious toleration came to Europe only in the 17th and 18th centuries, and from there it was transplanted to the New World. So Anabaptists were actually at

the forefront of religious toleration in their appeals to church and state authorities to grant greater religious liberties.

**CM:** *What would Menno say to the church today that wants to find common ground with as many diverse groups as possible, instead of standing on our historic differences?*

**Koop:** Menno, as a matter of fact, did seek common ground with others, in the sense that he defended Anabaptist convictions and tried to help the state churches and the government authorities

*... speak to them? Or do you think that, like Paul—who, in his address to the Athenians, split his hearers in three, with some laughing him out of the Areopagus, others becoming followers of Jesus, and still others wanting to hear more—we should be boldly telling our neighbours about Jesus and his way of peace, and let the chips fall where they may?*

**Koop:** Your reference to Paul's conversation with the Athenians as recorded in Acts 17 is useful for how we might think about conversing with persons from other faith traditions. Among the

*So highlighting differences can be risky business, but it is essential for Christian growth, and it is indispensable if genuine ecumenical dialogue is going to take place.*

understand where Anabaptist convictions were coming from. He pleaded for understanding and was concerned that he and his fellow believers would be treated fairly if, for example, they were brought before the courts to stand trial for their convictions. He wanted to be at peace with all of humanity.

This concern for fairness, however, did not stop him from speaking truthfully about his convictions and from highlighting differences between the Anabaptist faith and the faith of others. Articulating differences was very much a part of his approach. He refused to sell out on his convictions and stood firm on the issues that mattered to him most.

There is something valuable that we can learn from this. When we focus on what we have in common with one another, our relationship and learning can only take us so far. When we discover our differences, however, we usually come to a better understanding of our own convictions. This may lead to a greater confidence in what we believe. It may also lead us to the point where we may change our minds. So highlighting differences can be a risky business, but it is essential for Christian growth, and it is indispensable if genuine ecumenical dialogue is going to take place.

**CM:** *Is it necessary to find common ground with these groups in order to*

confessions has led us to talk mostly about ethics and theological tenets, but I would like to return to the topic of worship.

It is noteworthy that early Christians first turned to reciting the Apostles' and Nicene creeds in the context of worship. The creeds had their place in defining right belief, but their original home was in the liturgical life of the church and their purpose was to provide a language for worshipping God.

The church's confessional statements were integrated into the church's liturgy as a way of helping Christians respond to the faith that had been given to them. The recitation of the creed was not first and foremost about testing orthodox belief. It was about the church, the corporate body, worshipping the one God, creator of heaven and earth, who was understood to be present most profoundly in Jesus Christ and seen to be continually present in the church and the world through the Spirit.

Worship, then, was the starting point and proper context for the church's theological reflection and ethical practices. Perhaps we can learn something here from the early church, and find ways of integrating our confession of faith into the liturgical life of the church. ❧

Athenians, Paul seeks both common ground and he also speaks boldly about his Christian convictions. The outcome, as you point out, was not a resounding success, although some did become followers of Jesus. But then we are not called to be successful in our Christian life; we are only called to be faithful. The work of God's mission is ultimately not ours to possess.

**CM:** *Any other thoughts?*

**Koop:** Our discussion concerning the

### /// For discussion

1. How is the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* used in your congregation? Do the people of your congregation know what your church believes? Is it important that everyone's beliefs are similar?
2. The Anabaptists got into trouble with their governments because they refused to swear oaths of allegiance or to baptize their babies. Do we have beliefs that are at odds with our governments today? How different are we from other Christians? Should Mennonites emphasize their similarities or differences from other Christians?
3. Do you agree that we tend to overemphasize Article 22, which deals with peace, and underemphasize Article 10, which says we are called "to seek the lost"? Why might it be easier to talk about peace and ethics rather than talking about God and faith? Do we view faith and works as separate or as part of a complex spirituality?
4. Karl Koop suggests that we have become too relaxed and casual about the role of worship. Do you agree? How could confessional statements be used in worship? How can worship help us know or shape what we believe?



## 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](mailto: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.*

### ✉ Scholar seeks Mennonite perspectives on labour issues

**HOW DID NORTH** American Mennonites respond to labour issues in the late 20th century? My preliminary research suggests that there might not have been a consistent response.

For example, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba was asked in the early 1970s to assist Manitoba Mennonites who were seeking exemption from union membership. These Mennonites believed that union membership was incompatible with their religious beliefs. Further, they thought the newly elected NDP government and the Manitoba Labour Board were interpreting provincial labour legislation in a manner biased against Mennonites, and wanted assistance in their struggle against union membership.

By contrast, MCC British Columbia had organized a series of seminars in the 1950s and 1960s which asserted that Mennonites should be debating the question, "How can a Christian be a union member?" rather than, "Should a Christian be a union member?"

Why were Mennonites so divided on labour issues? To what extent did age, gender, national origin, migration history, church conference affiliation, educational background and class position play a role in individual Mennonite responses to labour issues?

To answer these questions, I will be consulting archives and conducting interviews across Canada and the U.S. I hope to talk to Mennonites about how their religious commitments shaped their perspectives on labour issues, how their background influenced their religious beliefs, and whether their understandings of religion and labour have changed over time.

I am seeking to interview Canadian participants in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., Winnipeg, and Vancouver/Abbotsford, B.C., as well as Americans in Goshen, Ind., Bluffton, Ohio, and Fresno-Reedley, Calif. If you are a Mennonite worker, pastor, business owner/manager, or academic—or if you are the child or grandchild of such a person—please e-mail me at [ja.thiessen@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:ja.thiessen@uwinnipeg.ca).

**JANIS THIESSEN, WINNIPEG**

*Janis Thiessen teaches at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, but is on leave for the next two years to be a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Winnipeg. Her research project, entitled "Religion and work in post-war North America: Mennonite responses to labour activism, 1945-95," is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.*

### ✉ MCC's anti-Israeli stance goes against God's will for his chosen people

**RE: "MENNONITE ANTI-ZIONISM?"** by Dick Benner, Sept. 21, page 2.

Imagine for a moment that your father left you an inheritance of land. You went away for a long time, and when you came back people were living in your home. You knew these people hated you in the past, but hoping by-gones were by-gones, you graciously allowed them to stay on your property. Shortly after your arrival, you learned that some of these people and their neighbouring relatives were furious that you had returned home and were planning war against you. You were left to defend your property and, with God's help, you foiled their attempt! Your enemies began to talk about how you were away so long that you had forfeited your right to it anyway.

Ignoring history and legal documents, people began to write letters to the paper about how aggressive and cruel you are, calling you "occupiers" of your own property! Other neighbours circulated "peace plans" to show how your inheritance could be nicely divided with your enemies that repeatedly try to kill you.

Welcome to Israel's story.

Mennonite Central Committee has taken a firm



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stand against Israel from which they cannot now claim innocence:

- By refusing to acknowledge Israel as a legitimate country and only calling her “Palestine/Israel”;
- By visiting churches and promoting questionable accounts of Israeli aggression;
- By numerous articles against, or misrepresenting, Zionism;
- By letters to our own Prime Minister calling Israel “occupiers”;

• By claiming it is for justice and peace while endorsing the theft of Israeli property and ignoring the aggression against her.

But the bottom line is this: God gave Israel the land. There has always been a godly Jewish remnant to whom the promises of God apply and will endure. The problem then is not with Israel; it is with those who do not believe the Word of God and who would “make the promises of God of no effect,” that is, those who make him a liar. For those who are so quick to deny the

## FAMILY TIES

# The appeal of fantasy

MELISSA MILLER

The realization dawned on me slowly, perhaps because I’m a slow learner or perhaps because I’m susceptible to romantic illusions. I “got smart” while lost in the pages of a murder mystery by Diane Mott Davidson, lingering over the description of the detective’s perfect husband. He was handsome, strong and sensitive. He was also a brave and dependable cop, rescuing the detective when she was in danger. Plus, he could whip up fabulous food whenever she needed sustenance and comfort. As the light bulb switched on in the dim crevices of my grey matter, I exclaimed, “Wait a minute! He’s a fantasy husband!”

When I shared my profound insight with my husband and son, they both responded with looks that were a mixture of wariness and concern, the kind we offer someone when they’re on the verge of embarrassing themselves. My husband, choosing safety, remained silent. My son offered carefully, “That’s why they call it fiction, Mom.”

Fantasy is a dimension of human experience drawn from, but not bound by, concrete reality. Fantasy is related to imagination. Working with Webster’s definitions, fantasy is “the free play of

creative imagination.” To imagine is “to form a mental image of [something that is not present].” We use fantasy in many ways and for many reasons.

Young people may fantasize about when they are grown up, of the work or family life they may have, and of freedom to pursue their own interests. A newly married couple may imagine the future: the life they are building together, the children that might join their family, their ideal home. An athlete might use fantasy to realize a perfect game, a flawless move. Someone who is ill with cancer may actively imagine a time when his or her body is cancer-free. It is easy to see positive

becomes preferable to the warm, real body to which one has made a commitment. The stories being played out in movies and on television can be more engaging than the story of one’s own life.

The life of Jesus was given that human life might be more full and whole. As he tells his friends: “*I have come that you might have life, and have it abundantly*” (John 10:10 paraphrased). Our fantasies—our imaginations—can contribute to an increased awareness of the abundance and blessedness of our lives. Or fantasies can breed dissatisfaction and deprivation in us.

Author Philip Gulley offers a different kind of fantasy than the one found in my opening story. In *Signs and Wonders*, a wife reflects on her husband’s qualities after a particularly unhappy family vacation, one planned by her husband. She thinks about how much he’s like his father and momentarily feels disappointed by



*Our fantasies—our imaginations—can contribute to an increased awareness of the abundance and blessedness of our lives.*

potential in such fantasies. They might get us through adversity, strengthen our commitments, compel us to do our best, and aid us in living well today so that our tomorrows are more complete.

But fantasies also have the potential for negative outcomes. Instead of using our imaginations to dream with our loved ones, or to propel ourselves to health, we may go down unhealthy paths. The perfect spouse in the mystery novel becomes preferable to the spouse in one’s own home. The perfect body on the Internet

that realization. Then she considers other characteristics of her father-in-law: his respect, the way he loves his wife and his steady faithfulness. With those thoughts, she concludes, “[I]f he turns out like his father, that wouldn’t be so bad.”

Such fantasies help us appreciate what we’ve got.

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

eternal promises of God for Israel, I simply ask, what makes you think he will keep his eternal promises to you?

Do the promises of God for Israel mean that he loves Palestinians any less? Of course not. They are souls for whom Christ died and he loves them. But the land is not theirs. God gave it to Israel by eternal decree and, although the world unites against Israel (as it will), God will be found true. He will still bless those who bless her and curse those who rise up against her. He will yet defend her and make her *“a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of earth”* Jeremiah 33:9.

LISA CATAFORD, BURNS LAKE, B.C.

## ✉ Who is the foreigner, Christ or the Jews?

ISRAEL WAS BIDDEN not to oppress or offend the foreigners living among them. In Exodus 22:21 we read, *“Do not mistreat an alien or oppress them, for you were aliens in Egypt”* (NIV). Deuteronomy 10:17-19 says, *“For the Lord your God . . . shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.”*

The question is, who is the foreigner on this earth. Is it Christ, or is it the Jews?

### GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Plastic surgery

SHERRI GROSZ

I was really surprised at how uncomfortable it was to leave the house. This past July my husband and I accompanied a group of youths to Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay. The packing list for our three-week trip included only the necessities: sleeping bag, clothes, toiletries, a Bible and a few small gifts, with everything to be carried in one backpack.

It was a little weird to leave the house without ID. The group coordinator still had our passports from her embassy visit and was going to have them for us at the airport. No need for a driver's licence or health card, so they stayed at home. We were advised that debit cards were rarely accepted in Paraguay or Brazil, so there was no point in taking them along either. The credit card, however, was the most difficult of all. I knew I wouldn't need it, and yet leaving it behind remained a struggle.

The “what ifs” of international travel ran through my head. What if we were stranded at an airport? What if we had to pay for medical care or medications? What if there was an emergency and someone needed to come home? Despite

the fact that we were carrying sufficient cash, the group had travel insurance, our coordinator was carrying a credit card and the conference office would surely wire money if needed, I struggled with leaving my credit card behind. I pondered my struggle at various moments in our trip.

I often use a credit card, especially for work. It's almost required to rent a car or book a flight. Since I am reimbursed

for my expenses, it's handy that expenses don't come out of our personal bank account immediately. By using a credit card for work-related costs, I can submit my expenses and by the time the credit card bill comes, I've usually received my reimbursement cheque. My husband and I pay off our personal cards monthly and we don't use them to buy things we can't afford. The credit card is strictly for convenience. So why my struggle to leave the card at home? Was I that dependent on plastic?

It seems that having a credit card with me gives me a sense of security. I feel

safe knowing that if an emergency were to arise, I would have the means to deal with it. I could pay a tow truck or repair centre if my car broke down. I could pay for a hotel room if I were stranded. I could deal with whatever financial need arose. Carrying that piece of plastic makes me feel safe; I can independently fix any problem that might arise.

But this is a false sense of security and a false sense of independence. A credit card doesn't keep me safe, and it won't keep my loved ones safe. While it may provide me with a financial buffer, and it can be helpful on occasion, a credit card cannot solve my problems and it cannot

protect me. It was good for me to leave my credit card home this summer and to wrestle with my attachment to plastic. Back at home I'm using the credit card again, but I'm keenly aware that my safety and security rest—appropriately—in the hands of God.

*Sherri Grosz is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit [Mennofoundation.ca](http://Mennofoundation.ca).*



*Carrying that piece of plastic makes me feel safe; I can independently fix any problem that might arise.*

Zechariah 4:10 commands, “Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor,” while Hebrews 11:13 declares, “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.”

During the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had this to say: “[I]f you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever” (Jeremiah 7:6-7); and, “You are to allot [this land] as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who

have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites . . . declares the Sovereign Lord” (Ezekiel 47:22-23).

This is what God said to his people, Israel, and then to all those who read and study God’s Word. But to his children everywhere he says in Ephesians 2:19, “Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

JACOB I. BERGEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

*Translated from German and edited by Barb Draper.*

#### FROM OUR LEADERS

# Schizophrenia, service and the grace of God

ED JANZEN

Sometimes a thought about a certain subject sticks in my mind; usually this is the result of reading, discussion or watching TV. Lately, schizophrenia has been mulling around in my head. Louise and I have been reading a book, *The Soloist*, for one of our book clubs. Then the movie, *A Brilliant Mind*, played on TV the other day. Both are true, very gripping stories of men who developed schizophrenia after promising starts in their chosen careers, one in music and the other in mathematics.

Nathaniel Ayers was a promising student at the Julliard School of Music and ended up on the streets of Los Angeles as a homeless man playing a violin with two strings. Steve Lopez, a columnist for the *L.A. Times*, discovers him accidentally, writes a series of columns about him, and hopes to change both Ayers and the city’s indifference to its homeless people and the conditions in which they live.



*[T]his condition brought many heartaches as they tried to deal with this devastating illness, but they stuck with her . . .*

John Nash eventually won a Nobel Prize for his economics in game theory, and was able to crack Soviet codes that seemed to be beyond others in the field during the Cold War. When his schizophrenia hit, he became delusional and dysfunctional, sometimes even dangerous. Eventually, he was helped by his

wife Alicia, who stuck with him in spite of many heart-breaking experiences that would drive most couples apart forever.

These stories brought to mind friends of ours who had a daughter who developed schizophrenia at about age 19 while attending university. She was a beautiful young woman who was doing well in school when it struck. For them, too, this condition brought many heartaches as they tried to deal with this devastating illness, but they stuck with her and went out of their way many times to help her. She passed away several years ago.

There are no instant cures for this condition, but with medication and the love and friendship of others—usually family—many of them live a fragile life, often teetering on the brink of sanity but managing to hang on.

Lopez comes to a surprising conclusion in his book when he writes of Nathaniel Ayers, “He has wiped away my professional malaise and shown me the dignity in being loyal to something you believe in, and it’s not a stretch to say that this man I hoped to save has done as much for me as I have for him.”

This is the lesson we learned during our Mennonite Central Committee service in the 1970s. Many of us thought

that if enough of us went out to help and worked hard we could change the world, or at least a part of it. We came back realizing that we received much more than we ever gave, and it was we who were changed—not the rest of the world—and our friendship with the people we met has endured over the decades. This is the power of God’s grace in our lives.

*Ed Janzen is the chair of MC Canada’s Support Services Council and secretary of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services Board.*

## YOUNG PROPHETS

# A waitress cloaked in compassion

BY RACHEL BERGEN

“This burger tastes disgusting. Give me my money back.”

“Do I have to wait forever for my coffee?”

“You’re closed already? But we drove all the way from Maple Ridge to come here to eat!”

“Last time I was here the spaghetti was so salty! I’m not going to come back if it tastes like that again.”



As trying as this job could be, I persevered, in order to pay for my fourth year at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. In fact, I worked at two jobs to pay for my education.

Since I began this job, though, I have grown more attuned to the needs of others. I was forced to pay close attention to my customers, to

make sure they did not run low on coffee, or finished their dinners faster than I anticipated and required dessert before I could come back to check on them. The

*Sometimes I wanted to tell impatient customers to wait their turn, that I was the only server working, and that I was exhausted.*

last thing I wanted was a lecture or an angry glare.

Colossians 3:12 tells believers that, “as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” Over time and in rather unconventional ways, I have come to feel as though I am learning to be cloaked in ways akin to these biblical qualities.

On a particularly busy night this past summer, after the crowd had tapered off and the restaurant was about to close, a woman and a man came in and ordered beverages. It seemed as though they had had a rough day. I discovered that the

woman’s car had broken down; she lived in Boston Bar, 150 kilometres away. The cost of towing her car there was going to be astronomical, and, as a single mother with a baby girl waiting for her back home, this was a highly stressful situation.

I was able to help this woman when she really needed it. I kept the restaurant open for an extra half-hour, let her use the phone and our phone book, and brought her and her helper some pieces of cheesecake. These small gestures seemed to make all the difference. They stayed until the tow truck arrived and then gratefully left the restaurant.

On another occasion, an elderly man that had trouble walking came in by himself. After he had finished ordering he sat down and waited for the food. I surmised that he was lonely, so I talked to him and brought him a newspaper. After I brought the food out, I made sure he had ketchup and water, which are normally self-serve, because it would have been difficult for him to carry them with a cane. Seemingly minute gestures brought a smile to his face, and I could see that I had gained something from my previous

unpleasant experiences with customers.

I have learned from working in the fast food industry that, even though my job was difficult and trying, the uniform I wore to work was as one of God’s chosen people. I now seek to be a waitress cloaked in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

My new job description is to serve God unseen. ☸

*Rachel Bergen is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C. Another of her jobs was as a freelance journalist for Canadian Mennonite.*

Comments like this were commonplace at one of my part-time jobs at a fast food restaurant in Abbotsford, where I live, this past summer. While I often complained about the bad days I had at work, I also contemplated what I learned from the customers who made my job difficult. I felt as though people looked at me and did not see the person behind the uniform. Instead, they saw a faceless server.

Almost every day I had at least one “bad customer” who felt that the prices were too high, the promotion we were offering that day was unfair, or that I was being too slow during the dinner rush. Rarely did customers say “please” or “thank you.”

Sometimes I wanted to tell impatient customers to wait their turn, that I was the only server working, and that I was exhausted. Sometimes, when they wanted me to stay open later, I wanted to yell, “I’ve worked for 12 hours today at two jobs! I do not want to stay here another minute!”

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Born**—Amara Rose (b. May 23, 2009), to Nathan and Katherine Born, Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

**Byblow**—Daxton (b. May 11, 2009), to Adam and Denise Byblow, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

**Dyck**—Ashley Margret (b. Aug. 20, 2009), to Kevin and Karen Dyck, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Ens**—Elijha David (b. Sept. 6, 2009), to Adam and Sarah Ens, Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

**Epp**—Sophia Marie (b. June 22, 2009), to Ryan and Lorna Epp, Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

**Friesen**—Luka Kelly (b. Aug. 12, 2009) to Tammy (Kehler) and Dale Friesen, Morden Mennonite, Man.

**Funk**—Caleb Alexander (b. Aug. 25, 2009), to Andy and Patricia Funk, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Kasdorf**—Juliette Gracie (b. Aug. 5, 2009), to Anthony and Haley Kasdorf, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**McLauchlan**—Braden Michael (b. Sept. 10, 2009), to Daryl and Krista McLauchlan, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Poettcker**—Josiah Peter (b. Aug. 8, 2009), to Grant and Rosalyn Poettcker, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

**Ratzlaff**—Natalie Teresa Ruth (b. Aug. 12, 2009), to Jenn and Rob Ratzlaff, First Mennonite, Calgary.

**Sinnock**—Jack Jeffery (b. Sept. 12, 2009), to Jeff and Marie Sinnock, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Underwood**—Joseph John Patrick (b. Sept. 1, 2009), to Craig and Katie Underwood, Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite, Ont., in Wasaga Beach, Ont.

**Wagler**—Troy Keith (b. Aug. 21, 2009) to Katie and Ryan Wagler, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Wiebe**—Zoe Katherine Krueger (b. Sept. 3, 2009), to Colin and Jennie Wiebe, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Scott Feick, Jamie Rempel**—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 30, 2009.

### Marriages

**Dyck/Tiessen**—Amanda Dyck and Gregory Tiessen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 29, 2009.

**Escover/Konrad**—Mary Escover and James Konrad, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 5, 2009.

**Filiatrualt/Kroeker**—Gary Filiatrualt and Ashley Kroeker (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.), in Windsor, Ont., Aug. 29, 2009.

**Forrer/Janzen**—Amy Forrer and Ben Janzen at Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 22, 2009.

**Hanan/Kroeker**—Sarah Hanan and Jeremy Kroeker, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 15, 2009.

**Howard/Martin**—Kendra Howard and Jared Martin at Floradale Mennonite Church, June 20, 2009.

**Klassen/Penner**—Mark Klassen and Jennifer Penner, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 1, 2009.

**Krahn/Young**—Caleb Krahn and Emily Young, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Aug. 22, 2009.

**Krahn/Zacharias**—Justin Krahn and Leslie Zacharias, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 2, 2009.

**Martin/Zehr**—Fraser Martin (Breslau Mennonite, Ont.) and Kelitta Zehr (Living Waters, New Hamburg, Ont.), at Breslau, Aug. 22, 2009.

**McCracken/Leili**—Richard McCracken and Stacy Leili, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 12, 2009.

**McDowell/Ponsen**—Annette McDowell (Community Mennonite, Stouffville, Ont.) and Jordan Ponsen, at Willowgrove, Markham, Ont., Aug. 29, 2009.

**Moynaugh/Neumiller**—Bob Moynaugh and Dianne Neumiller (Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.), Sept. 1, 2009.

**McRae/Stevanus**—Anne McRae and Aaron Stevanus, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 22, 2009.

**Peters/Sawatsky**—Cory Peters (Hanley Mennonite, Sask.) and Lindsay Sawatsky (Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.), at Hanley Mennonite, Aug. 1, 2009.

**Rymal/Woodsit**—Ruth Rymal (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Bill Woodsit, in Leamington, Aug. 7, 2009.

### Deaths

**Derksen**—John, 72 (b. Dec. 19, 1936; d. Aug. 11, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Dyck**—Diedrich, 85 (b. March 25, 1924; d. Aug. 20, 2009), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

**Frey**—John, 48 (b. Jan. 9, 1961; d. Aug. 6, 2009), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

**Jewitt**—Alene (nee Shantz), 89 (b. Dec. 17, 1919; d. Aug. 17, 2009), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Elfriede, 91 (b. Jan. 28, 1918; d. Aug. 22, 2009), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.

**Oberer**—Russell Henry, 86 (b. Dec. 1, 1922; d. Sept. 7, 2009), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Pauls**—Dietrich, 85 (b. Apr. 1, 1924; d. Sept. 3, 2009), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Quapp**—Louise (nee Bergmann), 78 (d. Sept. 10, 2009), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Schmidt**—Vera (nee Price), 81 (b. Dec. 10, 1927; d. June 16, 2009), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

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

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Rooted, growing and stretching into the future

*Breslau Mennonite Church celebrates milestone with “year of the vine”*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
BRESLAU, ONT.

The first Mennonites to settle in what is now Waterloo Region in southern Ontario came in the early 1800s, having supported the British Crown in the American Revolution for theological, biblical and traditional reasons. Following the War of 1812 between Britain and the United States, the number of settlers increased. Worship was organized in various places, including in 1826 in what is now Breslau.

By 1834, the Eby congregation in Berlin, now First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, had outgrown its log building. It was sold, dismantled and moved across the Grand River to land owned by the John Cressman family. Land was sold to the congregation for a cemetery, education facility and a church.

Although the first pastor was Christian Snyder, there already was a Schneider congregation at Bloomingdale, a few kilometres away, so the congregation was called Cressman Mennonite until it changed its name to Breslau Mennonite in 1968.

The original log building was eventually moved and is still used as a house in the village. The congregation dates its beginning to the relocation of that first building in 1834, hence its 175th anniversary this year.

A great day of worship and fellowship took place on Sept. 13. The sausage lunch, church and cemetery tours, jazz trio under the tent, banner and face painting for children, as well as ample opportunity for catching up with old friends and former members, made for a rich day. Former

pastor Ervin Wiens preached in the morning service and was joined by many other former pastors in the afternoon.

But the day itself was only a small part of the congregation's celebrations. Darrel Toews, part of the current pastoral team, noted that the preaching for much of the year has been drawn from the more than 90 biblical passages that refer to the vine, in particular the rich text in John 15: *“I am the vine, you are the branches.”*

*The congregation dates its beginning to the relocation of that first building in 1834, hence its 175th anniversary this year.*



*Pastors past and present gathered for the 175th anniversary service at Breslau Mennonite Church, Ont., on Sept. 13. Pictured from left to right: Laurence Martin, Jan Steckley, Juanita Laverty, Darren Kropf, Darrel Toews, Ervin Wiens and Susan Allison Jones.*

“Essentially, we spent the first half of the year preparing the vine, telling its story and then are focussing the second half of the year on reaping its fruit,” Toews said. Preaching in the summer and into the fall is focusing on the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5.

Besides the preaching and goal-setting a memory garden was established. Using grave stones associated with no known graves that were found under a utility shed in the cemetery, vines, stones, a deacon's bench, cross and pulpit, the area is a place for contemplation on those first settlers' lives as Anabaptist Christians in an often hostile world.

As Toews moves the church from considering its history to considering its place in today's world, congregational chair Ted Giesbrecht said, “The on-going challenge is to reflect [God's] light as brightly as possible from as many sources as we can build and provide, with an emphasis on being relevant and effective from the perspectives of those who reflect the light, those who are seeking the light, and those who have no idea that there is such light.” ☼

# On the open road

*B.C. Mennonite bikers tour province for second year*

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Numbers were down but enthusiasm was up for the second annual Mennonite Church B.C. motorcycle ride in early August. Organized by executive minister Garry Janzen, the Aug. 8-9 ride attracted seven riders on six bikes from five different congregations, compared to 20 bikes and 23 riders for the premiere event a year ago.

This year's ride turned into a two-day event, with the group taking the ferry to Vancouver Island and staying overnight to visit United Mennonite Church of Black Creek. The ride officially started on Aug. 8 at noon at the church, with a destination of Gold River.

"This road is a beautiful ride with lots of nice twists and turns that only a motorcyclist can really enjoy," reported Janzen. Even a mid-afternoon rain didn't dampen the spirits of the riders.

On Sunday the group participated in the morning worship service at the Black Creek church, with Janzen presenting

the message. Besides the bike group, two youth groups from the Lower Mainland were there to help run the Vacation Bible School program. All joined in for a church barbecue following the service.

That afternoon, most of the group returned to Nanaimo to board the ferry back to the mainland, enjoying the ride down the mountain with views of land and ocean.

Besides the fun of the ride, such experiences allow a non-traditional setting for people of MC B.C. churches to broaden their fellowship. "This was a new opportunity, a different opportunity for people who wouldn't normally meet each other in any other context," Janzen told *Canadian Mennonite*. "We're together on the same page [as bikers]."

Plans are already being made for next year's trip, possibly from Vancouver to Whistler, Pemberton, Lillooet and down the Fraser Canyon. ❧

PHOTO BY GLORIA CASHMAN



*Mennonite Church B.C. bikers took to the roads of Vancouver Island this summer for their second annual motorcycle outing. They are pictured in front of Black Creek United Mennonite Church, where they worshipped on Aug. 9.*

## /// Briefly noted

### Renovations at Regina church nearing completion

Grace Mennonite Church, a 200-member congregation in Regina that is waiting to find a full-time pastor, is moving ahead with some much-needed changes to the building. "We had talked about this for a long time," says church secretary Len Ewert. The kitchen is one area receiving many changes. Extra cupboard space was necessary to accommodate all the china that people were donating to help with the church's popular "high tea" events, according to Emma Bartel, one of nine members of the Women in Mission group that has been fundraising towards the half-million-dollar project. "We put on lots of special meals," Bartel adds, noting that the women raised \$11,000 over the past couple of years. Other improvements to the kitchen include two new stoves, a new water system that makes a dishwasher possible, and an island. Also included in the changes are new handicap parking spaces at the front of the church, new flooring in the education wing, a larger youth room and an upgraded furnace. The work began in early July and should be finished this month, Ewert says.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

### New staffer at Camp Assiniboia

WINNIPEG—Bill Klassen of Taber, Alta., has been hired as Camp Assiniboia's new maintenance person/custodian. Klassen brings a wealth of experience maintaining and repairing farm equipment, as well as working in many other trades. He began his position in September. Camp Assiniboia is one of three Camps with Meaning facilities operated by Mennonite Church Manitoba.

—MC Manitoba Release





# Church Snapshots

AMBS PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN



*Janice Yordy Sutter, a member of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) board, leads staff and students in a prayer of blessing for interim seminary president George R. Brunk III, who began his work in July, and asks God's blessing on his work, during a service in early September. He will continue as interim president for a period of between six and 12 months, depending on how soon a new president can begin. AMBS welcomed 34 new students for the fall semester, including those studying on the campus in Elkhart, Ind., at the AMBS-Great Plains program in Kansas, and in online classes.*

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*MennoHomes organized a building blitz from Sept. 3 to 7, creating two four-bedroom semi-detached homes (four units) in the village of Wellesley, Ont., for large, low income, rural families. Organizing the event were, from left: Murray Leis, site supervisor; Martin Buhr of MennoHomes; an Old Colony Mennonite supervisor who did not wish to be named; and Cornelius Reimer, a deacon of the Old Colony congregations. Supporting the build were carpenters from Old Colony Mennonite churches from Drayton, Aylmer, Crosshill and Niagara. The federal, provincial and regional governments have all contributed to this affordable housing project, while MennoHomes, the organization that will own and manage the buildings, needs to raise the remaining \$6,600 per unit. It is hoped that families can move into the units in February. Further properties are being negotiated in Elmira.*

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*The staff of Ontario Mennonite Music Camp—pictured from left: Elizabeth Rogalsky Lepock, Doug Epp, Ellen Drumm, Linnea Thacker, Darren Creech, Julia Monaco, Jean Lehn Epp and Clara Hilts—kept more than 30 campers occupied for two weeks of intensive instrumental and voice training at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. Solos, duets, musical ensembles, a choir and the production of *The Trubbable of Zerubbabel* showcased the spiritual and musical developments of the campers.*

MENNONITE CHURCH EASTERN CANADA PHOTO



Participants at this year's Lao Mennonite Conference Canada gathering assemble for a group photo at Grace Lao Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

## Lao Mennonite Conference Canada renews hope for church in Laos

BY BRIAN BAUMAN

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Release  
WATERLOO, ONT.

The theme of "God's healing and hope: Building healthy communities" was at the forefront of the annual gathering of national Lao churches that gathered at the end of August at Grace Lao Mennonite Church in Waterloo.

Activities during the two-day event ended with enthusiastic support for the executive board's shared vision to establish a Mennonite church in Laos.

Tom Poovong, pastor of Lao Community Mennonite Church in Calgary, Alta., supports the board's vision, saying the plan "excites me and it gives me reasons to encourage others to participate in the [Lao conference] and to be Mennonite."

Conference president Chinda Kommala led the business session. The board shared both its hopes and challenges for the conference. Their current challenge is the organization's spread across Canada coupled with limited funds, disabling them from meeting in a meaningful way. Despite this challenge, members are hopeful that they will be able to build a strong, sustainable conference that will benefit the churches and the mission.

Kommala responded to a question from the floor regarding the board's hope for the future of the Lao churches. "One of the things we want to see is for all the Lao Mennonite churches to relate more closely to the Mennonite churches in their area, to build relationships. This will make us more Mennonite and that is a good thing," he said. ☞

## Connecting with grandchildren

*Worldwide adventures deepen bonds between generations*

BY RAMONA BROWN MONSOUR  
ELMIRA, ONT.

"It's a real blessing to get to know them so well," says Karen Martin of Elmira, Ont. Martin and her husband Willard have taken each of their grandchildren on a major trip, when the child was ten years old.

Their first trip was with their granddaughter, Victoria (Tori) Clayton, when they went to Africa. They attended the 2003 Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe, where they helped put together an AIDS awareness quilt for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Anyone affected by HIV or AIDS was invited to help stitch together the quilt. Tori was kept busy threading needles for many women who had poor eyesight. The quilt then travelled around North America with MCC to help raise funds.

Tori remembers celebrating her birthday in Zimbabwe: "I got an orange. It was all the locals could afford." She also recalls staying with a local family in Kenya and seeing the slums of Nairobi. "You saw what was really happening."

"We made a point of staying with locals, rather than taking any tours," says her grandfather.

The Martins next trip was with their grandson, Adam Clayton, in 2006. This time they headed north to Alaska and the Yukon, and ended at the Calgary Stampede in Alberta.

"I wanted to see whales," Adam says. He saw them in Alaska, where he and his grandfather became members of the Polar Bear Club.

"You had to be totally submerged in the Arctic Ocean," says Willard. "No going in part way!"

They also saw lots of bears on the trip: black, brown, grizzly and polar bears. One brown bear was right outside their cabin when they stayed at Denali Park in Alaska. "Keep your distance, was very good advice," Adam quipped.

Adam was also very interested in learning about the Gold Rush of 1896-99 and they panned for gold in the Yukon River, just outside Dawson City.

"We got very wet," Adam recalls, "because you have to stand in water while you're panning. I wouldn't want to do it for a living."

In 2008, the Martins accompanied their granddaughter, Rachelle Clayton, to Eastern Europe. Rachelle had read the book *Hana's Suitcase* that chronicles a young girl's story during World War II. The Martins and Rachelle visited the Auschwitz concentration camp museum and saw

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN AND WILLARD MARTIN



*Willard and Karen Martin of Elmira Mennonite Church, Ont., spent quality time with their granddaughter Rachelle Clayton, travelling to Krakow, Poland in 2008.*

the Mennonite Centre in Molochansk in southern Ukraine, where Mennonites suffered during the Second World War.

From Ukraine it was off to Hungary and Slovakia.

"The parliament buildings in Budapest were beautiful and the boat cruise on the Danube was great," Rachelle recalls.

When she returned to Canada, Rachelle spearheaded a shoe drive for orphans in Ukraine. With the help of Elmira Mennonite Church, Ont., they collected and shipped six big boxes containing 240 pairs of shoes.

The Martins look forward to taking another great trip in a few years with their granddaughter, Natalie Martin, who is just five right now.

"Planning can be very exciting," says Willard. "It's great grandparent/grandchild time." ❧

*Ramona Brown, a writer-researcher living in Elmira, Ont., is a world traveller and a certified community food advisor with Public Health.*



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## BURKINA FASO FEATURE

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Devastating floods follow fires in West African country

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada Release

On Sept. 1, a flood disaster of epic proportions devastated the capital region of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The devastation followed a destructive fire that swept through three rural villages on May 2, villages that are home to members of a fledgling Mennonite church.

In a Sept. 2 letter of request for prayer, Siaka Traoré, president of the Burkina Faso Mennonite Church, said official reports recorded five deaths. The government is preparing an appeal for international assistance, he said, and more rain was in the forecast.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Anne Garber Kompaore and Jeff Warkentin both reported to MC Canada offices about the unusually heavy rains that turned streets into canals.

Ouagadougou residents are accustomed to brief flash floods and mud during the rainy season, but were unprepared for a

storm that dumped nearly 300 millimetres of rain—about half the normal rainfall for the entire rainy season—on the city and surrounding region in a matter of hours. Those with cement-block houses fared reasonably well, but mud brick is the only affordable option for many, meaning the heavy rain essentially dissolved entire neighbourhoods, reported Kompaore in an e-mail. “Cars parked along the canal were tossed around like Matchbox toys and piled in disordered array,” she wrote.

Kompaore herself said that the force of the water punched holes in an outer cement block wall surrounding her family compound, and numerous outbuildings on her property were temporarily flooded.

Warkentin said that, oddly, his neighbourhood sustained no damage.

Kompaore’s husband Daniel runs a school for children unable to attend public school. Many families sought temporary

refuge in the school, adding to the nearly 200 official refuge centres established throughout the city.

City and national authorities are overwhelmed trying to take care of their own damage and help the homeless at the same time. An estimated 150,000 people are homeless, wrote Traoré, about a 10th of Ouagadougou’s population. The entire population has been called upon to donate clothing, bedding, food and money. About \$400,000 Cdn was raised locally in the space of 24 hours, Kompaore wrote.

“There is no way one can rebuild a mud house in the middle of the rainy season,” which normally lasts from June to October, she added.

The city’s developing drainage infrastructure was not able to handle the sustained downpour. Twelve bridges were damaged and five collapsed, wrote Traoré. Two hospitals had to be evacuated from the rooftops. Hospital staff worked to remove nearly a metre of water and mud from new surgical suites, he added. Expensive diagnostic imaging equipment was also damaged.

“The underground garage of the West African Monetary Union became an underground lake, and irreplaceable archives and documents of numerous other buildings, as well as millions of dollars of computer and medical equipment, were lost,” Kompaore wrote. In addition to shelter, disease and clean drinking water top the priority list of government concerns.

The Office for Development Projects (ODE), the relief and development arm of the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions in Burkina Faso and a long-time Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partner, has asked MCC for financial assistance. The Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso is a participating church in ODE.

MCC has pledged \$20,000 and is accepting additional donations. ODE will use MCC’s contribution to supply food, mosquito netting, mats and soap, and to rebuild homes. Other aid organizations, including the United Nations and the Red Cross, are responding to the immediate need, providing food and clean drinking water. ❧

—With files from MCC.

PHOTO BY ALAN DIXON



*A rainstorm of epic proportions flooded the capital city of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, reported Anne Garber Kompaore, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in the West African country. Some of the mud brick homes in this image later dissolved into the ground, she wrote in an e-mail.*

## BURKINA FASO FEATURE

# Mennonites training their own church leaders in Burkina Faso

BY LYNDA HOLLINGER-JANZEN

Mennonite Church Canada Release

ORODARA, BURKINA FASO

During a lull in his Bible studies, Hamidou Traoré looks out through the window of the radio recording studio at the cement bricks outlining the future home of the Mennonite church's Bible school.

Traoré is one of seven young leaders preparing for ministry at Eglise Evangélique Mennonite du Burkina Faso. They took up their studies in January, the beginning of the dry season, when the agricultural work that feeds their families is not as demanding.

The vision of preparing Mennonite church leaders for ministry dates back more than a decade.

"For several years, we have given this

task to sister denominations, who have trained our people in their Bible schools," says Siaka Traoré, national president of the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso and one of the teacher-mentors at the Basic Biblical Training Center in Benin. "The time has come to begin a training program that will take into account our doctrinal convictions as Mennonites."

Hamidou Traoré—not closely related to Siaka Traoré; their shared family name is one of the most common in Burkina Faso—and the six other leaders-in-training are being shaped for leadership in a way that draws on centuries-old educational methods. Four experienced pastors give of their time to teach and mentor the students

in the Dioula language, which is the most widely used language in the region where the Mennonite church is strongest.

"In traditional societies, before the arrival of formal education, fathers faithfully transmitted their wisdom to their sons and mothers did the same for their daughters," says Siaka. He also points out that the Apostle Paul spoke of elders transferring their knowledge to younger people in the church and that Jesus taught by mentoring. "The evangelical principle of making disciples is what motivates us in undertaking this program," Siaka says, adding, "With the goal of building a strong and growing church, we have found it imperative to give training to those whom God is calling to service."

Traditional education methods do not require extensive infrastructure, permitting training to begin even before construction of the Bible school is completed. Three students began biblical studies in January 2008, in rooms belonging to the Mennonite radio recording studio that was built in 2006 through the joint efforts of Mennonite youths from Burkina Faso and France working side by side.

About 13 percent of the funding for training is contributed by the students, their sending congregations and the national church. The rest of it comes from the Burkina Faso Partnership Council, the administrative structure through which North American Mennonite mission agencies, including Mennonite Church Canada Witness, work in the country.

Hamidou Traoré's father, Tiéba, was the first person to become a Christian as a result of Mennonite witness in Burkina Faso in the early 1980s. It was during those years that two Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission linguists, Anne Garber (now Anne Garber Kompaore) and Gail Wiebe, first began to work in his village of Kotoura.

Tiéba's determination in turning from African traditional religion and Islam to follow Jesus encouraged his son to do the same. "I love God's Word and deepening my understanding of it," says Hamidou, who leads worship and is a member of the leadership committee of Kotoura Mennonite Church. ☸

PHOTO COURTESY OF BASIC BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER



Students are mentored at the Basic Biblical Training Center, Benin.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Tuning in to Christ

BY LILLIAN (HAAS) NICOLSON  
Mennonite Church Canada Release  
ORODARA, BURKINA FASO

With only two days and slim resources to work with, Bible translator Souleymane (Solo) Traoré called us together to compose and record Christian songs in the Siamou language. I was sceptical about what we could accomplish in such a short period of time, considering our limitations.

Our group gathered at 11 a.m. in an Orodara recording studio, two hours after the workshop was scheduled to begin. Among us were three *griots* (traditional musicians); Ruth, a Siamou pastor's wife; a Catholic elder; two Mennonites (one of whom was a shoe repairman and the other a Bible translator); and me, completely unmusical and non-Siamou. The only unifying factor I could detect in the group was a common language and some interest in music.

But how could we draw a Christian theme for the songs we were invited to create? Siamou biblical translations are limited to creation stories and Adam and Eve. Solo and I were the only ones literate in Siamou and the *griots* were not Christian.

BURKINA FASO FEATURE

Solo wasn't deterred. "When the music is in your mother tongue and in your mother music, people can sing with greater joy and understanding," he said. "It makes you do more than just sing. It makes you dance."

Using a selected Bible passage, Mary

Hendershott, a visiting ethnomusicologist who led the workshop, guided us through techniques for developing a good refrain. Solo followed with a reading of the creation story and we discussed the aspects of it that spoke to us most profoundly. One

of the *griots* began to pick out a tune on the *bala-phon* (wooden xylophone) and sing his interpretation of the story.

Soon Ruth's voice hesitantly rose in a refrain she had composed, and the others obediently but tentatively sang along. Then someone mentioned that the tune was in the Jula scale, a musical key from the trade language of the area. The *griots* transposed it into a Siamou scale and, suddenly, the room erupted with joy. Everyone sprang to their feet, praising God with music and song in their mother tongue, dancing to the *balaphon* and drums.

We managed to compose and record four rough drafts in this workshop—and plant many different kinds of seeds. The Christians present listened to the stories of creation and Adam and Eve in Siamou for the first time. The *griots* heard these Bible stories for the

first time ever. We pray that these seeds will take root and grow. ☺

*With notes from Lynda Hollinger-Janzen. For the past 10 years, Lillian Nicolson has immersed herself in the Siamou language and culture to develop a literacy program with the Siamou. She married Norm Nicolson in 2006, and the couple has served together in Burkina Faso since January 2008. Lillian has joined the Bible translation team and Norm is engaged in an audio recording ministry.*

PHOTO BY KEMBER LILLO



Philippe Seydou Traoré, left, Amidou Jabati, Siaka Jabati and Brahima Jabati compose the first Siamou Christian music in a January workshop in Burkina Faso.



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## COVER STORY

# Growing food fears

*More poverty, hunger in developing world as recession takes hold*

Mennonite Central Committee Release

Although the worldwide recession appears to be letting up in Canada and the U.S., in many developing countries it has barely begun and the impact will be devastating, according to a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) spokesperson.

"Many families in Africa, Asia and Latin America spend between 50 to 70 percent of their household income on basic food staples," says Bruce Guenther, MCC's coordinator of humanitarian assistance. "Food prices have come down from the extreme levels they were at last year, but they are still up to triple what they were."

Families are spending so much on food that they have little money for other essentials such as education and medicine. The stress and shock is enough to throw many families that were able to get by into poverty.

"On top of this, people are now beginning to lose their jobs because of this recession," says Guenther. "The effects of mass hunger will continue to make it harder for people to survive."

Guenther recently saw the impact of hunger firsthand in Kenya, where severe drought conditions have increased the need for humanitarian assistance. MCC is responding by providing emergency food for 3,000 Maasai families and nutritious meals to 43 primary schools. As well, MCC has organized food-for-work programs, through which participants can collect maize, beans and cooking oil in return for community work in sustainable agriculture.

MCC food aid reached record levels this past year, as the organization responded to hunger caused by natural disasters, skyrocketing food prices and climate change. The next year is shaping up to be worse.

The Food and Agricultural Organization

of the United Nations recently reported that the number of hungry people in the world is on track to reach more than a billion in 2009—the highest number ever.

In March, the World Bank said the recession was expected to trap 53 million more people in poverty this year, defined as subsistence living on less than \$1.25 a day. Poor people in developing countries have little buffer to protect them against the effects of the crisis.

"The high cost of fertilizer and fuel, in combination with extreme weather conditions, are affecting access to food and the amount of food grown," says Willie Reimer, director of food, disaster and material resources for MCC, adding, "And while there is still a surplus of food being produced, it is not as large as in previous years."

That there is even a surplus of food being produced in the world is of great importance for Reimer. "This is really more than a food crisis," he says. "It is a hunger crisis. There is still more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone."

Often the problem is access to food

caused by factors such as unequal access to land and conflict.

"In war-torn areas like southern Sudan, 22 years of conflict has resulted in fading knowledge about food-growing techniques," says Reimer, adding that hidden landmines in the soil complicate people's abilities to go out and till the land.

MCC is responding by increasing the amount of its emergency food assistance, continuing to help farmers increase the food they can grow, and advocating for food systems that are fair and just.

However, the needs are still great. Some of the things people can do to help:

- Pray for the people who are hungry, that they may soon have enough to eat, and for those who minister to them.
- Live simply so that your lifestyle in this interconnected world is not a burden on the poor.
- Speak out on behalf of the poor and hungry, so that they are not forgotten by governments.
- Donate to organizations like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank or MCC. ☸

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## 'Cents'ible Solutions

*Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church senior proves inexpensive diet possible*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

In the early summer of 2007 a tempest broke out in Waterloo Region. A senior woman on social assistance was left with approximately \$25 a week to spend on food after paying rent and other expenses. Regional politicians objected, and Frank Etherington, a local journalist, called the situation "absolute bunk." A family of four was to live on \$120 a week, but wasn't even left with that after paying rent, he reported.

Martha Hoffstetter, a member at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, responded to Etherington's column in the *Waterloo Region Record*, but didn't stop there. She developed a cookbook, *"Cents'ible Solutions: A Cookbook to Help*

*You Save Money*. In it she outlines how she and her husband lived on \$193.94 for four weeks, with some staples like rice and pasta left over.

Daily menus used every bit of the food purchased. "A \$5.97 chicken became a roast chicken dinner, chicken noodle soup for two lunches, and a broccoli chicken casserole," she wrote in her letter to the editor.

In his column, Etherington noted that people like local councillor Sean Strickland "point out that many welfare families lack basic cooking skills that would help them cook inexpensive meals. They also don't have the transportation to shop around and take advantage of special food prices."

Hofstetter assumes those skills and advantages for readers of her book, although all her shopping was done at one discount grocery store. She also assumes that "most people have a spice rack on hand."

She credits her life as the child of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, as well as being a farmer's wife, with providing her with the requisite skills to create and cook so cost-effectively.

The initial printing of 500 books is quickly being sold out, displayed at various help agencies in Waterloo Region, including The Working Centre in downtown Kitchener. Friends from near and far are also ordering the book to give to friends and family, promoting healthful and inexpensive eating. And her grandsons are using the book to cook at school.

Laughing during her interview for this article, Hofstetter noted that a teenaged boy should be counted as two people when preparing food.

All proceeds from the first printing are going to Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and The Working Centre.

A second printing is being prepared with an index of individual recipes. ❧

### ❧ Briefly noted

#### MC Canada congregants begin assignments with MCC

AKRON, Pa.—Three Mennonite Church Canada congregants are among 50 new workers who were commissioned for service after participating in an orientation at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) offices in Akron this summer. Of the 50, nine are serving in Canada or the United States, and 41 are serving in other countries. David and Margaret Penner of Grace Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man., are serving three-year terms in Mexico as program managers. Jim Hett of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., is serving as a business manager at the Waterloo Generations thrift store. Each year about 300 people begin MCC assignments; 1,165 MCC workers currently serve in 50 countries.

—MCC Release

## MSCU Regional Meetings

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**Meeting Begins: 7:00 pm**



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GOD AT WORK IN US

## Director of camping ministries resigns

*Bob Wiebe found working with family, youths a blessing over the last 18 years*

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

Some jobs become a way of life. After 18 years as director of camping ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, Bob Wiebe considers it an unexpected blessing that his work was often a family affair. All three of his now-grown children “spent significant amounts of time at camp, and Verna, my wife, has been very supportive,” he says. “It was almost like we were doing it together.”

When Wiebe steps down from his post at the beginning of November, he will give himself a “mini-sabbatical” to rest and discover new pursuits.

During his tenure, Wiebe’s task of overseeing summer programming, winter retreats and guest group rentals at the three Camps with Meaning facilities—Assiniboia, Moose Lake and Koinonia—remained constant but grew increasingly complex.

“It became more of a challenge to find enough resources and people,” he says. “There were more regulations and

insurance-type concerns. It has become an environment where there is a heightened awareness of risks.”

Despite the challenges of trying to find enough suitable people to put together a program every summer for each of the three camps, trying to take in enough revenue to balance the books annually, and devoting more and more time and resources to marketing, Wiebe always found the enthusiasm and passion of the youths and young people contagious. This, together with the people who cared, prayed for and supported him and his ministry on a regular basis, kept him going.

“The camps were an ideal way in which to work with youth and young people,” Wiebe says. “A tremendous shift of responsibility happens. We entrust the youth and young adults with a big responsibility and they rise to that challenge. It becomes their program as much as it is mine or the conference’s.”

Recognizing the treasures in the programs

he inherited, Wiebe worked hard to enrich them. He observed how the sharing of faith stories by the young leaders has “gathered a new life of its own over the years.”

The Bible curriculum has developed into a creative, very biblical- and Anabaptist-based resource that is used on a five-year rotation. New nature centres have been built at each camp and draw upon an ever-widening pool of resources.

During their training week, staff engage in team development activities, which involve group dynamic exercises that identify strengths and weaknesses in the group and force them to work together to accomplish tasks.

“This has become an increasingly important part of the camp experience for the staff and something they value,” says Wiebe.

Wiebe has overseen the implementation of several new programs: the servant-in-leadership training program; a four-week summer day camp program; birding, quilting and scrapbooking retreats; and major renovations and additions to Camp Koinonia’s kitchen.

But Wiebe sees the need for changes within Camps with Meaning.

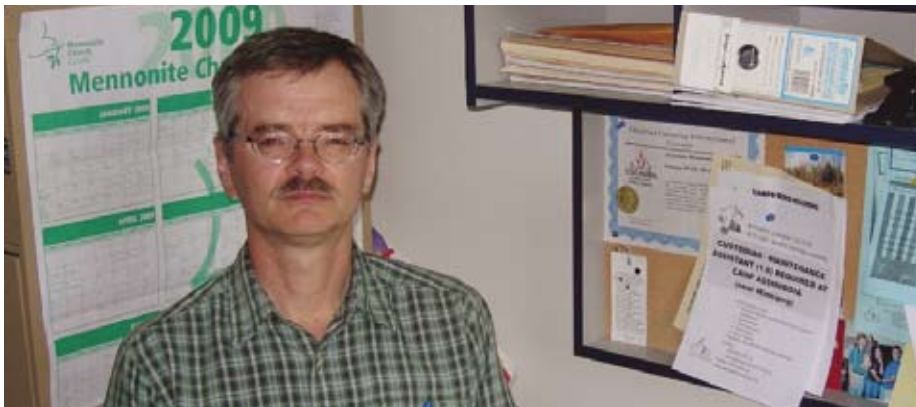
“We need to expand the circle, to reach out to a new demographic,” he says. “At the same time as Manitoba schools and our Mennonite population are in general decline, the aboriginal demographic is increasing and there are lots of new Canadians coming who haven’t experienced camp. We need to find meaningful ways to connect with those demographics.”

“We also have an opportunity to move ahead in the creation care department,” he adds. “We could do more in the year-round program in creation care.”

Camps with Meaning offers unique features when compared to other provincial camps: It is owned by MC Manitoba and it has a long-standing program for adults with disabilities, among them.

“Through our community building and emphasis, striving for cooperation rather than competition, and in our written and unwritten curriculum, we always try to reflect our Anabaptist theology,” says Wiebe.

Kristy Letkeman began working with Wiebe in September as she moves into the position of interim program director for the next year. ❧



*Bob Wiebe, who is retiring from his position as director of camping ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, is pictured in his Winnipeg office.*

## OBITUARY

# A Mennonite in Canada's defence department

Jake Koop,  
June 18, 1923 – July 2, 2009

BY BILL JANZEN  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
OTTAWA

Jacob (Jake) Koop, who died at the age of 86, was unique, in that he served in the senior levels of the Department of National Defence (DND) for most of his working years while also giving leadership in a Mennonite church.

Born in Ukraine, Koop came to Canada as a child and completed high school at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Man. When his World War II “call-up” came, he joined the army, having concluded that he could not honestly accept all the implications of a conscientious objector stance. Still, he prayed that he would never have to kill anyone and he was always grateful that his prayer was answered. He said that half of the boys in his Mennonite Collegiate Institute class also signed up.

After the war, he studied science at the University of Manitoba, was baptized at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, and married Elsa Pauls. They moved to Montreal for his Ph.D. studies at McGill University, but soon he was invited to a position with the Defence Research Board in Ottawa.

Over the next 20 years Koop worked particularly in two areas, both dealing



Koop

with international nuclear issues. One was to monitor and assess the former Soviet Union's nuclear activities as well as its capabilities and possible intentions. The other was to assess the likelihood that certain other countries—including China, India, Israel, Pakistan, South Africa and Brazil—might try to acquire nuclear weapons. He became the government's expert in these areas.

In the 1970s he was asked to work more on questions of policy, specifically on identifying the long-term global framework for the pursuit of Canadian security. This led him to study questions of energy, agriculture, technology, communications, minerals, different political scenarios and other factors. Now he interacted with leading

1968, which limited the spread of nuclear weapons to more countries.

Other efforts were less successful. In his memoirs he wrote: “I have always been . . . convinced that the Canadian intelligence community is a vital element in our contribution to world peace and security, particularly in the area of arms control and disarmament. Hence, I have always felt very good about working in scientific intelligence, particularly in areas of nuclear weapons testing, the stability of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. strategic relationship and . . . nuclear weapons proliferation.”

While seeking disarmament through negotiation, he accepted the legitimacy of a country defending itself militarily against unprovoked aggression if all other efforts to resolve the problem had been exhausted. He saw it as analogous to what the police do at the domestic level.

Alongside his work at DND, he strongly supported Ottawa Mennonite Church. Indeed, when the church was formed in 1959, the Koops signed up as charter members. Soon thereafter, he was elected to serve as deacon, together with two other men who had also served in the military. He also did a fair amount of preaching, up to twice per month during one year when the church was without a minister.

Koop was very open to dialogue about his work. He felt his stance represented a legitimate thread in Mennonite history and theology. Certainly, his work was ori-

*At times he seemed to wish that the church could give him a fuller blessing. But he stayed in the church.*

“think tanks,” such as the Club of Rome, the World Future Society and the Worldwatch Institute, along with prominent scholars.

His posting at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and a sabbatical year at Harvard University also focused on questions of defence, but a posting in London, England, as the science advisor to the Canadian High Commission, involved him in many other areas. Still, he described the focus of his career as being on arms control and disarmament. He contributed to the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963, which banned nuclear testing in the atmosphere, and to the Non-Proliferation Treaty of

ented towards the prevention of war and the preservation of peace. At times he seemed to wish that the church could give him a fuller blessing. But he stayed in the church. He liked its global embrace, even if some of its words about peace seemed to him a bit narrow.

During my years as the Mennonite Central Committee Ottawa director, when I would often draft letters to the government on a defence or foreign affairs issue, I would ask myself, how would this look to Jake Koop. A discussion with him was always informative, challenging and marked by grace. His friendship was a gift. ❧

## Jung's Psychology and the Christian Experience: A Weekend Exploration

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Durham, Ontario

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Bob Hudspith: hudspith@mcmaster.ca

# A 'faith'ful volunteer

*AIDS support program worker steps out of her comfort zone*

By ANGELIKA DAWSON

MCC B.C. Release  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Working with people on the margins isn't something new for Faith Nickel, a volunteer with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Nickel grew up as a "missionary kid" living in the Dominican Republic, where her parents were Plymouth Brethren missionaries. She also served as a missionary in the Congo for six years, and in each of these experiences she was confronted with poverty and hardship on a daily basis.

But living in Abbotsford is obviously different. "In Canada it's harder to see who the isolated people are and to find genuine ways of connecting," she says. "MCC has a way of finding these groups and developing support programs for them."

Nickel chose to volunteer with MCC B.C.'s HIV/AIDS support program after hearing about it from Bridget Findlay, the program's coordinator. The program provides support services, referral to resources and education to people living in the Fraser Valley, serving those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

"Volunteers bring support and friendship to people struggling with this life-threatening virus," Findlay says. "Without volunteers like Faith, several group members would not be able to come out and be a part of the support group or attend events. Faith brings to them friendship, which is truly cherished."

Nickel serves as a driver, taking people to support group meetings, functions or appointments. She also attends bi-weekly support group meetings together with the people that she brings. Her favourite part of the job is the time spent with people in the car. "This is when I really get to know people, and am invited more deeply into their lives," she says.

Not that the experience has been without its challenges. She says that she has had to work at undoing some of her own stereotypes and resistance to the people

most affected by HIV/AIDS. "Working with this community is partly a challenge to myself to step out of my defined world and still find God there," she says. "And maybe it's my challenge to God, my need to see his love at work there."

But she says that her experience has made her realize how hard MCC has worked at nurturing genuine friendships and creating a non-judgmental, safe place where people can meet and support each other. "It offers me, an average church-goer who rarely crosses paths with this community, the opportunity to connect in a meaningful way and be a part of their support system," she says. ☼

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC B.C.



*Faith Nickel volunteers with the MCC B.C. HIV/AIDS support program.*

☼ Briefly noted

## Stutzman named new MC USA executive director

Ervin R. Stutzman of Harrisonburg, Va., was chosen as Mennonite Church USA's next executive director at a special executive board meeting held Aug. 25. Stutzman is vice-president and seminary dean, as well as professor of church ministries, at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Pa. He served on the executive board of MC USA from 1999-2005 and as denominational moderator from 2001-03. He expects to begin his new duties in early 2010. He served on pastoral teams at Mennonite Christian Assembly in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Mount Joy Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. An ordained minister and bishop, he was moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference before beginning at EMU in 1998.

—Mennonite Church USA Release

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## ARTBEAT

## BOOK REVIEW

# A keen sense of the transcendent

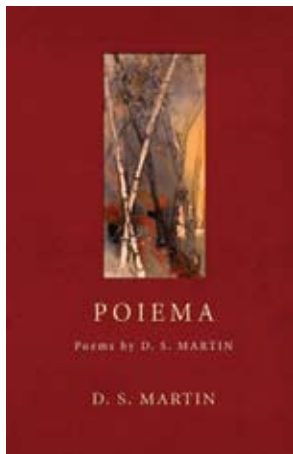
*Poiema.*

By D.S. Martin. Wipf and Stock, 2008.

REVIEWED BY JOANNE EPP

This is the first full-length poetry collection from D.S. Martin, whose chapbook, *So the Moon Would Not Be Swallowed*, appeared in 2007. Martin writes about poetry for publications such as *Image* and *Faith Today*, and is music critic for *ChristianWeek* and an occasional contributor to *Canadian Mennonite's* Artbeat section.

*Poiema* is bookended by two poems that speak to the poet's task. The first tells the story of Caedmon, the first known poet in English, who receives a vision commanding him to compose "a song of the creation of all things." The final one, "Poiema," takes its name from the Greek word translated



"workmanship" in the well-known verse from Ephesians. It ends with the paradox that we are "His workmanship His poem/ & yet are oblivious to so much."

The poems in between deal with a number of themes: biblical subjects; family history; nature. A few are responses to paintings; these show quite vividly how a viewer can be drawn into a work of art.

The poems in the third section, selected from Martin's earlier chapbook, are among the best in the book. They are scenes from the lives of his grandparents, missionaries to China from 1923-51. Here, Martin has

distilled the essence of their stories and tells the reader just enough to make a scene come alive.

In some poems Martin uses form to good effect; for instance, in "Routines and Recurrences," the repeated lines reinforce the picture of an old woman losing her memory. "Villanelle" is a psalm of lament contained within a traditional French form.

Martin has a keen sense of the transcendent in the visible world. This comes through most effectively in "Cycling," which contrasts the way "feet push pedals as thoughtlessly/ as they step" with the marvel of how the physical process actually works.

But overall, the book feels as if it needed more editing. Too many of the poems lack energy or focus; too often Martin explains when he should let the stories or images do the work. And there is too much that simply doesn't make sense. Sometimes it's a single line or phrase, but in one case it's the basic metaphor of the poem that doesn't work. This is a shame, because many poems in this collection do contain the kernel of something stronger. Hopefully, that promise will be realized in his future work. ❧

*Joanne Epp is a poet and reviewer living in Winnipeg.*

## Yellow Page Business Directory

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Mennonite & BIC Resource Centre  
519-745-8458 x225 [www.mbicresources.org](http://www.mbicresources.org)

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## Calendar

### British Columbia

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

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

**Nov. 14:** MCC B.C. annual conference at Culloden Mennonite Brethren Church, Vancouver.

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

**Until Jan. 3, 2010:** "A Common Thread: Textiles from Sto:lo First Nation, South Asian and Mennonite Communities" exhibition at the Reach Gallery, Abbotsford.

### Alberta

**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.

**Nov. 17-20:** Church Planting Congress at Center Street Church, Calgary. MC Canada Witness encourages congregations to send reps; MC Alberta Missions Committee can help subsidize church costs. For more information, e-mail info@churchplantingcanada.ca.

### Saskatchewan

**Oct. 14-28:** MC Canada IMPaCT: an international gathering of pastors in Saskatchewan.

**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.

**Nov. 21:** MC Saskatchewan leadership assembly.

### Manitoba

**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:** One-day "Parenting Adult Children" workshop, Steinbach Mennonite Church. Resource person: Ruth. B.Z. Thomson, older adult issues specialist. For more information, or to register, call 204-326-2293.

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

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

**Nov. 9:** Mennonite Collegiate Institute annual general meeting.

**Nov. 13-14:** Mennonite Collegiate

Institute presents *Oliver Twist*.

**Nov. 13-14:** MCC Manitoba annual general meeting, "Caring in the Name of Christ for our Neighbours and God's Creation" at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

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

**Nov. 16:** MC Manitoba fall delegate meeting, at Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, from 7 to 9 p.m.

**Nov. 18-21:** Meat canning for MCC in Winkler.

### Ontario

**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. 16-17:** Ten Thousand Villages Festival sale, bake sale and tea room at Zurich Mennonite Church; 3 to 9 p.m. (16), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (17).

**Oct. 18:** Sixth annual gospel vesper, a hymn sing from Life Songs No. 2, at Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville, 3 p.m. Song leader: Bob Shantz. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

**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. 24:** Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Fall Enrichment Day, Listowel Mennonite

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Church. Hedy Sawadsky and Barbara Martens will speak on Following Christ in our time; 10:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**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.

**Nov. 4-7:** Ten Thousand Villages

Festival sale at Vineland United Mennonite Church, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. (4-6), 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. (7). Tea and lunch room open each day.

**Nov. 21:** Nithview Auxiliary annual Christmas Tea and Bake Sale, Nithview Home, New Hamburg; 2 to 4 p.m. Features include tea room, crafts, home baking and apple dumplings.

**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.**

## Classifieds

### Volunteers Sought

**Volunteer host and hostess** needed at Menno-Hof. One-month to one-year term beginning December 2009. Duties include hosting visitors and other assigned tasks. Housing provided. Contact LeRoy Mast, Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 45665, 260-768-4117 or lmast@mennohof.org.

### For Rent

**House for rent:** Winnipeg, Wolseley neighbourhood. Great location on quiet street near major bus routes. Available January 2010 – April 2011. Call Nathan or Ang Gerbrandt, (204) 996-5807.

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Please send questions and applications to:

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### YOUTH PASTOR POSITION

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

### LEAD PASTOR

**Glenlea Mennonite Church**, located 10 minutes south of Winnipeg, Man., invites applications for a **LEAD PASTOR**, starting in the summer of 2010. The time commitment is negotiable between 0.75 and 1.00 FTE. We are a well-established, active, caring community of about 100 people. Our church currently has an intentional interim minister after the retirement of two long-serving pastors. We are prayerfully seeking a pastor committed to the Anabaptist faith with demonstrated gifts in preaching, teaching and providing spiritual leadership for all age groups. GMC is a member of Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Church Canada.

To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to Jonathan Regehr, Search Committee Chair, P.O. Box 3, St. Adolphe, MB R5A 1A1, or regehr.jon@gmail.com.

## Advertising Information

Contact *Canadian Mennonite*

Ad Representative

Lisa Metzger

1-800-378-2524 x.224 or 519-664-2780

advert@canadianmennonite.org

## Upcoming Advertising Dates

| Issue Date | Ads Due | Focus On                   |
|------------|---------|----------------------------|
| Nov. 2     | Oct. 20 | <i>Books&amp;Resources</i> |
| Nov. 16    | Nov. 3  | <i>Music</i>               |
| Nov. 30    | Nov. 17 | <i>Mission and Service</i> |

# 40 years . . . and counting



*This MCC loaf of bread, made by the Cottage Bake Shop in Abbotsford, B.C., sold for more than \$213,600. In total, the 40th Mennonite Central Committee Festival Auction and Relief Sale at the Abbotsford Tradex raised more than \$650,000 for MCC Food for All projects around the world.*

MCC B.C. PHOTOS BY ANGELIKA DAWSON



*Two couples each paid \$7,000 for the opportunity to own a “grandchild” of the famous Chortitza oak from Ukraine. Pictured with Walter Bergen, centre, who grew the seedlings, are Gabe and Art Unrau, left, and Marlyce and Art Friesen. The oak they are holding was later planted at the Reach Gallery Museum in Abbotsford. Two additional seedlings went home with each buyer.*



*Nearly 40 cyclists braved the cool weather to cycle up to 40 kilometres each in celebration of MCC's 40th sale, raising more than \$45,000 for their efforts.*