

A photograph of children playing flag football in winter gear on a snowy field. The children are wearing heavy jackets, hats, and gloves. One child in the foreground is holding a football. A blue bucket filled with footballs is visible in the lower right. In the background, there are other children and a sign that says "RESERVED Library Toronto Council Parkers ONLY".

CANADIAN MENNONITE

January 11, 2010

Volume 14 Number 1

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EDITORIAL

The preacher and the entrepreneur

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Canadian Mennonite ushers in 2010 with the addition of two new series—one on the art of preaching, another profiling business entrepreneurs within the Mennonite family. Readers should not attempt to equate the two, except to say that there might be some entrepreneurship to good preaching and hidden homiletics in doing business well.

Allan Rudy-Froese of Kitchener, Ont., himself a preacher currently doing a Ph.D. in homiletics, persuaded us that the art of preaching in this modern day of interactive communications might need some shoring up. He promises not to “preach” at us in this new series, “This Preacher has 22 Minutes” (page 13), but will keep the subject light, sometimes entertaining, as he takes stock of preaching’s effectiveness as a teaching tool from an historical perspective.

In thinking about this, I calculated that of the estimated 2,500 sermons I have heard over my lifetime I can only count on one hand the content of any of these homilies. That’s not to say, though, that accumulatively these millions of words have not helped to shape my faith.

Because in our Anabaptist tradition, the “preacher” was more than the words he or she uttered. That person embodied the “Word of the Lord” as a centrepiece of our worship. No, he/she wasn’t the

Lord in person, like in the high church tradition (pope/priest), but rather had feet of clay just like ours. But we did expect some encouraging or prophetic word that would stir our thoughts and inspire our actions for the coming week.

It will be a good exercise to have a preacher take stock of what he does. As listeners, we probably don’t appreciate all that goes into the makings of a good sermon.

Another practitioner puts it this way: “I see the sermon as a whole during the week, when I organize it and find the clarity and brevity that I seek. When I stand to speak, the sermon breaks apart into 10 or 12 little sermons, small chunks of information. Each piece has a short life of its own. When the last of these living ideas passes through my lips, the sermon is over. I have delivered a fragile, shifting, imperfect cloud of thoughts and prayers into my community of friends. Before I sit down, those ideas are already spreading and thinning, dying or taking root in the minds of the people. What happens with my words now is not for me to worry about.”

In the “Business of faith” articles (page 22), we want entrepreneurs to tell us how they integrate faith and commerce. As fellow church members, we sometimes feel a kind of ambivalence towards these persons, judging them unfairly as



working hard for personal gain in our free enterprise system, while at the same time aggressively seeking their financial resources for our congregational budgets and for the ongoing support of our many mission and service ministries (see Pontius’ Puddle on page 12 for a humorous take on this dichotomy).

Some of our most talented church members have left us because of this; others, large in character, shrug it off as petty jealousy and ignore it.

We are interested in keeping our businesspersons as functioning faith partners, giving them opportunity to speak to their “call” to business, their struggles with ethics and stewardship, and their vision in bringing Anabaptist values of honesty, integrity and equality to the workplace. After all, a call to business is no different from any other profession that brings the same set of values to the system in which it operates.

We trust both of these series will give the new year some new meaning.

Meet your board member

Al Friesen of Altona, Man., represents MC Manitoba on *Canadian Mennonite’s* 12-member board. A member of Altona Berghaler Mennonite Church, he is program director and morning radio show host on CFAM Radio 950, AM 1250 Radio Steinbach and CJRB Radio 1220 Boissevain. In addition to his church and community involvement, he is active in the sport of curling, serving on the boards of provincial and local clubs and a foundation. He is a past-president of the Broadcasters Association of Manitoba. He can be reached via e-mail at afriesen@goldenwestradio.com or by phone at 204-324-5901.



ABOUT THE COVER:

On Dec. 9, Heidi Braun’s Grade 3 class from Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle School visited the Transitional Learning Centre for newcomers in downtown Winnipeg. Braun’s class spent the afternoon reading together, making Christmas cards and playing outside with the Transitional School students with the balls and skipping ropes that they had brought as gifts.

PHOTO: WINNIPEG MENNONITE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

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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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Voices in the Sky, Pt. IV: **PAUL LOEWEN**

THEOLOGICAL FEATURE

Towards the conversion of churches

By Jeremy M. Bergen



As we examine our own failings and acknowledge our own blind spots, we may open ourselves to receiving gifts—practices and convictions—from other Christian traditions.

The request of our historic persecutors for forgiveness presents us Mennonites with a temptation and an opportunity.

As *Canadian Mennonite* editor/publisher Dick Benner noted in his “A grand family reunion” editorial (Aug. 17, 2009, page 2), Lutheran representatives at the Mennonite World Conference assembly made reference to asking Mennonites for forgiveness. The Lutheran leader spoke of plans to renounce some 16th-century condemnations of Anabaptists, a plan that was more fully reported on in the Nov. 16 article, “Lutherans called to recant.”

The temptation for us is self-righteousness. We might receive such requests as a giant pat on the back, a sign that we’ve arrived: “See, we were right all along! Glad to know that others have finally come around to our way of thinking!” And we can magnanimously bestow forgiveness on our former persecutors. But it will be a cheap forgiveness that has not cost us very much. We should avoid this temptation.

The opportunity is for these requests for forgiveness to become occasions for our own conversion as churches. The question is: How will we respond in ways that allow us to grow in faithfulness? Will we receive this invitation to think about our past and the divisions among Christians as a chance for honest self-examination?

We know that individuals are called to conversion, and that this is a life-long process. When one church asks another for forgiveness, we are reminded that churches, too, are in constant need of conversion. For what do our churches need to repent, especially with respect to the disunity of Christians?

It is significant that, while Catholics and Lutherans did put Anabaptists to death at the stake, Anabaptists did not do likewise. So when we Mennonites examine our own history, we will not

ILLUSTRATION FROM MARTYRS MIRROR, COURTESY OF HERALD PRESS



Do we take pride in the view that the Anabaptist martyrs were 'right,' while other so-called Christians were superstitious, violent or simply evil?

have to ask Lutherans or Catholics for forgiveness for lethal violence.

But violence is not the only sin there is. The sins of division are many. What about actions that reflect self-righteousness or a lack of charity? Do we take pride in the view that the Anabaptist martyrs were "right," while other so-called Christians were superstitious, violent or simply evil? Do we regard ourselves as "the church"? Do we still hear statements in our churches to the effect that Catholics aren't really Christians? Or are we complacent about divisions between Christians, happy to let other denominations be the church in their own way, but fail to find ways to build relationships, learn from each other, work together in Christian witness and grow in unity?

We reinforce the logic of division at many levels, all contrary to Jesus' prayer that his followers might be one (John 17:20-23). When we assume that Friesen and Martin are "Mennonite names," while Armstrong and Kim are not, we create divisions within our own congregations.

When we disagree about theological or ethical matters, as is part of church life, do we condemn the "other side" as not being Mennonite or Christian?

To pick a provocative example, I am

tempted to say that anyone who rejects pacifism cannot be a Mennonite. I ought to resist this temptation. Of course, I will try to persuade those in our churches who disagree that Christian discipleship entails Jesus' way of peace, just as I seek to follow this way myself. But it makes all the difference whether I condemn them as outside the body of Christ, or seek to persuade them as members of the same church, bound together in Christ who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). In fact, I want to convince not just Mennonites, but all Christians, of pacifism. How can we have this conversation as members of the same body?

Conversion means moving towards Christ

The fact that churches are in need of conversion is one of the great insights of the modern ecumenical movement. A second great insight is that churches grow closer to each other only as all move closer to Christ. The issue is not whether others have been converted to our way of thinking. What matters is that we all move closer to Christ, a journey that Mennonites must be on as well.

It is not a simple question to ask, "What does moving towards Christ mean?" It does not mean a lowest-

common-denominator faith in which we leave aside our distinctive convictions. Quite the contrary, genuine fellowship with other Christians is the condition under which our beliefs about baptism and pacifism, for example, may be engaged by other Christians. It is also the condition within which we can be transformed by the distinctive witness of other Christian traditions.

I believe that the Mennonite movement is vital only to the extent that we have a witness to other Christians, and to the world, about just what it means to move ever closer to Christ. Our distinctives must only be in service of this end. We are faithful to the impulse to reform the entire church that motivated the early Anabaptists only if we engage with other Christians, not if we keep to ourselves.

Denominations that ask our forgiveness recognize that true fellowship requires an honest wrestling with the past and their part in the enmity among Christians. To determine our part requires self-reflection as well as dialogue. It requires hearing from the other and attempting to see history from the perspective of another. As we examine our own failings and acknowledge our own blind spots, we may open ourselves to receiving gifts—practices and convictions—from

other Christian traditions. We may find that we have more to receive from Catholics, Lutherans or Pentecostals than we have to give in return.

Is the unity of the church really that important? I'm not suggesting that this is the only thing for which our churches need conversion, nor even necessarily the very top priority. However, the disunity of the church compromises the church's witness that, in Christ, hostility

I am tempted to say that anyone who rejects pacifism cannot be a Mennonite. I ought to resist this temptation.

is overcome.

In order to seek reconciliation, the Lutherans are compelled to wrestle with things they said and did 400 years ago. Why are they doing this? They are telling us this is important, and we should take note. That is already a gift to us.

Mennonite forgiveness given and received

We have some history of repenting for divisions within the body of Christ. Some will remember that a delegation of the Mennonite Brethren church made a poignant request for forgiveness at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada annual sessions in 1986. It asked forgiveness for those times when Mennonite Brethren members were excommunicated for marrying outside the denomination. Fewer may remember that, in 1960, the General Conference apologized for past words and actions towards the Mennonite Brethren.

At a 1983 service in Zurich, Switzerland, a Baptist-Mennonite delegation made a confession before God and leaders of the Reformed churches: "Instead of striving in brotherly fellowship for the unity of your body, we have withdrawn ourselves and given the impression of being better Christians. We have often lived in unjustified complacency, preferring to see the faults of others, rather than our own dire need for renewal."

These are important examples of repentance, but a change of life must

follow repentance. To repent means to turn around. The question is, "How does a church live out its conversion?"

If the World Lutheran Federation asks our forgiveness in a solemn ceremony, I hope our response will be guided by the example of the Swiss Mennonite Conference, which responded to a request for forgiveness in 2004 from the Reformed Church of Zurich: "History may designate us as victims and could incite us to find

satisfaction in that. . . . But the fact that you recognize the difficult points of your history in relation to ours helps us to see ourselves and to meet you differently."

Will we see ourselves differently? Here is an occasion for conversion. The Swiss Mennonites acknowledged in their own history, "conformism, atrophy, withdrawal and pride." If any of these apply to our churches, then how might we together undo such destructive patterns?

The Swiss Mennonites pledged to revisit their past. But dialogue and new relationships with Reformed Christians does not mean watering down our convictions or putting differences aside for

the sake of just getting along. "We maintain, however, strong convictions . . . in particular to that which pertains to more ethical and ecclesiological questions, that we should like to see more widely shared throughout the body of Christ," the Swiss Mennonites stated. "And we would like to engage in a longer dialogue concerning our church and theological traditions in order to reinforce our common witness to Jesus Christ and his gospel."

Conversion is about not being in control, but radically turning to Christ in trust. We cannot, therefore, predict where conversion with respect to the disunity among Christians will lead us, but it will not simply confirm what we already think about ourselves as a Mennonite church. This will involve some difficult work of self-reflection, but also the joy of restored relationships within the body of Christ. The conversion of churches is not primarily about our identities as Mennonites or as Lutherans, but about being drawn together in new and unexpected ways with all who know their identity to be given by Jesus Christ. ❧

Jeremy M. Bergen is an assistant professor of religious studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and is writing a book on the repentance of churches.

❧ For discussion

1. Have you ever been asked for forgiveness? How did you respond? What emotions were connected with the incident? How is a private request for forgiveness different from a public one? What makes a public apology effective?
2. Jeremy Bergen says that in responding to a request for forgiveness, the "temptation for us is self-righteousness." Do you agree? Is self-righteousness particularly tempting for Mennonites? What are Mennonites most apt to be self-righteous about?
3. Before the late 20th century, Mennonites tended to be isolationist. What are the strengths and weaknesses of a Mennonite community that is separated from society? Do Mennonites still have trouble accepting that Catholics (and other denominations) are also Christian?
4. What does it take for a surname to become "Mennonite" or for someone to feel included in your congregation?
5. Do you agree with Bergen that moving towards Christ is more important than maintaining a Mennonite identity? Where might an emphasis on Christian unity lead?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ **Headline not indicative of article on Lutheran-Mennonite relations**

ON BEHALF OF Mennonite World Conference (MWC), I need to express profound disappointment with your choice of the headline, "Lutherans called to recant," Nov. 16, page 12. What happened to the long-cherished biblical virtue of humility often embodied so well in Anabaptist tradition, especially in the Anabaptist martyr tradition?

We are disappointed for the following reasons:

- The headline reflects neither the contents of the article nor the spirit and tone which characterized the five-year conversation between Lutheran and Mennonite leaders.
- While the joint International Study Commission focused on the role of Lutherans in our shared story, Mennonite commission members made every effort to make it clear that we are not without sin in this relationship. We are in no position to cast the first stone—nor will we cast any stone.
- The Lutheran World Federation Council has recommended to the federation's full assembly that, at its July 2010 meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, it take formal action asking forgiveness for the Lutheran role in the persecution of Anabaptists. MWC leadership is committed to grant that request and to do so within a process of mutually granting forgiveness in a spirit of reconciliation and humility. We have within our own communion plenty of opportunity for the healing of memories! Jeremy Bergen hits the nail on the head when he asks, "Can we see this courageous action as an opportunity for self-examination?"

When Lutheran World Federation Council Ishmael Noko, himself the son of a Brethren in Christ mother,

stood before the assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, he spoke from his heart, humbly, softly and with deep feeling; he was conciliatory. The 6,000 assembled guests from around the world rose spontaneously in a resounding and sustained ovation.

Our own newly installed president, Danisa Ndlovu, another son of a Brethren in Christ mother, responded with these words, "What we have heard will change our lives and perspectives. We are witnessing the breaking of walls. . . . We are ready to receive the words we have heard."

Your headline does not honour the spirit of this conversation and that saddens us. When my Lutheran friend asked me the other day, did you have to use that headline, I hung my head in shame.

"[T]he fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance: against such there is no law."

ALBERT C. LOBE, WATERLOO, ONT.

Albert C. Lobe is the MWC's North American representative.

✉ **Mennonites don't see Lutheran decision as 'recanting': Suderman**

I WRITE TO express my concern about the "Lutherans called to recant" headline, Nov. 16, page 12, and the resulting incongruity between the headline and the article itself.

Regardless of dictionary definitions, we know that in church history—Mennonite, Lutheran and more—the word "recant" is associated with a change in belief made under duress, threat of torture and even death. Indeed, for Anabaptists and Lutherans alike, it is inseparable from the fierce persecution unleashed by the church against itself.

The excellent article provides good alternatives to the language of "recanting." It speaks of "deep regret and sorrow," and "asks for forgiveness from God and Mennonites." According to the article, this historic decision reflects "a spirit of celebration and prayer," a "sacred moment," a "conciliatory spirit and expression of hope," a "path of healing and reconciliation," "honesty, carefulness and compassion," "joy and thankfulness," and "mutual forgiveness in a spirit of reconciliation and humility as the goal." It is language of repentance, forgiveness and grace.

The news releases and public statements of both the Mennonite World Conference and the Lutheran World Federation reflect well the spirit of this engagement. I want Lutherans—and others in our ecumenical and constituent circles—to know that we do not understand their decision and proposed action as a

“call to recant.” It is, rather, fruit of the power of God’s relentless grace: the same all-encompassing grace of God that Lutherans have taught us to embrace more fully in our own confession and spiritual walk.

ROBERT J. SUDERMAN, WINNIPEG

Robert J. Suderman is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

✉ Mennonite coverage of Assembly 15 left many questions unanswered

The following letter was originally sent to Mennonite World Conference, which publishes Courier, and is reprinted at the author’s invitation.

THANKS FOR THE colourful reports of Mennonite World Conference Assembly 15 in the recent *Courier*. The coming together of so many national and ethnic churches is certainly a cause for thanksgiving and celebration. The glowing reports, appropriate as they

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Good Samaritan or just too busy?

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

If you’ve read the parable of the Good Samaritan, you will quickly gravitate towards the actions of the Samaritan who showed compassion for the man beaten, robbed and left lying at the side of the road, while voicing disappointment in the priest and the Levite who hurried by. How could anyone—especially someone with religious convictions—not stop to help a person in need?

It turns out it’s much more common than we might think.

Some years ago, a study was done at Princeton Theological Seminary, where a number of students were asked to give presentations to fellow students and faculty. Half of the students were given the topic of the Good Samaritan and the other half were given a variety of biblical stories that did not deal with compassion and generosity. All the students were made to wait in one building before walking to a second building, where they were to give their presentations.

Prior to making their way to the second building, some students were told they had plenty of time before presenting, while others were told they needed to

hurry or they would be late. What the students did not know is that on the path between the two buildings an actor was lying on the ground, coughing repeatedly and appearing in clear need of help. The theory was that those students given the topic of the Good Samaritan would be more likely to stop and help the individual in need than the other students with random topics, regardless of how much time they did or did not have before their presentations.

The results were startling. There was no correlation between the presentation topic and the likelihood of stopping to help. In other words, students who were about to present on the merits of helping people were just as likely to pass by the



[A]ll of us are capable of acting like the priest or Levite if we feel we don’t have the time.

person in need as students presenting on unrelated topics.

What did determine whether people would stop to help was the amount of time they were given. Of the students who were told they had plenty of time,

63 percent offered some form of help, while only 10 percent of the students who were told they should rush to the second building offered assistance.

No matter how much we agree with the actions of the Good Samaritan, all of us are capable of acting like the priest or Levite if we feel we don’t have the time. It’s not enough that we believe in showing compassion and generosity to others in need. Of greater importance is a slower pace in life and a core conviction that stepping out of the busyness of life to make time to help people is always worthwhile.

At Mennonite Foundation of Canada we refer to this type of generosity as “joyful, faithful, giving.” Compassion and generosity at the level of the Good Samaritan isn’t worried about the cost, nor does it worry about schedules. Good Samaritans help and show compassion because they know that spending time and giving resources for the well-being of others is always a joy.

So what’ll it be: Priest, Levite or Good Samaritan?

Darren Pries-Klassen is the newly appointed executive director of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit Mennofoundation.ca.

are, did, however, leave me with many questions and a longing for some deeper analysis. In future issues of *Courier*, and in the Mennonite press generally, I hope to see articles that explore questions such as the following:

- What were some of the surprises and disappointments of Assembly 15? What were people saying? Who was comfortable and who was not? What issues or events raised the most hackles? Grappling with difficulties—and differences—is surely an essential aspect of being a worldwide Mennonite body.
- It has been a heady experience for Mennonites in recent years to hear “apologies” from Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed for their persecution and mistreatment of Mennonites. And we are on record as offering our forgiveness. The reports of these

ecumenical encounters always leave me extremely uncomfortable. Within the extreme turmoil and complexity of Reformation Europe, all Christian groups were driven to extreme positions and often regrettable actions. Have Mennonites apologized for being so intransigent and self-righteous? For seeing ourselves only as victims? Have we owned up to our virulent anti-Catholicism over the centuries? (Father Gregory Fairbanks had it right when he noted that both communions have “sinned” by keeping the divisions alive.) Mennonites need a much less simplistic, and disingenuous, approach to this complex history.

- The statement of forgiveness offered to Ayoreo chief Jonoine Picanerai raised a host of questions for me. Where were his words? What was his response? What is his story and how did this public ritual of

FROM OUR LEADERS

Biblical interpretation

GORDON PETERS

I recently finished reading William P. Young’s novel, *The Shack*. So many have read it that the title has become a surprise bestseller. As I read, I often wondered, “What’s the big deal with this book?”

My mind went in many different directions as I read. I wondered how Christians around the world would view this particular personification of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I wondered how many would view this

portrayal of the Godhead as heretical. Reading this book led me to wonder again how it is that there are so many different interpretations of what the Bible teaches and how we, as Christians, interpret it for our lives.

The many different flavours in the wider Mennonite family are evidence of the many different ways we have understood Scripture. Add the rest of the Christian community and the variations are endless. Over the past year or so, we around the board table at Mennonite

Church Canada have had the privilege to work with general secretary Robert J. Suderman as he developed a paper called “Being a faithful church: Testing the spirits in the midst of hermeneutical ferment.”

We have grappled with how it is that we read the same Bible but we come up with different interpretations of what it means. There are numerous issues across the country that churches and church

members are dealing with, and the conclusions vary.

Suderman’s paper has a tone of understanding that encourages us to talk with each other about our differences. I found a similar tone in *The Shack*. The Holy Spirit talks with the protagonist, Mack Philips, and reminds him of the things in his life he needs to make right before he can be in full communion with God.

What do we need to do to be in right communion with God and with each other across MC Canada? Are we patient

with our fellow believers? Do we listen with patience, or do we interrupt and seize our chance to show how wrong they are?

We read in a recent issue of *Canadian Mennonite* about a day-long session of MC Canada members talking with members of the Christian Reformed Church on the topic of peace. The article pointed out how Matthew 10:34 could be interpreted in two different ways. Here again we see how reading a short passage can lead two denominations in totally different directions. Is one church right and the other wrong? Are both right?

As I move along in age and, hopefully,

The many different flavours in the wider Mennonite family are evidence of the many different ways we have understood Scripture.



wisdom, I’m convinced that the more I learn, the less I know. God is much more than I can know. To think that my—or our—understanding is the only “true” understanding puts God into a very small box. I think the author of *The Shack* feels that God is capable of being a personal God to everyone at the same time.

Gordon Peters is chair of Mennonite Church Canada’s Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and sits on the general board.

forgiveness come to be? What is the current relationship between Mennonites and Ayoreo people?

I'm hoping some of these questions will be addressed in future issues. I believe Mennonites everywhere would benefit from the discussion.

MARGARET LOEWEN REIMER, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Mennonites will be judged on how we care for 'the least among us'

REGARDING THE BRIEF media accounts of the rapes, hanging and vigilante-style justice in Manitoba Colony, Bolivia, in the last few months: The silence

from our Mennonite constituency is deafening, but this "thing" isn't going to go away. Those horrific reports out of the Manitoba and neighbouring Las Cruces colonies can only be interpreted as urgent cries for help.

And in the long run we will be judged not on how wonderfully we sang at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay—and I applaud that!—but on how we treated "the least" among us. In this decade for certain, and perhaps far longer than that, "the least" among us are the raped women and girls of Manitoba Colony.

ABE WARKENTIN, STEINBACH, MAN.

FAMILY TIES

Relationship shifts

MELISSA MILLER

At year's end, I transfer names and phone numbers from my old date book to my new one. While an electronic system may be more efficient, I prefer paper and pen. As I record information in my new date book, I review my connections with the people listed in the pages, recall activities we've shared during the past year and anticipate what lies ahead.

Each year there are names that don't get transferred from the past into the present. Perhaps I knew the person through work and there's been a change in position. Maybe someone has moved to another part of the country and we have less contact. Perhaps there's been a death. Or perhaps something has changed between me and the other person, maybe something intangible but real, a shift that means we no longer connect in the same way. We are no longer on each other's "regular" phone lists.

In the ebb and flow of relationships, such changes are common. Sometimes we "break up" with friends or family members, or they break up with us. The change might be abrupt and focused on a sharp conflict or heated difference of opinion. Or maybe the relationship has changed gradually. For some reason, two people drift apart, maybe unsure how or

why the former closeness came to an end. Sometimes relationships change because of health concerns. Friends may have less to give in a friendship if they are dealing with physical or mental health issues.

In families, changes happen as people grow; young adults often connect less with their parents as they claim their identities and find their place in the world. Value differences can create



January is a good time to take stock, a good time to ask questions about friendship and relationships.

distance. And a marriage shifts all the relationships in a family, with some people becoming closer and others finding themselves displaced.

If the growing apart has been mutual, there is less difficulty than if the change has been one-sided. If the change isn't mutual, it's awkward and uncomfortable, even painful, whether I'm the one who is pulling away or the one who is no longer being sought out. Guilt and uncertainty can burden us as we worry over the altered dynamic. We might wonder, "I haven't seen him in such a long time, but I never get around to calling." Or, "Why isn't she in touch? Did I do something wrong? Is she upset about something?

How will I find out if she won't talk to me?"

January is a good time to take stock, a good time to ask questions about friendship and relationships. Is something different between someone I used to be close to and me? Would I like to change that? What could I do to address what's happened? Sometimes through prayer and reflection, we see a step we can take. Sometimes it's as simple as picking up the phone, and reaching out to the other person, a little way to rekindle the warmth. Sometimes it's more difficult, like asking for—or speaking—the truth of what's gone wrong, and being prepared

to address the hurt. Sometimes time is the answer, simply waiting it out until another season emerges for the friendship. Sometimes there is nothing to do. We have to accept the changes with whatever grace and tolerance we can muster.

In 2010, MC Canada churches continue to reflect on Colossians 3:12-17 as theme verses. In the passage, we are twice told to "clothe ourselves with love." Good advice wherever we are in our relationships.

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

✉ Jack Dueck's stories make *Canadian Mennonite* a 'must read' journal

I WAS TRULY impressed and deeply moved by Jack Dueck's story, "Jesus' Advent changed everything," Nov. 30, page 13.

This quintessential scholar, communicator and teacher has the wisdom to seize the moment to bring us a journalistic masterpiece that produces rich food for the soul from a respectful interfaith interview. The one-page report was packed with multiple layers of profound concepts.

I will highlight what for me is most poignant: I was raised in a Christian home, joined a Mennonite church, graduated from high school and two colleges, all being of the same denomination. In my experience, the gratitude towards people of Hebrew origins for producing my saviour was trumped by tacit anti-Semitism throughout large portions of my heritage. As a believer, I regret that I have been guilty of carrying a negative and destructive attitude against the people who produced the essence of my salvation.

This article has jolted my conscience. When I read articles of such quality in *Canadian Mennonite*, this journal continues to be a "must read" subscription. WALTER DRIEDGER, MISSION, B.C.

✉ Music must empower 'mission' as well as 'communion'

RE: "MUSIC AS communion" feature article by Len Enns, Nov. 16, page 4, and "Endeared to four-part singing" editorial by Dick Benner, Nov. 16, page 2.

I have the greatest respect for Enns, as I had the privilege of singing in the Canadian Mennonite Bible College Singers while he was on sabbatical there 20 years ago. His compositions and abilities as a conductor are amazing, his knowledge of music phenomenal, and his character was a wonderful model to students.

But I admit to being thrown off balance a little after reading "Music as communion." Maybe it was because that week I had been at a church-planting congress in Calgary, where about 140 of the 650 participants were Mennonites, and the forms of church the Anabaptist speakers were talking about were quite untraditional, putting missiology ahead of ecclesiology.

While I can't argue with the importance of music in our "communion" experience, I have to wonder where the spiritual gift of music can aid us in the missional agenda of the church. As meaningful as our four-part, no-amp tradition is to us in the Russian/German/Swiss portion of the Mennonite church, I am afraid that if we don't begin to also talk much more about "music as witness," Benner's concern for congregations composed of "mostly old people singing their

harmonies with smiles on their faces, totally oblivious to the fact that the young people [and, I would add, most or all other ethnicities represented in the current Mennonite church], with their instruments and rhythm, are nowhere around," is a valid one.

DOUG KLASSEN, CALGARY, ALTA.

Doug Klassen is senior pastor of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary.

✉ Shedding wisdom on the Israel-Palestine conflict

WE NEED TO hear more from Jack Dueck. His "Jesus' Advent changed everything" story (Nov. 30, page 13) was a breath of fresh air that sheds wisdom on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Many in the Mennonite pew, knowledgeable of the Bible, think of modern-day Israel when they read certain verses. It is helpful to focus on the church and our role in bridging inroads through the conflict. We need to start as a small cup of cold water for the thirsty. Could Israel have water on even days and allow Palestinians water on the odd days of the month?

God did give Abram land, but there is a covenant that goes with the land: "*In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3).

It takes special grace to find ways to peaceful co-existence when your neighbour hates you. Many say there is no military solution to the Middle East conflict. But pressures may ease somewhat since U.S. President Barack Obama can see alternatives to oil as the main source of energy.

HOWARD WIDEMAN, WALDEN, ONT.

/// Obituary

Peter J. Dyck

Dec. 4, 1914 - Jan. 4, 2010

Just one week after being honoured at a reception in Akron, Pa., for his renowned service as Mennonite Central Committee administrator in Europe, Peter J. Dyck, 95, died peacefully at home. He was also a compelling storyteller and writer. Born in Russia in 1914, Dyck and his family endured the deprivation of the Russian Revolution. He moved to Canada as a lad and later returned to Europe as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer during World War II. Here he met and married Elfrieda Klassen, who preceded him in death in 2004; she was 87. Together they assisted thousands of refugees from post-war Europe to find new life in Paraguay. See Jan. 25 issue for a more complete biography of Dyck's life and work with MCC.



/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bartel—Linnea Grace (b. Nov. 16, 2009), to Rick and Becky Bartel, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Dyck—Harper Rae (b. Oct. 7, 2009), to Jenna and Kelly Dyck, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Goetzke—Calum Amos (b. Nov. 22, 2009), to Lyris Short-Goetzke and Eric Stutzman, Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Groves—Edward Joseph (b. Nov. 5, 2009), to Rachel Hildebrandt and Adam Groves, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lenshyn—Asher Wesley John (b. Dec. 6, 2009), to Chris and Katrina Lenshyn, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

McWhinnie—Claire Madeleine (b. Nov. 21, 2009), to Suzanne and Lindsay McWhinnie, Hagerman Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Nyland—Andrew (b. July 27, 2009), to Kevin and Laura Nyland, Calvary Mennonite, Ayr, Ont.

Rempel—Abigail Noelle (b. Oct. 8, 2009), to Andrew and Stephanie Rempel, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Riedl—Jillian (b. Nov. 25, 2009), to Dave and Kristy Riedl, Calvary Mennonite, Ayr, Ont.

Baptisms

Jonathan Klassen—Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Nov. 15, 2009.

Raya Cornelsen—Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg, Nov. 29, 2009.

Marriages

Duenas/Heinrichs—Rolet Duenas of the Philippines and Aaron Matthew Heinrichs (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.), at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Oct. 3, 2009.

Deaths

Dyck—Harry, 71 (b. Nov. 14, 1938; d. Dec. 8, 2009), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Elvin, 73 (b. Oct. 26, 1935; d. Sept. 26, 2009), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Hamm—Annie, 90 (b. June 25, 1919; d. Nov. 11, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Herrfort—Melvin Laverne, 65 (b. Feb. 1, 1944; d. Dec. 13, 2009), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Hiebert—Henry, 81 (b. May 15, 1928; d. Nov. 8, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Iutzi—Viola (nee Sommers), 95 (d. Nov. 1, 2009), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Janz—Charlotte Louise, 96 (b. Oct. 3, 1913; d. Dec. 10, 2009), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Jutzi—Frieda (nee Gerber), 75 (b. Feb. 10, 1934; d. Dec. 6, 2009), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Kool—Edith Marie (nee Peters), 67 (b. Jan. 3, 1942; d. Nov. 15, 2009), Toronto United Mennonite.

Kuhl—David P, 94 (b. July 10, 1915; d. Nov. 19, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Neufeld—Abram (Abe), 89 (b. Dec. 12, 1919; d. Dec. 3, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Neufeld—Tina, 94 (b. Oct. 13, 1915; d. Nov. 1, 2009), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Neufeldt—Isaac (Ike), 88 (b. April 19, 1921; d. Aug. 27, 2009), Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.

Neumiller—Annie, 92 (b. Jan. 25, 1917; d. Oct. 16, 2009), Carstairs, Alta.

Penner—Isaac G, 84 (b. Dec. 20, 1924; d. Oct. 26, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Rempel—Helen, 86 (b. July 7, 1923; d. Nov. 29, 2009), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

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

Pontius' Puddle



THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

How long is your sermon?

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

One of the shortest sermons on record in current times was preached on a hot summer day to the restless faithful in a Methodist church in North Dakota. The preacher came to the pulpit with her carefully prepared 20-minute sermon at the tenaciously held benediction time. Rather than preach her prepared sermon or hastily summarize, she intoned an entirely new and contextually relevant word: “It is hot in here. . . . Hell is hot. . . . Don’t go there. . . . Amen.”

When the preacher sat down, there was a brief silence and then the congregation erupted in relieved laughter.



a half-hour. In the Canadian Mennonite scene, sermons hover around 22 minutes. Fifteen minutes is just too short, but, as a sermon approaches a half-hour, the aware preacher knows that enough has been said and the congregation is revealing in its body language that enough has been

heard.

But what is 22 minutes? Duration is a funny thing. Time does fly when you’re having fun. If you are captured with the words of the preacher, 22 minutes will be over before you know it. If the sermon drags, or you simply aren’t “into it” that morning, 22 minutes can be agonizingly

In spite of the fact that most preaching manuals begin by citing the latest ‘dire’ crisis in preaching, the sermon is still with us.

On the other end of the time spectrum, in Reformation-era England and in the early days of European settlement in North America, parishioners would sit on hard wooden benches for well over an hour for the sermon alone. These sermons tended to be of the lecture variety, with 15 to 20 “points” and numerous sub-points. Today, there are still many places the world over where sermons are an hour in length.

How long does your preacher hold forth? Catholic homilies tend to be between five and eight minutes, while sermons in some mainline Protestant and Evangelical churches can be around

drawn out.

The issue is not so much how long an event is, but what is happening in the time allotted, making our perception of time relative. Some years ago at the Ontario Science Centre, there was a display dedicated to the minute: 60 seconds. There were games and suggestions for ways to experience the chronological minute. When involved in an active game or an engaging story, a minute flies by. Enclosed in a sensory deprivation chamber, though, a minute can be unbearably long.

Notwithstanding the negative critiques of preaching, we as a church do expect

much of these 22 minutes. Competency in preaching is consistently ranked “very high” when congregational members are asked to spell out what they expect of their pastors.

These expectations are often made concrete in the practical life of the pastor: On the week that pastors are preaching and planning the service, they are given one-third to one-half of their entire working week to prepare for Sunday morning. On average—at least from the preachers I know in Mennonite Church Canada—sermon preparation takes somewhere between five and 15 hours. Those are ridiculous “prep” numbers in the context of other jobs in Canada. Few other professionals get this much time to prepare for a 22-minute address of any kind.

While the church itself enjoys naming the foibles of preaching, and over time has made attempts to change the form, place or status of the sermon, expectations continue to run high. In spite of the fact that most preaching manuals begin by citing the latest “dire” crisis in preaching, the sermon is still with us. There is something about voicing and hearing the gospel in speech that we find necessary and indispensable. But what is that “something” that keeps us alive to the importance of these 22 minutes?

In observation, story and humour—together with biblical and theological grappling—we will try to make sense of these 22 minutes. Upcoming topics for this column include a look at the frequently mentioned connection between sermons and boredom, a close listening to the controversial preaching arising from tent meetings, and an analysis of why preachers have been made fun of—from the carnival dramas of the Middle Ages to the sketches of Monty Python. ✎

Allan Rudy-Froese is doing a Ph.D. in homiletics (the art and theology of preaching) at the Toronto School of Theology. E-mail him at allanrf@rogers.com.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

A Mennonite presence in the nation's capital for a half-century

BY ELLEN SHENK

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
OTTAWA

Fifty years later their steps are slower, their hair lighter and their numbers reduced. Still, nine charter members were present on Oct. 10 and 11 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Ottawa Mennonite Church as the Anabaptist presence in the nation's capital.

The weekend was rich in worship, music, art, storytelling and, of course, food. A Thanksgiving dinner on Oct. 10 served 222; the program afterward highlighted each decade since 1959, a men's choir sang and a slide show recounted past events.

The anniversary banner, which was designed and made by the quilting group and which shows the history and life of the church, was prominently displayed in the sanctuary.

A choral highlight of the Oct. 11 worship service was a composition by the congregation's pianist and composer, Carla Klassen. With the theme of "Ottawa Mennonite as home," the work was based on passages from the Psalms and ended with "Dona Nobis Pacem."

Ottawa in 1959 was an unlikely place to establish a Mennonite church because it had only a tiny, and mostly transient, Mennonite population. The group first met in homes and then in schools.

Initially, the Conference of United Mennonite Churches of Ontario regularly sent visiting ministers. Bill Dick was hired in 1961 as part-time minister. Later ministers included Bill Janzen and Adolf Ens in a shared ministry, Frank Epp, Bob Koop for a summer, and Alma Coffman. The church hired Don Friesen in 1978, and this fortunate confluence of minister and congregation continues to the present.

In 1966, Ottawa Mennonite built its first church on Kilborn Avenue. As church membership grew, this building has been



PHOTO BY ELEANOR DYCK

Ottawa Mennonite Church's women's choir members from the 1970s reunite at last fall's 50th anniversary celebrations to sing under the direction of Adina Tiessen (back to the camera).

renovated and enlarged twice, in 1985 and again in 2003. Current members come from more than 17 denominations as well as several Mennonite groups. Sunday attendance averages between 225 and 250.

A strong service focus at Ottawa Mennonite has been involvement with Ten Thousand Villages (TTV). Initially,

members held sales in offices and malls, but in 1992 the congregation began holding sales at the church on Fridays and Saturdays in November. The sales at Ottawa Mennonite are the longest-running and among the largest TTV festival sales in Ontario. Congregants also established the Ottawa Alternative Trade Corporation, which now owns and operates two year-round TTV stores in Ottawa, and some serve on the corporation's board.

The church also has an active refugee assistance program, which began with the sponsorship of one Vietnamese family 30 years ago, and has since assisted more than 100 refugees. The program includes financial support and settlement assistance. The church established a separate corporation that oversees three houses for the use of refugee families.

As Ottawa Mennonite begins the next 50 years, congregational chair Monica Scheifele says, "We anticipate continuing current programs and faithfully following God's leading in responding to needs that may arise." ❧

PHOTO BY PATTY WOODYARD



Centrepiece of the Ottawa Mennonite Church anniversary banner.

Congregation embarks on parish nurse ministry

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

CARMAN, MAN.

When Carman Mennonite Church added a registered nurse to its ministry team in 2009, no one knew what the future would hold.

In September, Ollie Wiebe, a church member and semi-retired registered nurse, was installed as a parish nurse on a volunteer basis.

"I'm not sure why we didn't do this long ago," says senior pastor Bob Pauls.

He and Wiebe are amazed how quickly the ministry has been received and embraced by the membership even though the concept was entirely new to most in the congregation.

Over two decades ago a Lutheran pastor in the U.S. was concerned about the people in his parish who were falling through the cracks in that country's health care system. Since his initial work, parish nursing has caught on in churches across the U.S.

Canadian churches, especially Mennonite ones, have been slower to adopt this ministry, said Evelyn Labun, a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. Her nursing career and research has taken her around the world to nurse, teach, develop curricula and work in administration, always with an interest in the spiritual elements of nursing care.

Generally, the church has understood the command "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:2) as an emphasis on spiritual healing, but recently it is coming to see its responsibility to heal in a broader, holistic context.

"I think we are still in the process of figuring things out," says Wiebe.

Trying to divide her time between visitation, education and advocacy presents challenges. Wiebe has accompanied elderly people to medical appointments and has advocated for them while guiding them through a complex health care system.

She has a support group of church

members to help clarify priorities as a member of the ministerial team. In her 30 years of work in the nursing field, Wiebe says she did not always have the freedom to discuss the spiritual connection to physical health and healing, "even though it is common knowledge that there is a connection between the two."

"I have only received positive feedback from our members," says Pauls, who feels he also benefits from this ministry. "It has given me a greater sense of confidence that the church is doing what it is supposed to be doing. Knowing that certain needs are being tended to in a way that I cannot, frees me up to visit other individuals with different needs as well."



Senior pastor Bob Pauls, right, offers a prayer during the installation service of Ollie Wiebe as parish nurse at Carman Mennonite Church, Man.

"I speculate this is going to become more and more of a paid position," Pauls says. "There is such a need out there and it is such an important ministry. We provide ministry for young people, why shouldn't we do it for those with health needs?"

Labun agrees. "I advocate for salary," she says. "If a church feels this is worthwhile and important work, they will give something for it." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Spanish congregation continues to grow

VANCOUVER, B.C.—First United Spanish Mennonite Church of Vancouver had a successful year and growing ministry under pastor Jorge Hoajaca, with between 75 and 90 in attendance every Sunday in 2009, up from between 65 and 72 the previous year. Ten believers were baptized this past year. "Our prayer request is for the Lord to provide steady jobs for our people," a church report in Mennonite Church British Columbia's *News 'n Notes* newsletter states. "The average salary in our congregation is between \$9 to \$11 per hour, and many of our people are refugee claimants receiving social assistance. We did not choose that scenario; instead, it is the Lord who shapes our ministry here."

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

Thirteen anointed at special St. Catharines United Mennonite service

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.—A special evening anointing service on Nov. 1 saw 13 individuals come forward. Pastor Ken Gazley taught about this practice from a Mennonite perspective. He cited Psalm 23:5 ("You anoint my head with oil"); Matthew 11: 28 ("Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"); and Matthew 26 (the story of the woman who poured oil on the head of Jesus), in explaining that the key component of anointing is not physical healing, but the full surrendering to Jesus of individual needs, whether physical or emotional.

—St. Catharines United Mennonite Church Release

Bethany Place lauded at grand opening

Seniors facility attuned to the needs of aging seniors

STORY AND PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

A sea of seniors filled the cavernous dining hall at Bethany Place for the facility's much-anticipated grand opening on Oct. 30. Replete with politicians, grateful staff and a sweet-sounding ladies choir, the afternoon event could not have turned out better.

Representatives from all three levels of government—each in turn donating generously to the project under the banner of providing housing for low- to moderate-income seniors—came to offer words of congratulations and encouragement on the new building.

Maurice Vellacott, long-time Member of Parliament, told those assembled, "This is an important project . . . to help seniors in need, ensuring that that generation of Canadians who have contributed so much to our province and our country, and who built this country, . . . can live with dignity and be treated with respect."

David Ratzlaff, former administrator, spoke about the many plans and hopes for the new building, including laundry, meal and cleaning services for seniors, and plugins for scooters. "We've accomplished all of those goals and mostly within budget," he noted.

The Bethany board initially considered constructing a nursing home for the needs of the large, mostly Mennonite community of retirees and seniors, but was stymied by government policy that discouraged addressing long-term care.

Instead, the board moved to accommodate the increasing needs of Bethany residents with an assisted-living concept. The building was designed with aging-in-place features to help seniors stay independent as long as possible. A coordinator position was also developed as a contact point between residents and family members,

and to help arrange extra services for residents.

Attuned to the needs of the aging population, the building design also took future environmental impact into account, with an approximately \$1.1 million geothermal heating and cooling system, which will save

money in operating costs as well as reduce greenhouse gas. Another welcome feature of the design is a ground-floor pharmacy and medical clinic, allowing residents direct access to healthcare.

"The clinic is the only one of its kind in Canada that includes both traditional and natural approaches to medicine," explained Flo Lavallie, who works there.

Architect Charles Olfert spoke glowingly of the ingenuity and careful planning used in designing Bethany Place. "It's incredible what you put together with the money you had," he said, giving credit to the creative ideas that spilled forth from the staff.

The Bethany board is already dreaming of the next phase of development that will care for the residents' continuing needs. ❧



Al Regehr, former chair of the Saskatoon Mennonite Care Services board, left, and Bethany Place executive director Teresa Isaac hold a mock cheque for \$1.4 million signifying the federal government's contribution to the Bethany Place project during the grand opening on Oct. 30.

FEATURE REPORT

Living fit, living well

'Aging in place' co-ordinator helps Bethany Place seniors keep active

STORY AND PHOTO

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

Dressed in sweats and a T-shirt, Tina Friesen jokes and laughs with residents during a weekly exercise class. Sweet-faced seniors lining the wall in the workout room respond to her easy smile and reach high in the air.

Friesen, a mother of three, is the aging-in-place co-ordinator at Bethany Place, the newest building at the Bethany Seniors Housing Complex in Saskatoon. A large sunlit office across the hall from a group of softly chirping budgies makes a pleasant backdrop to her daily routine. She has been in this new role for the last 18 months and it seems to fit her like a glove.

"I love helping people," she explains.

In her work with this vulnerable and often-ignored group in society, Friesen has spent 10 years as a special care aide. Her experience has helped her see some flaws in the provincial healthcare system. She has seen how seniors are shuttled from one institution to the next as end-of-life issues force a decline in their overall health. "More confusion results, more setbacks occur," she notes, adding that "it seems like [senior care] is staff-based." Her desire, though, is to make it geared more to the needs of the residents.

Originally hired to serve just the needs of Bethany Place residents, her job has since expanded, and she is now available to residents in the larger complex. But the idea of having an assisted-living focus there was only a second choice.

"At first, Bethany wanted to build a nursing home, but that didn't work out," Friesen explains.

The next option was to create something that would meet the present abilities of



Tina Friesen, left, works on resistance training during an exercise class at Bethany Place in Saskatoon, Sask.

seniors.

"They wanted something that would fit the needs of the people," she says.

The "aging in place" concept was chosen as a way to encourage independence in seniors. Household services such as laundry, housekeeping and meals are arranged through Friesen according to each resident's needs. Her dream, however, is to see a place where care for residents can be offered right till the end of life. It's possible to have that now, she says, but at greater cost to the residents.

But there is more to her role. A resource centre opens doors to important conversations that might not otherwise occur. Recently, Friesen began gender-based discussion groups to talk about bladder problems. The groups began, she says, from information offered at the resource centre.

"Most will not talk to their doctor about it," observes Friesen, adding that "they don't need to be isolated by it."

As important as education is, exercise is just as vital. Friesen strongly believes people should be proactive with their

health. "Exercise is one of the biggest things to keep you independent longer," she notes.

The "aging in place" concept is used in Hamilton, Ont., Ottawa, Edmonton and Delta, B.C. The idea is welcomed by politicians and healthcare workers alike, as it saves money from fewer hospital visits and it allows seniors to live on their own longer.

Change of plans

Before beginning in her new position, Friesen's life took a few twists and turns. She and her husband had originally hoped to work with Muslims. Together, they studied for three years

at the Canadian Theological Seminary in Regina in preparation. From there, they moved their family to Toronto to do a stint in local missions.

"We interned at the Rexdale Alliance Church for four years," she says. They met one-on-one with Muslims in this Toronto suburb in an effort to build friendships. Friesen respectfully wore a head covering and loose clothing so common among Muslim women. Following that, they spent another four years in downtown Toronto, where her husband worked as a multicultural pastor.

But when some learning challenges with their adopted son cropped up, the Friesens decided to heed the advice of the mission agency to stay in Canada, where their son could get the necessary help. Led in another direction, they gave up their dream of working overseas and returned to Saskatoon.

And it was her love of seniors that led her to accept the job at Bethany Place. A job she clearly enjoys, and, it seems, clearly suits her. ▮

'Exercise is one of the biggest things to keep you independent longer.'

(Tina Friesen)

/// Briefly noted

Mexican Mennonites face increasing acts of violence

The Mennonites of Durango, Mexico, suffered increasing violence last fall, with two kidnappings and a murder. In late September, Abram Klassen of the Durango Colony was seized at his place of business by four masked and armed men. His brother was contacted a few hours later, and after a large ransom was paid Klassen was released unharmed late in the day. Three days earlier, Gerhard Bartsch had been found murdered on the road between Nuevo Ideal and Santiago. He had been beaten and suffered 55 stab wounds. According to *Die Mennonitische Post*, the murderers were soon apprehended driving Bartsch's blood-spattered pickup. Guns and drugs were found in the truck. A second kidnapping occurred in November when a young man was seized near his parents' construction business. His family was able to reduce the ransom demand, but struggled to gather money on a Sunday when banks were closed. They paid with cash, two cars and guns.

—BY BARB DRAPER

MC Canada warns of probable e-mail scam

It has come to Mennonite Church Canada's attention that someone posing as Rev. Dr. Adolphe Komuesa Kalunga from the Democratic Republic of Congo is soliciting funds from the Mennonite community in Canada. Hippolyto Tshimanga, who is responsible for African ministries, personally knows Kalunga and points out several inconsistencies in the e-mail appeal for more than \$20,000 to supposedly rebuild and restock a healthcare centre in Congo. Please be reminded that donations to address the atrocities in Congo should be made only through reputable organizations such as MC Canada.

—From an MC Canada Release



The annual gala in support of the Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home lived up to its billing as a "royal reception," with MC Rodney Martens, left, gala co-chairs Evelyn Greenwood and Linda Tiessen, and honorary doorman Henry Hildebrandt in full regalia. The 365 guests were made to feel like royalty as they dined on a multi-course meal accompanied by live harpists, and were later feted with an after-dinner band as well as hors d'oeuvres and dessert "fit for a king." Purchase of a gala ticket entered guests in a draw for a European castle vacation. The Oct. 24 event raised more than \$40,000 for the home, which will go towards mobility projects, including ramps and automatic doors.

✠ ✠ ✠
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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

MEDA, MasterCard investing in youths

STORY AND PHOTO BY JAKE NICKEL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

SASKATOON, SASK.

Youth Invest, a more than \$5-million, five-year program to help alleviate youth unemployment in Morocco and Egypt, is a fitting successor to the first Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) microfinance initiative in Paraguay many years ago, according to Adil Sadoq, MEDA's field project manager in Morocco. At MEDA's Saskatoon branch meeting in early November, Sadoq said MEDA is ready to show once again that giving "a hand up" can be just as profitable and life-giving as the experiment of many years ago.

"MEDA's newest program will help Moroccan youth navigate the world of commerce," he told the gathering. MEDA is investing nearly \$400,000 in the initiative, adding to a \$5 million contribution from the MasterCard Foundation; some larger financial institutions in northern Morocco are also involved.

Youth Invest is geared to alleviating youth unemployment and teaching young adults business methods, by devising business-related training to encourage youth entrepreneurship skills, and helping existing microfinance institutions to develop innovative products for this emerging group of potential clients.

Until recently, microfinance institutions have not focused on poor youths, Sadoq said. This is due in part to "the perception of risks associated with serving young people who may lack education, collateral or work experience" needed by the youths to qualify for micro-loans to help them in either getting involved in an apprenticeship program or to establish small businesses of their own.

"The area of financial services for youth is in its infancy," said MEDA president Allan Sauder when announcing the program.

"The MasterCard Foundation and MEDA agree that by taking a youth-centred view and working with leading microfinance institutions we will create a new standard for financial services to youth, which we can share with the industry."

Eventually, the dream is that the youth entrepreneurs of today will become apprenticeship providers for other young



MEDA board member Paul Tiessen, left, embraces Adil Sadoq, MEDA's field project manager in Morocco, during a recent Saskatoon MEDA branch meeting in November.

people striving to make a living. As more youths qualify for micro-loans and then pay them back, current unemployment problems will be replaced by a healthy, prosperous business economy. ❧

'Christ at the Checkpoint'

Church leaders invited to attend Bethlehem conference

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

The fence that separates Israelis from Palestinians in the West Bank all the way up to Jordan is 2.5 times taller than the Berlin Wall was, reaching eight metres tall at some points. The 703-kilometre wall has sharp barbed wire and armed guards to prevent people from crossing it.

This separation fence is a reality for residents on both sides and will become a reality for those who attend the Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology in the Service of Peace and Justice Conference, sponsored by Bethlehem Bible College from March 12-17 in Bethlehem, Israel-Palestine. The wall is clearly visible from the conference room and what it represents will be a main topic of conversation.

Other topics of dialogue will include the divide between Israelis and Palestinians, the need for interdenominational dialogue on this division, and the divide between this conflict and the rest of the world's understanding of it due to the noticeably shrinking presence of Christians in the area and the prevalence of Christian Zionism.

It is important to attend the conference because "you hear the words differently when you look out the window and just down the street is a refugee camp and the wall [that separates the Israeli and Palestinian land]," says Glenn Witmer, a former Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in the Middle East.

Pre- and post-conference plans include visits to holy sites in Jerusalem and Galilee, as well as Palestinian villages and Christians in Galilee, the Dead Sea, Jericho and Qumran. These sightseeing trips are intended to set the current conflict in the Gaza Strip in the context of the biblical past.

Christ at the Checkpoint will bring together local and international speakers, including Tony Campolo and Rev. Alex Awad.

To register, or for more information about the conference, e-mail conf2010@gmail.com. For tour packages, visit Witmer online at mennojerusalem.org. ❧

Kairos out \$7.1 million

Concerns raised as Canadian church coalition loses government funding

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release

WINNIPEG

A recent decision by the federal government to abruptly terminate funding to a Canadian church organization has set off alarm bells among other church groups across the country. In early December, the government announced that it was ending its 35-year history of providing matching funds to Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, a coalition

of 11 Canadian churches and church-related organizations, including Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada.

“This decision hurts real people overseas with real needs. It is these people who will bear the brunt of this decision,” said Don Peters, executive director of MCC Canada.

Kairos addresses a wide range of social

justice and economic justice issues in association with 21 partner organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and about 80 community groups in Canada.

Much of Kairos’s international funding came from the federal government through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which provides millions

Peacebuilders call for hope after Philippine massacre

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release

At least 57 people were killed in the Philippine province of Maguindanao on Nov. 23 while either attempting to register a candidate for a 2010 election, or covering the event for media purposes, according to Daniel Pantoja. The Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker to the Philippines and a leader of Peacebuilders Community in Mindanao also noted that two of the dead were cousins of Peacebuilders staff member Jester Valdez.

The Paris-based agency Reporters Without Borders organization reports that 29 journalists were counted among the dead, the heaviest loss ever of media personnel in a single incident.

Pantoja criticized local reporting on the tragedy, which connected it visually with unrelated photos of tanks, further exacerbating tension in the area. “We have seen over the years how easy it is for a localized incident to spark wider violence and how negative perceptions of conflict often reduce the capacity to address these flare-ups in creative nonviolent ways,” he said. “This [connection to the military] only cements that image of violence in the national consciousness and the idea that military action is the appropriate or only response.”

Through Peacebuilders, Pantoja called upon the offending media to “balance their reporting with the pictures and stories of the many peace workers, journalists and advocates struggling to birth a better reality in Mindanao.”

Among other things, he cited concern over increased military and police presence in an already highly militarized and volatile area, the risk for spillover of communal violence into surrounding communities and further displacement of civilians.

To counter these concerns, Peacebuilders Community proposed a 30-day cooling-off period to permit impartial investigation of the incident, examination of the broader scope of national justice practices, the development of a reconciling and truth-telling commission, and coordination between national agencies for violence prevention.

Pantoja invited prayer, “that out of this tragedy, God will create an opportunity to transform the collective national consciousness from its acceptance of violence to the pursuit of nonviolent peacebuilding.”

PHOTO BY DANIEL PANTOJA



The perpetrators of the massacre reportedly crushed vehicles with people still inside them using large earth-moving equipment. This media vehicle and the bodies inside were exhumed by police investigators. “This massacre must have been well planned,” according to Daniel Pantoja. “Heavy equipment like this did not just happen to be in this site by coincidence.”

in grants to Canadian organizations that help the poor overseas. Many of these organizations, including MCC, are Christian and firmly rooted in Canadian church denominations.

The CIDA grants often enable organizations to match donations on a one-to-one or even better basis. These matching grants have proven extremely popular among donors and there is concern among some church organizations that their CIDA funding will also be suddenly, inexplicably cut.

In late November, Kairos was notified that its project proposal for 2009-13 did not meet CIDA priorities, and its \$7.1 million funding request was rejected. This proposal had been approved at every level of CIDA until it reached the desk of Beverley Oda, minister of international cooperation, for final approval.

"We are disheartened that this long-standing relationship and decades of support by the Canadian government has ended," said Mary Corkery, executive director of Kairos, noting that the government's decision came a week after 57 people were massacred in politically motivated killings in the Philippines, including two lawyers from a human rights organization supported by Kairos. (See "Peacebuilders call for hope after Philippine massacre" sidebar on bottom of page 20.)

During Question Period in the House of Commons on Dec. 7, members of the opposition parties asked Oda why she cut funding for Kairos with no advance warning after CIDA had worked in partnership with the organization for 35 years.

The minister responded by assuring the House that the government will continue to support the work of member agencies of Kairos. "As I reported to the House, there are over a billion people living in extreme poverty," Oda said in one of her responses. "That is why we will continue to support work that provides better health care, improved literacy, food security, water and sanitation facilities.

"That is why we continue to support the Primate's World Relief, the Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development, the Mennonite Central Committee and the United Church of Canada," Oda added.

Peters said he appreciates the affirmation that MCC is receiving from Oda. This

'This decision hurts real people overseas with real needs.'
(Don Peters, MCC Canada)

affirmation, he said, provides an opportunity for MCC to speak out on the importance of churches and church-based organizations working together in partnership. "MCC brings together Anabaptist churches," he said. "But Kairos brings together the wider church community. This takes MCC to another level of church relations."

Deo Namwira represents MCC Canada on the Kairos Global Partnership Program, a group of coalition members that provides direction to programs that receive matching funds through CIDA. "We hope this is a decision that will be reversed," said Namwira, who also works with CIDA-funded projects at MCC. "Kairos deserves to be funded and supported."

The Government of Canada has established three priority themes to guide CIDA's work:

- Increasing food security;
- Securing the future of children and youths; and

- Stimulating sustainable economic growth.

According to Namwira, though, Kairos works very specifically on advocacy concerning economic justice and social justice. "These are the ingredients of sustainable development," he said. "We cannot achieve development if these two elements are missing. We cannot give farmers seeds if they can't plant the seeds; we cannot give students pens if they can't go to school; we cannot achieve development without social and economic justice."

Mennonite Church Canada has expressed its support for Kairos, too. In a letter to Oda, Witness executive secretary Janet Plenert appealed to "the Canadian government to reconsider its decision to cut funding," writing, "We also believe the work of Kairos is within the scope, mandate and priorities of CIDA." ❧

With files from Kairos and MC Canada.

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GOD AT WORK IN US

'A holy calling'

Clare Schlegel says farming is big business as society enforces production rules



the
business
of faith

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

NORTHEAST HOPE TOWNSHIP, ONT.

On the wall behind Clare Schlegel are photographs of eight of the farms he owns in various partnerships. One of them is the “home farm” his father farmed until 1988, when it was incorporated as Schlegelhome Farms Inc. But Schlegel was already farming crops like kidney and roma beans, and was into chickens and hogs, with his wife Catherine on their Blind Acres Inc. farm, beginning in 1979. The “Inc.” after the names points out Schlegel’s early sense that farming was big business and was about to get much bigger.

Numbers are complicated. He owns about 405 hectares of land in and around North Easthope Township, close to New Hamburg, but, together with various partners, he has around 1,200 hectares in crops.

He has about 1,200 sows of his own producing piglets that are born, reared, weaned, grown and fattened in one unit, and as many again in production through partnership agreements.

Schlegel says his gross income “varies greatly,” but, like most hog farmers in Canada, “income tax deductions have shown the losses suffered by hog farmers.” He notes that “the hog industry is going through a very difficult time.”

He employs eight people full-time to work with the crops, hogs and chickens, and in his trucking businesses.

Schlegel says that his father Earl instilled

in him the adage, “How can one have a more holy calling than producing good food for people?” He says he sees himself as “meeting human needs, as opposed to being a businessman working only for profit.”

But in recent years he says farmers have moved from being seen as “good stewards of the land and to care for their animals,” to “rule followers,” as society, since the mid-1990s, has been making more and more demands on how food is grown and processed.



Businessman/farmer Clare Schlegel is pictured with his fleet of trucks to service his many enterprises.

“Everything’s become more legalistic, predetermined by society,” he says. “We’ve got certification for almost everything we do. There’s really very little role on a modern farm for children. We’re totally professionalized. . . . It’s a much more professional kind of set-up than even 10 years ago.”

As a businessman, Schlegel knows that in order to stay in business he needs to do what his customers expect. Animal rights proponents have brought new demands that complicate his work. Changes he sees

coming are to “loose housing,” where sows are free to move around in groups within the barn, rather than in the current individual stalls that allow farmers to monitor their feed and to keep them from fighting with each other.

Working for others, including in a factory producing meat products, showed Schlegel that he wanted to be his own boss. He started working on a degree in agriculture in the late 1970s, but soon found himself on the farm, first working for others and eventually taking over the family farm.

“Perhaps ‘proud’ isn’t the right word,” he says as describes how his son and daughter-in-law have, in turn, purchased one of his farms. They are independent, although he works with them where it is beneficial.

Schlegel has been active advocating for hog producers at both the local and national levels. Just last year he finished a second term as president of the Canadian Pork Council, where he has tried to influence negotiators in the current round of World Trade Organization talks to create fair rules for farmers in both developed and developing nations.

Through the years, Schlegel has used skills honed in business for the church. “I’ve never gone on voluntary service,” he says, but he has served as congregational chair in his home congregation of East Zorra Mennonite Church, near Tavistock. He has also served as the treasurer of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and sat on the finance committee at the national level in both the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and its successor, Mennonite Church Canada, where he also served as treasurer. ☸

ARTBEAT

Worship council holds inaugural meeting

New hymnal, technological changes on the agenda

Mennonite Publishing Network Release
ST. JACOBS, ONT.

What songs should be included in a new hymnal for the Mennonite church? What new resources could be provided for worship leaders? How will the Internet and other technological changes affect the way people get and use music in the future?

Those were some of the questions raised at the inaugural meeting of the Mennonite Bi-National Worship Council, which met for three days in early October at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

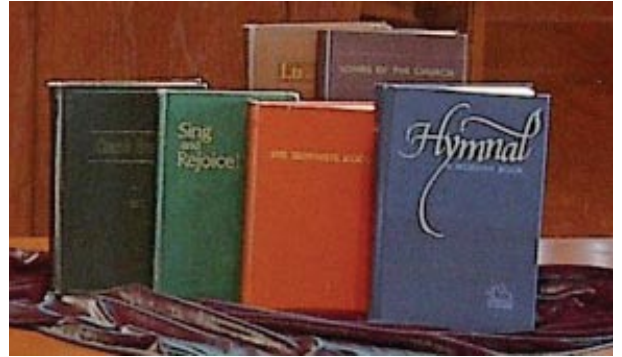
The meeting began with an overview of the worship and music resources available across North America, including *Leader* magazine, worship materials used at national conventions and assemblies, courses taught at Mennonite seminaries and schools, materials provided by resource centres, regional worship events, and the role of the current hymnal and supplements.

Council members then dreamed about new resources that could be offered to song and worship leaders. The list included suggestions to hold more song and worship-leading events in area conferences; conversations with Anabaptist musicians and composers who work primarily in the contemporary praise and worship genre; and ways to include input about worship from non-German and non-Swiss churches.

The council also discussed how electronic and technological changes will impact the transmission of worship and music resources, and talked about ways to unleash the creativity of Mennonite composers, poets, visual artists and musicians.

The new worship council is sponsored by Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), and was created following a denominational hymnal consultation organized by MPN in 2008.

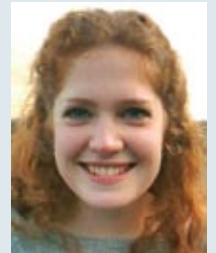
Canadian council members include Irma Ontario; and David Bergen, Mennonite Fast Dueck, Manitoba; Mark Diller Harder, Church Canada ☞.



/// Briefly noted

Abner Martin Music Scholarship winner announced

Sarah Jane Johnson of Dorset, Ont., is the 2009-10 recipient of the \$3,500 Abner Martin Music Scholarship. The cash award is made annually to a deserving student who is affiliated with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and is a full-time student in a graduate or undergraduate music program. Johnson participated in Canadian Mennonite University's Outtatown program and with the InterMenno trainee program in Holland. She is now in the second year of a bachelor of music program at Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), Waterloo, Ont., specializing in cello performance. At her home church she played for and led music worship frequently during her high school years and in recent summers. She has helped with special music at community fundraisers and at local nursing homes and hospitals. She is a cellist in the WLU Symphony Orchestra and plays with the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel Choir when needed. She is also involved with the Kitchener-Waterloo Youth Theatre, and frequently plays duets with a pianist friend at churches in Waterloo Region. Applicants for next year should contact Lewis Brubacher (LBrubacher@sympatico.ca) for an application form; the deadline is Sept. 15.



Johnson

—Menno Singers Release

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FOCUS ON FINANCES

Microfinance loans build peace in Afghanistan

BY BENJAMIN JANZEN

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Release

Money and war often go hand in hand, but as a community that has been richly blessed Mennonites know that responsible stewardship involves using our economic resources to work for peace in a troubled world.

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) was looking for a practical way to support peacebuilding internationally as part of our Stewardship in Action initiative that advances peace, social justice and mutual aid in our communities.

As a financial institution, lending and savings are what we know best; however, our ability to do lending and savings is bound by provincial borders, so we needed an international partner to be able to make an impact. It was natural for MSCU to turn to our long-time partner organization, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). In particular, MEDA's expertise in microfinance—small loans to small businesses—was attractive to MSCU, given the focus on lending and savings.

MEDA was excited to get MSCU involved in its work in Afghanistan. Women in the wartorn country are faced with huge challenges in feeding and caring for their families, and MEDA partners with Women for Women International to provide small loans for farming, retail, service and production businesses run by these women. As part of this work, MEDA has also recently become involved in the Afghanistan Challenge, a Canadian government dollar-for-dollar matching initiative.

Through these partnerships MSCU has donated \$50,000 (\$25,000 from MSCU directly and \$25,000 in matched funds) to women like Butool, who says, "My husband always struggled to find work. I had been raising our two children and also trying to earn money to support us. But we had very little; every day was a struggle.

The microfinance program has been essential for us. We can now cope with the

hard times of life. We know we can find our way out."

Through the MEDA Trust website (medatrust.org), MSCU staff have been able to allocate microfinance loans to real women in Afghanistan. Each branch and head office department has set up its own "giving group" on the website to track and personalize the experience.

In the coming months, MSCU will work with MEDA to promote the initiative to the broader community and get others involved in practical peacebuilding. ❧

Meritas, Qtrade announce intention to merge

Meritas/Qtrade Joint Release

Meritas Financial Inc. and Qtrade Fund Management Inc. announced late last year that they have agreed to merge their operations. The combined entity will be part of the Qtrade Financial Group, which will have more than \$4 billion in assets under administration and \$350 million in assets under management.

Meritas Mutual Funds will continue to operate as a separate division within Qtrade and will continue to focus exclusively on

socially responsible investing (SRI).

"[T]he opportunity to broaden our wealth management offering with Meritas, a leading provider of SRI investment solutions in Canada, is very exciting," says Qtrade CEO Scott Gibner. "Meritas's strong and unwavering commitment to SRI over the last 10 years has been the foundation for their success and, as SRI funds continue to grow in popularity in Canada and globally, we believe this dedication



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FOCUS ON FINANCES

and historical track record will continue to serve Meritas very well into the future.”

“I am excited by the expanded prospects for Meritas as a result of this partnership with Qtrade,” Meritas CEO Gary Hawton says. “At a time when many mutual fund companies are cutting staff and closing funds, we plan to do the opposite. We anticipate adding new staff across Canada to continue to develop the strong relationships with the advisors who have made us one of the fastest-growing mutual fund companies in the country.

“Our growth suggests that more

Canadians are asking for SRI funds to be added to their portfolios,” Hawton adds.

The Meritas head office will continue to be located in Kitchener, Ont., with regional representation across Canada. Qtrade will continue to be based in Vancouver, B.C., with an Eastern Canada office being created in Kitchener to serve its growing client base in Ontario and the surrounding provinces.

Both parties anticipate the transaction will close at the end of March, subject to regulatory and other necessary approvals. ☺



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Portfolio Diversification is Key

Growing up, we can all likely remember our parents telling us “Never put all of your eggs in one basket”. While at the time we may not have fully understood what they meant, truer words could not have been spoken when it comes to personal finances and investing.

Although Canadian equities rebounded by over 30% in 2009, the S&P/TSX Composite Index (S&P/TSX) remains over 15% below where it closed at the end of 2007. At the same time, U.S. markets, as measured by the S&P 500, fared considerably worse, down nearly 25% during the same timeframe and more than 15% lower than where it started on January 1, 2000.

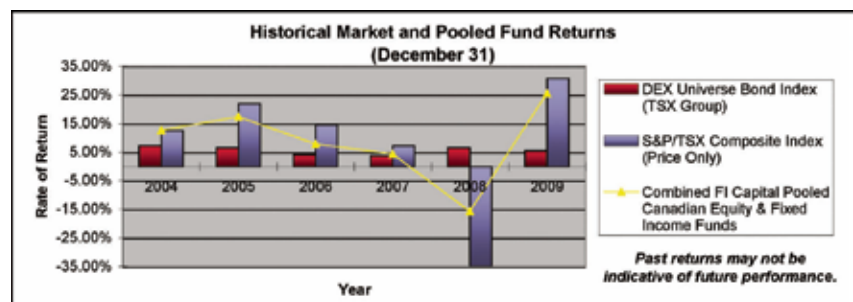
So what is an investor to do? Just remember what mom and dad told us—*don't put all of your eggs in one basket* or, in other words, diversify your investments. Diversification involves investing in a variety of different asset classes (stocks, bonds, guaranteed investments, etc.) and using an assortment of investment styles (value, growth, socially responsible, etc.). By spreading your risk or diversifying your investments, the result is a portfolio where, at any point in time, some investments will be doing well while others may not. Typically, this “mix-and-match” approach will have lower volatility and better long-term returns. The attached chart shows the historical returns earned by:

(i) the S&P/TSX, (ii) the DEX Universe Bond Index and (iii) a 50/50 combination of FI Capital's pooled Canadian equity and fixed income funds. While the “combined” FI Capital pooled funds would not have performed as well as the S&P/TSX in 2005-2007, they would have managed to better preserve capital during the carnage in 2008. For some, high investment returns may be the sole priority. However, at FI Capital we believe that capital preservation is equally important—ask those Canadian equity investors who lost nearly one-third of their portfolio value in 2008. With every passing year, we get one year closer to retirement so our investment horizon (and the time to recover any investment losses) becomes shorter. Investing must be thought of as a marathon, not a sprint! Investing is about planning and patience.

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Be sure and check out NEWS UPDATE, the newest feature on *Canadian Mennonite's* website: www.canadianmennonite.org. It highlights important breaking calendar events of the week across the provinces, significant personnel changes and other happenings that are of significance to you, our readers. It is updated each Friday.

Yellow Page Business Directory

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Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 5, 6, 12, 13: MCC B.C. fundraising banquets—(5) Bakerview MB Church, Abbotsford, 6: 30 p.m.; (6) Fraserview MB Church, Vancouver, 6: 30 p.m.; (12) Sardis Community Church, Chilliwack, 6: 30 p.m.; (13) Bethel Mennonite Church, Langley. Featured speakers Phil Schafran, MCC B.C. resource development director (5, 12) or Wayne Bremner, MCC B.C. executive director (6, 13). Music by the Watchmen 4 Male Quartet.

Feb. 5-7: College and career Impact retreat, at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

Feb. 20: Book launch of *Affluenza Interrupted: Stories of Hope from the Suburbs* by Doreen and Hugo Neufeld; 7 p.m., at Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton. Program includes storytelling by the authors, folk singer Tim Chesterton, and "Arrogant Worms" songs by Darian and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld. For more information, call 780-466-3277.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 22: RJC open house for youths in Grades 7-12; includes school tours, coffee house, and snack and runs from 5:30 to 10 p.m.

Jan. 29-31: MC Saskatchewan senior youth retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Feb. 12-13: MDS all unit meeting and gathering. Focus is on MDS's 60th anniversary through stories and worship. Visit mds.mennonite.net to register after Nov. 15, or call 1-866-261-1274. Daytime meetings at Warman Berghaler Mennonite Church; banquet and program at Valley Christian Academy, Osler (12).

Feb. 26-27: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Messiah Lutheran Church, Prince Albert.

Manitoba

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

Jan. 25-26: Church in Ministry Seminar: "Mapping the way: Finding pathways through challenging issues." Keynote speaker: Timothy Geddert. Sponsored by CMU's Institute for

Theology and the Church.

Jan. 26-27: CMU Winter Lectures with Vern Redekop, associate professor of conflict studies at St. Paul University, Ottawa. Theme: "Paradoxes of reconciliation."

Jan. 28-29: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior high presentation of three one-act plays, at the Franco-Manitoban Centre, Winnipeg.

Jan. 29, Feb. 17, Feb. 26, March 26: Campus visit days/open house at CMU. RSVP toll-free at 1-877-231-4570.

Feb. 3: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, 7 p.m.

Feb. 5: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate and Mennonite Collegiate Institute gala event, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg.

Feb. 5: CMU Friesens Arts Café presents "Renaissance Resoundings" with CMU Chamber Choir and soloists; 7:30 p.m.

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

Feb. 7: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate and Mennonite Collegiate Institute gala event, at Buhler Hall, Gretna.

Feb. 12-14, 2010: Young adult retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 15-17: Winter retreat for adults with disabilities at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 19-20: MC Manitoba annual delegate meeting, Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Ontario

Jan. 26: MCC Thrift Shop and Waterloo Generations present "Suit up for Sudan: A fashion show" in support of the MCC Sudan: Coming Home project, Glencairn MB Church, Kitchener, 7 p.m. Tickets available at MCC Ontario office, Kitchener and Waterloo MSCU branches, Waterloo Ten Thousand Villages, the MCC Thrift Shop and Generations, or by calling 519-745-8458.

Feb. 3: MC Eastern Canada and the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada present "A day of quiet prayer," Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call 519-880-9684 or e-mail mennospiritdire@gmail.com.

Feb. 7: Menno Singers presents a gospel hymn sing, Elmira Mennonite Church.

Feb. 15: Family Day at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Spend a day together as a family participating in indoor and outdoor activities. For more information, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

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.

Briefly noted

Menno Singers to sing Rachmaninoff Vespers (All Night Vigil), Opus 37

KITCHENER, ONT.—On March 6, Menno Singers will perform one of its favourite works at St. Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kitchener at 8 p.m. under the direction of Peter Nikiforuk. In 1915, in the midst of World War I and the civil unrest within Russia, Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) composed his famous *All Night Vigil, the Vespers, Opus 37*. The work has been called the pinnacle of Orthodox church music in the East, the equivalent in stature to Bach's *B Minor Mass* in the West. This stunning, deeply spiritual, 15-movement a cappella work uses traditional church Slavonic texts. Musically, Rachmaninoff draws on ancient Russian chants and preserves their modal sounds. Menno Singers first took up the challenge of the Vespers in its 1992-93 season with then artistic director/conductor William H. Janzen, and returned to it in 1998. After this year's performance of *Vespers*, the choir ends its season by sponsoring the Mennonite Mass Choir in a performance of Haydn's *Creation* at St. Peter's Lutheran Church on May 15 at 7:30 p.m. with soloists Stephanie Kramer (soprano), Brandon Leis (tenor) and Daniel Lichti (bass).

—Menno Singers Release

Classifieds

Announcement

TIEFENGRUND ROSENORT MENNONITE CHURCH - 100th Anniversary. July 24 & 25th is the celebration of "Thanks to God for 100 years of grace" at Tiefengrund Church, 7.5 km. north of Laird, Sask. Anyone interested in coming is welcome and may contact the church at Box 57, Laird, SK S0K 2H0, or e-mail: trmc@sasktel.net. We request that former members and attenders send in their memories/greetings to be put into a book(let) to be available for interested folks at the anniversary. Registration forms will be available at the end of January.

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Employment Opportunities



TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Christian Alliance International School (CAIS) is seeking exemplary teachers and administrators for a rapidly growing Alberta-accredited school in Hong Kong. CAIS has recently been awarded a land grant from the Government of Hong Kong on which to construct a 1600-student school. Expansion of the current 525-student facility will begin in August 2010, with leasing of additional premises to accommodate enrolment growth until the opening of the new school. As a result, a number of vacancies are anticipated for 2010-2011. Please visit the Employment page of the school website at <http://www.cais.edu.hk> for more information about the School, specific posts and application requirements.

Direct inquiries / applications to:
Mr. Art Enns, Headmaster
Fax: (852) 2760-4324 or E-mail: jobs@cais.edu.hk



Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SUPPORT SERVICES** (transitioning to Chief Operating Officer).

Accountable to the General Secretary, the Executive Secretary is responsible for carrying out the mandate to support Mennonite Church Canada with administrative services to enable the church to do its work efficiently and effectively. Based in Winnipeg, this position is responsible for giving leadership to the areas of communications, human resources, resource development, information technology, legal compliance, property management, pension plan administration and assembly planning.

This position is expected to evolve into a Chief Operating Officer role within the next two years. As part of these duties, the Executive Secretary, Support Services is expected to help develop and facilitate this transition for the role, the department and the council.

This person is a member of the executive staff team and participates in overall planning and implementation of the objectives of the denomination. Some travel within Canada is required.

The position requires a person of vision with a capacity for complex administrative and organizational duties. Demonstrating flexibility and creative responsiveness to change, the successful candidate will have strong leadership qualities, including excellent verbal, written and interpersonal communication skills, organizational skills and the ability to think strategically. In addition, he or she will exhibit strong supervisory skills and be a good team player. A combination of educational and work experience suitable for the responsibilities of the position, including computer skills, are required.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church.

The job description is posted at www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/. Inquiries, nominations and applications can be directed to Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary, at rjsuderman@mennonitechurch.ca; Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4 (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Applications will be processed beginning Jan. 23, with a start date as soon as mutually agreeable.

LEAD PASTOR

Altona Mennonite Church (AMC), located 100 km southwest of Winnipeg, Man., invites applications for a full-time Pastor starting September 2010. AMC is a progressive and caring congregation of 100, in a rural community of approximately 4,000. The candidate to be considered needs to be committed to Mennonite Anabaptism, educated in a conference school, and have gifts as a preacher, spiritual leader, teacher, and in pastoral care.

Please see our website - www.altonamennonitechurch.ca - for contact information. Direct resumes to:

Altona Mennonite Church
c/o The Pastoral Search Committee
Box 1237
Altona, MB R0G 0B0



Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of **GENERAL SECRETARY**.

The General Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer of Mennonite Church Canada, accountable to

the General Board, and responsible for the total program of Mennonite Church Canada.

The successful candidate is a person of vision with a strong Mennonite-Anabaptist ecclesiology; demonstrates strong leadership qualities with the ability to balance competing responsibilities; is able to relate effectively with a diverse constituency; can oversee the management of financial, human and physical resources; and demonstrates excellent oral, written and interpersonal communication skills. Education, work experience and computer skills suitable to the responsibilities of this ministry are required.

This is a full-time position, located at the Winnipeg, Man., denominational offices, and requires considerable travel within Canada, as well as occasional travel outside of Canada. The preferred starting date is in late summer or early fall of 2010.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church.

The job description is posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>. Inquiries, nominations and applications can be directed to Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Moderator, c/o Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4; (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785); or e-mail moderator@mennonitechurch.ca.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date Ads Due

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Lesson of the two basins

STORY AND PHOTO BY RANDY KLAASSEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

VIRGIL, ONT.

Martha Lucía Gomez, pastor of Pereira Mennonite Church in Colombia, visited her congregation's sister church—Bethany Mennonite in Virgil—during a trip to Canada last fall for Mennonite Church Canada's International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together event.

In the weeks before the visit, Bethany congregants had been called to prayer as Gomez had been denied a visitor's visa to Canada. Part of the anticipation had been that she would be able to share a sermon, and elation followed when interventions paved the way for her to receive a visa.

In her sermon, Gomez spoke of the hours prior to Jesus' crucifixion when two basins played pivotal roles in the gospel story.

The first was used when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, saying, *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"* (John 13:15).

The second basin was used by Pilate when he washed his hands before the crowd, saying, *"I am innocent of this man's blood"* (Matthew 27:24).

She said the two basins represent the opportunities Christians have for sharing in the lives of others. They can choose to "wash away" responsibility for their neighbours, as Pilate did, or they can claim their responsibility for their neighbours, as Jesus did.

With rampant violence happening in Colombia and other parts of the world, Christians can choose to ignore the suffering of others or take the servant's basin and wash the feet of those entrapped by hostility.

Given that two months before her visit, Bethany sponsored a family from Colombia who chose to flee from violence there, Gomez expressed the blessing of peace for what was happening through the servant-like ministry of the congregation. ☸

Randy Klaassen is pastor of Bethany Mennonite Church.



During a visit to Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., last fall, Martha Lucia, pastor of Pereira Mennonite Church, Colombia, preaches on the "two basins" that were pivotal in the hours leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.