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Help for Haiti

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EDITORIAL

What to do with all that money

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Mennonite giving by Canadians to the vast needs in earthquake-ravaged Haiti shows we have come of age in our generosity. As of this writing, the \$8.4 million (including the matching funds by the Canadian government) coming into Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) coffers in three short weeks since the devastation is indeed remarkable.

While suffering on this magnitude has always touched our hearts and pocket-books, we, as a people, and our appointed relief agencies are having some extraordinary help with this tragedy. Never before have the local media—in the form of day-long call-ins over four provinces—put this kind of trust in MCC nor has the Canadian government been so ready so quickly to immediately set aside matching funds, signalling an implicit trust in how we implement this aid.

No longer, it seems, are we doing our relief “thing,” as *Die Stillen im Lande* (the quiet in the land), but we have been joined by larger societal forces to expand our efforts. While we are, in the words of Don Peters, “gratified and humbled” by these unexpected partnerships, it will take some getting used to, since we have traditionally worked outside of these cultural and political power bases.

While agencies such as MCC and Mennonite Economic Development

Agency (MEDA) have been persuasive and effective in telling their stories to their primary constituents—members of all branches of Mennonites globally—they have not necessarily tailored this narrative to wider audiences. Thus, if there is such a thing as a Mennonite corporate modesty, we probably feel some uneasiness about all this enthusiastic response, prompting one of my friends to ask: “What are they/we [MCC] going to do with all that money?”

A fair question.

What it raises is not “what,” but “how.” Knowing the people who administer the programs and funds at MCC/MEDA, we have no doubt of their integrity, financial prudence and good judgment. What concerns us more is that all this money, coming in so generously from partnerships—media and government—continues to be applied in another kind of partnership, with the people and local infrastructure of Haiti.

We in the western world have learned some hard lessons in our missionary efforts of the past—our zeal tainted, as Arnold C. Snyder recently reminded the faithful at Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., with “a colonial, paternalistic attitude that mirrored the racism and imperialism of the white colonizers.”

At some subconscious level, we may fall into this same trap with our aid to the poor and needy of Haiti, now reeling



with unspeakable suffering and need, but who may appear to us to be so steeped in an ancient, voodoo culture that they need all of our modern political/technical solutions to overcome their problems. And the tendency to force our solutions on Haitians may be compounded by the political outlook of our new powerful cultural partners at the giving end.

We urge MCC and MEDA to continue unwavering from their course of working with Haitian nationals, as they have been since the 1950s, in such long-term projects as reforestation, food security and microfinancing with local partners. Yes, relief kits are needed; may our Mennonite hands, and co-opted volunteers, assemble them by the thousands in the coming days and weeks.

But may our relief and development agencies also use this flood of dollars to expand partnerships with Haitians to help Haitians own and solve their own problems.

Meet your board member

Linda Matties of Abbotsford, B.C., represents MC British Columbia on *Canadian Mennonite's* 12-member board. A mem-



ber of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, she works as a faculty assistant at Trinity Western University. She has also worked as a teacher/librarian. Holding a master of divinity degree, she has written Bible study material and has done workshops at various churches. She is on the executive committee and the leadership board of MC B.C., and can be reached at 604-852-8082 or via e-mail at lhmmatties@uniserve.com.

ABOUT THE COVER:

A young Haitian boy wears a bandage over his nose to abate the smell of death that permeates sections of the capital city, Port-au-Prince, following the Jan. 12 earthquake that has left as many as 200,000 dead and two million homeless. See pages 18 to 20 for our ‘Help for Haiti’ coverage.

PHOTO: BEN DEPP, MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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

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

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Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising: **Lisa Metzger**, advert@canadianmennonite.org, toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Rachel Bergen, National Correspondent, ca@canadianmennonite.org, 204-885-

2565 ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman**, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org,

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New blog postings

[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

No dual citizenship: **CHERYL WOELK**

34 litres later: **PAUL LOEWEN**

Don't ya just hate that guy?: **WILL LOEWEN**

During the 2008 assembly in Saskatoon, the Faith and Life Committee led a discussion around a paper entitled 'Confessing Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world.' A full version of the document can be found at mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre. This three-part series of theological and personal reflections seeks to further engage us in the task of testifying to Jesus. What can we learn from each other about how to speak about Jesus in our place of work and leisure? Our lead article for this issue was penned by Harry Huebner, professor of theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

Following the one who says 'I am the truth'

BY HARRY HUEBNER



How do you see your faith today in relation to your earlier views? No doubt you are wiser now than you were, but are your views true now and were they false then? Do you think you will hold your convictions today to be false sometime in the future?

In western thought we have been trained to think of truth as something we can have, a possession that can be expressed with a statement. Yet for much of the Judeo-Christian tradition, truth was viewed as something people were invited into, something no one could fully grasp but everyone could participate in. Perhaps the most poignant contrast here is between the words of Pilate: "What is truth?" and Jesus: "I am the truth."

Truth as a journey

How does the view that truth is embodied help us understand our faith in relation to others?

Permit me some personal reflections. I grew up with the distinct impression that we were different from the non-Mennonites around us. I suspect that the effect of this consciousness was that I developed an identity that came primarily from within the tradition, albeit one not that clearly understood by me. When I went to college and I encountered people within the Mennonite tradition who had different beliefs than mine, it created a crisis. I thought that I had the truth. Only later did I come to see truth as a journey.

In recent years, I have had the opportunity to be part of a variety of encounters with "others" in the vast family of believers. The formation of Canadian Mennonite University required

It is important for Christians to be in dialogue with adherents to other faiths, even if the hoped-for goal is not confessional unity, as it is in dialogue with other Christians.

intensive faith discussions with another Mennonite tradition—the Mennonite Brethren—which some in my Mennonite stream have called “other.” For the last several years I have been involved in formal ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholics. And more recently, I have had opportunity for inter-religious dialogue with Shia Muslim clerics from Iran.

Although each context is unique, these opportunities are incredibly rich because they are occasions for empathetic listening and a deepening understanding of my convictions as a Mennonite believer. I am able to make sense of being Mennonite only on the basis of the biblical wisdom that truth is a path, traversed humbly and graciously, and the stranger can sometimes help to guide my way.

Why be in dialogue?

The first thing to say here is that to live is to dialogue. So really we do not need a mandate, we do it anyway. And yet that is not enough.

We still need to ask: Why should Mennonites be in structured dialogue with Catholics, Lutherans, Jews and Muslims, among others? Is this a matter of biblical mandate? I believe that it is—on the basis of three general biblical insights.

- First, when Jesus is asked to give his own summary of the faith, he reverts to the Israelite Shema, in which the faithful are called to love God and neighbour (Luke 10:27). And throughout his ministry he teaches that these two loves are not separable. Moreover, in the Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10:29-37), the neighbour is intentionally portrayed as the other who can teach “insiders” about their faith.
- Second, Jesus is extremely critical of religious leaders, especially at the point where they display a stance of hoarding God for themselves (Luke 4:23-30). For Jesus, the covenant is not defined by a narrow view of tradition, but by faithfulness to the call of Yahweh—and that includes both “insiders” and “outsiders.” Faithfulness is not a box that we are in or out of, but a journey to truth that breaks out of boxes.
- The third observation comes from

the Apostle Paul, who argues that “in Christ” there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Galatians 3:28). This is Paul’s way of saying that the Christian faith envisions a new humanity where radical difference can be overcome “in Christ,” although cultural distinctives are not irrelevant to the faith. Hence, Paul spent time in the synagogues as well as the town square, seeking to unite Jews and Gentiles into a united body in Christ.

It may be hard to find an explicit mandate in Scripture that tells us that we should be in dialogue with people of other faiths, yet dialogue and debate are evident everywhere. Often one sees the biblical themes that God is the creator and sustainer of all people, that the faithful should be open to learning from the stranger, and that openness to God implies uniting what has been broken.

The posture of faith in dialogue

It is important to note that within the New Testament the aim is to convince others that Jesus is Messiah. It is an open debate conducted in the context of reading and re-reading the Scriptures. And it is addressed to both those internal to the tradition: the Jewish and early Christian communities; and those outside: the Gentiles. And while the debates were fiercely passionate at times, the posture remained confessional: this we believe . . . here is our rationale.

- **The first context of dialogue is with those internal to our tradition.** The basis for this discussion should be our best reading of the Bible, our experiences, our best communal reason and an honest view of our different Mennonite traditions. Yet the latter three cannot be normative in the way that the Bible is: Our reading of each must be measured against the Word of God. If a particular practice, teaching or doctrine adhered to by our Mennonite forebears is found not to be faithful to Scripture, it should be refined or rejected.
- **Second, dialogue with Christians of other traditions should be seen as interacting with other believing Christians.** This is an opportunity for mutual testing and the understanding of Christian faithfulness. The traditions

at stake here are much broader than our own, and many of the disagreements between us have long histories over which lives have been lost. So such discussions are not to be taken lightly and sometimes require confession and forgiveness in order for it to be possible to take each other seriously. When that happens, and careful dialogue does take place on matters of both agreement and disagreement, such interaction can be very rich.

The major mandate for this dialogue is Christian unity. When doing so, we open ourselves to the “truth journey” within our mutual traditions. And so we inquire together, for example, how the language of the sacraments has enhanced or impoverished the Roman Catholic understanding of faith, and how its absence has enhanced or impoverished the Mennonite understanding of faith. In such dialogue it is important to remember that unity is not the same as unison; harmony, or melodic difference, is perhaps its richer form.

• Third, dialogue with adherents to non-Christian faiths involves far less common ground than with other Christian traditions.

It is important for Christians to be in dialogue with adherents to other faiths, even if the hoped-for goal is not confessional unity, as it is in dialogue with other Christians. But there are other goals, such as witness, mutual understanding, respect, edification and peace.

Fundamental religious disagreement is a given in this dialogue and should be expected to continue. But this does not rule out the possibility of spiritual enrichment. My experience with Muslim dialogue has been just that.

Although there are deep theological differences between us—over Jesus as Messiah, the cross and resurrection of Jesus, Trinity, incarnation, peace and justice—we have become friends who pray for each other, and we help the other to see God more clearly. While this may not make logical sense, it is nonetheless real.

In conclusion, it is especially important for peacemakers to set an example for how to engage people with whom we disagree, and, in some cases, whom the world has defined as “enemy.” I have often

thought that pacifists should be leaders in how to conduct inter-religious dialogue. After all, we are the people who have said that, rather than killing people of difference, we will love them and we will

be willing to die for them, as Christ has modelled for us. Truth, in the end, is not an abstraction, but a way of life that is committed to following the one who says, "I am the

truth." The journey to this truth requires dialogue. ❧

Conversation on birth and re-birth

BY HELEN BAERGEN

“Working on your research?” I ask.

She is, after all, hunched over her Blackberry at the cafeteria table.

“No,” she says. “Reading the Bible.” She looks up and smiles as I slide into the seat opposite her. “This is so interesting!”

Here from China to get a Ph.D., terms like “effluent, toxic, sludge, and phosphorous” form her usual vocabulary. Yet here she sits reading the story of Jesus and the woman at the well.

In my workplace at the university I teach the right and wrong uses of commas, ways to correct incomplete sentences, and the appropriate presentation of research data in English.

But my faith? My attitude toward my students: Treat them with respect; be the best instructor I can be.

Her lab partner, at his workplace, kept a Bible on the desk alongside bacteria-collecting paraphernalia. In her long hours peering into test tubes, he suggested she take a break, read something

different—read the Bible.

She did, and got hooked, and came to me to ask, “Do you read the Bible?”

I entered the conversation carefully. What had she been told? What confusion might I add to her burgeoning questions? How does the language of faith coincide with the language of science? Is the leap too far, too wide? How do I explain a faith that was handed to me on a platter of generations and I had only to take it? What do I really believe? Why do I believe? Do I have the vocabulary to adequately express the things I take for granted? Why would I want someone like her to take on my faith?

She enters each conversation with abandon, fearlessly eager to know. Is God more than an American idea? What’s the connection between Jesus and God? Is religion just a way to talk about a higher power? Why do we need to think about God? Do Buddhists and Hindus believe in the same God? What about my friend who does yoga meditation? Is that a way to find God? Why do some people push

you so much to say you believe like they do? Is it all about finding peace for yourself, about finding meaning in your life?

She joins me at my church on Baptism Sunday, listens and watches as five people commit themselves through baptism: “Very interesting . . . very interesting . . . it feels like you are all family . . . quite emotional, really . . .”

I watch and marvel at her delight . . . my floundering . . . her new understandings . . . my inadequate vocabulary . . . her wonder . . . my thrill at hearing myself speak of things long “lax-ed” into easy complacency . . . into smooth forgetfulness.

She has invited me into a conversation that is quite possibly going to “re-birth” me as much as it will help in her being born anew. ❧



Helen Baergen serves as an instructor in the English Language Centre at the University of Manitoba.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Broaching the faith in business

BY JOHN TOEWS

In 1999, my wife Eileen and I moved to British Columbia, where I became the general manager of packaging operations for a large hydroponic tomato

greenhouse production and packaging facility. For the next eight years, it was my privilege to work almost exclusively with people from Sikh, Hindu and Islamic

faith traditions.

During my first few years in this position, there was very little dialogue or conversation regarding faith issues. We

worked diligently to establish a safe work environment not only in terms of health and safety issues, but emotionally as well. Part of the corporate mission was to establish a culture of respect and fairness.

Some time after my second year, I gradually slipped into the role of providing “on-the-side” pastoral counselling regarding marital, family, career and conflict issues. Eileen and I were invited to Sikh engagement and wedding celebrations and religious ceremonies. We were also invited into the homes of

had worked diligently to be on good and just relations with all faith traditions. After surviving his time in prison, it became a matter of principle for him to choose Peyman, a Muslim, as his business partner.

I asked Peyman about his thoughts on Iraq. This was a painful topic for him and I quietly responded, “Hopefully, we can all respect each other.”

His immediate response was, “That’s all fine and good, but what do I do if someone does not respect me?”

not have known the answer, so I quoted Genesis 33:10: “*When the brothers met they embraced and kissed, and Esau said to his brother Jacob, ‘For truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God.’*”

I further shared, “Peyman, this is part of my story, it is part of your story and it’s a story of peace!”

Our relationship went through a quiet transformation that day. Instead of being people who met in the world of business, we became good friends. This experience, and others like it, have given me great hope in the transforming power of the biblical story as we struggle to confess Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world. ❧

* *Pseudonyms.*

We discussed the fact that Jacob had tricked his father Isaac into blessing him with the blessing of the firstborn, which belonged to Esau.

our Muslim and Hindu friends, as they were invited into ours, and we had great conversation over many cups of tea. Dialogue regarding our religious faith issues followed quite naturally.

At a particular Sikh engagement celebration, I was in conversation with a businessman. He was aware that I had been a Christian pastor, and he tossed out a challenging question which had to do with his understanding of Christian claims of exclusivity.

My response was, “You know our Heavenly Father has made many different kinds of trees in the forest, hasn’t he?”

His immediate response was, “If we all thought like this, we would not have war.”

The parables of the Prodigal Son and of the Good Samaritan in cross-cultural/religious dialogue produced especially profound discussions on the nature of God.

On one occasion, I was having lunch in a packaging plant with Sukhjiwan*, a young Sikh, and Peyman*, a university grad from Iran. They were business partners making a new start in Canada.

In the years before coming to Canada, Sukhjiwan had experienced the religious and political violence that had swept over the Punjab. At one point, he was picked up from a soccer field and thrown into a notorious prison. He spent hours in prayer amidst the screams of those who were being tortured. Like his father, he

I asked him if he knew the story of Abraham. He said that he did. Together, we traced through the story from Abraham and Isaac to Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25-33). We discussed the fact that Jacob had tricked his father Isaac into blessing him with the blessing of the firstborn, which belonged to Esau. Jacob fled for his life, but in time Esau followed with 400 men with the intent to kill his brother.

I asked Peyman what happened next in the story. He was silent and he may



John Toews and his wife Eileen now live in Steinbach, Man. He has combined a commitment to the church with making a living in the agri-business field. Besides having their own grandchildren,

a little girl with the name of Astina in Surrey B.C. calls John and Eileen “Grandma and Grandpa in Canada.”

/// For discussion

1. Harry Huebner begins his article with a series of questions about truth. Has your view of the truth ever changed? Huebner suggests that truth is a journey, rather than something we can identify. Do you agree? What did Jesus mean by his words, “*I am the truth*”?
2. Huebner gives three reasons to dialogue with other faiths. Do you find them convincing? Do you agree that dialogue with other faiths can provide spiritual enrichment? Are there dangers in this dialogue?
3. Helen Baergen asks, “How do I explain a faith that was handed to me on a platter of generations?” What do you think she means by “a platter of generations?” What are the differences between her coming to faith and that of her Chinese student?
4. John Toews describes some of his experiences in dealing with Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, and suggests that different faiths are like different trees in the forest, all worthy of respect. Why have Christians in the past had difficulty respecting other faiths? Is this changing?
5. What is the relationship between truth and peace?

/// Readers write

VIEWPOINTS

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.

✉ Do more than 'mutter' about military taxes

THE DEPARTMENT OF Defence gets about 9 percent of our federal tax money. It claims to need billions of dollars every year to defend Canadians from those dangerous enemies, those peasants leading hard-scrabble lives in the Afghan countryside.

"Defence" is a euphemism. Let's call it what it is: war. If we have enemies in Afghanistan, we have made them. And if Afghans are our enemies, are we loving them as Jesus taught us to do, by forcing ourselves into their homeland and lives with armed troops, tanks and bombers? Unfortunately, the conflict we've created requires the ongoing replacement of expensive military hardware and heartbreakingly vulnerable young men

FROM OUR LEADERS

Surprised by joy

DAVE BERGEN

I enjoy a good joke. When the daily paper arrives, one of the first things I read is the comics. I enjoy the way a cartoonist can focus a particular truth about life's experiences, drive it home with absolute precision and, no matter how sobering the truth, still help me appreciate the humour in it.

Proverbs 17:22 states that "a cheerful heart is a good medicine." In recent years, some doctors have rediscovered this truth and are advocating laughter as a form of therapy for their patients. They have confirmed through scientific study that laughter promotes both physical and emotional healing. Laughter reduces stress, boosts the immune system, lowers blood pressure and clears the respiratory system. A good belly laugh loosens every muscle and nerve in our bodies and prevents us, at least for a few moments, from doing anything but laughing.

Laughter is also a great social connector. Because we can so readily picture ourselves as the subject in a humorous situation, tastefully applied humour can

be a great community-builder.

I believe God must have a good sense of humour. Anyone with the nerve to approach an 80-year-old couple (Abraham and Sarah) with the ludicrous announcement that they are going to have a baby has to have a sense of humour! Please don't misunderstand me. God's purposes are serious, but I'm sure God must have known how absurd the birth announcement would sound. The miracle child of this story is named Isaac ("he who laughs")!



I've heard it said that joy is 'the only infallible sign of the presence of God.'

In the New Testament, Jesus goes out fishing with Peter. Peter, the expert, fishes all night in the right spots, at the right depths and at the right times, all with no success. In the morning, when the prime fishing hours have passed, Jesus suggests they try another way—one that breaks all the rules. I'm sure he must have had

a hearty chuckle when his seemingly absurd carpenter's suggestion netted more fish than a whole night of a seasoned mariner's wisdom and experience.

I've heard it said that joy is "the only infallible sign of the presence of God." In both of these examples, in the midst of a humorous situation there was a distinct visitation of God's presence and grace into human experience. So, although the divine purpose is serious, God is not above using humour to convey important messages.

God created us with the ability to laugh and pronounced that creation "very good." When we laugh, we experience joy. And when we experience joy, we begin to know something of the goodness and grace God has in store for us.

But we are, by nature, less than perfect.

A healthy dose of humility goes a long way to help us admit our imperfections and give us the ability

to laugh at them. Thus humour, sin and grace become inextricably intertwined. So have a joyous day and laugh a little, lest you miss a marvellous God-created opportunity to receive the grace of God.

Dave Bergen is executive secretary of MC Canada's Christian Formation Council.

and women, while Afghanistan becomes further war-riddled with every annual infusion of our tax dollars.

Yet we continue to obediently send in our taxes. There must be a point at which a citizen of the world, not to mention a Christian brought up in a peaceful and peace-loving community, says "I object!"

We will not be heard if we only mutter "I object" under our breath as we file our taxes as usual. We must voice our objection loudly and clearly by not sending to Ottawa the portion of our taxes that would go to the department responsible for waging war.

A mechanism to facilitate this objection has been devised by Conscience Canada. Since 1978, this organization has created a Peace Tax Trust Fund that will

hold the 9 percent of your federal taxes if you send it to it. Conscience Canada has been working diligently through the years to get permission from the government to legally disperse these held taxes for peaceful ends.

It has also prepared a Peace Tax Return to be sent in with taxpayers' income tax forms objecting to having to support the Canadian military with their taxes and calling on the right to redirect their taxes to peaceful causes.

This easy-to-use Peace Tax Return 2009 can be obtained online at consciencecanada.ca.

MARY GROH, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Show me the money

KEVIN DAVIDSON

In the movie *Jerry Maguire*, the title character, a slick sports agent, makes a tough moral decision to switch from the greedy and dishonest attitude found extensively in the sports management business to one that values people, loyalty and fairness. As a result, he loses his job and ends up in the now famous shouting match, "Show me the money," with his only remaining client.

When we step back and look at our own financial decisions from the past, in the present and into the future, what are these decisions saying to us and our children? If you haven't noticed, our habits, behaviours and attitudes towards money have a huge impact on the next generation and, according to Nathan Dungan of Share Save Spend, children today spend five times more money than their parents did at the same age—and that's adjusted for inflation!

What is at the root of how we ultimately spend money? Is it our belief system? And if it is, who do we really believe owns the money? The Lord reminds us in Deuteronomy 8:17-18 to "remember the Lord your God, for it is he who

gives you the ability to produce wealth."

In I Chronicles 29:14, King David says, "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."

In his book *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn lists six attitudes or beliefs that affect our money management decisions:

- **Unbelief:** We don't believe that God can and will provide for our needs, so



Give 10 percent, save 10 percent and spend the rest.

we tend to hoard our money instead of giving it away.

- **Insecurity:** If we give something away, there will not be enough for ourselves.

- **Pride:** We are the source of our provision, instead of God.

- **Idolatry:** Material things become idols when we value them so much that we don't use and give them according to God's purposes.

- **Power/control:** We refuse to acknowledge God's ownership, and use money for selfish purposes, instead of kingdom purposes.

Home: We believe the illusion that earth is our home.

Does our belief about who owns the money have a direct influence on how we manage it? I think so.

I remember some excellent financial advice my wife and I received during our premarital counselling: Give 10 percent, save 10 percent and spend the rest. The percentages are not the issue; spending the money is not the issue. It's about what we value most. I know if I didn't intentionally manage my finances in this way, the giving would be at the end and there wouldn't be anything left.

When our hearts come to terms with the fact that God is the source of our

finances, our money management decisions become a lot clearer and simpler. If you don't believe me, just ask my wife.

2010 is a new year to "show me the money." The million-dollar question is, "Who is 'me' going to be?"

Kevin Davidson is a stewardship consultant at the Calgary, Alta., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit Mennofoundation.ca.

✉ If I am a Christian must I be pro-Israel?

IN RESPONSE TO the editorials and letters on Israel and Palestine published last year, I want to bring questions to the discernment process.

My first question is this: Is Israel the same now, as people of God, as they were in biblical times? I think the coming of the Messiah made a great difference.

Was Israel rejected by Jesus? I think it was. Did he not say to his disciples in Luke 9:5, *“If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them?”* We have to remember Jesus was rejected by Israel.

The second part is this: Is modern Israel the people

of God? I think that Israel is not representing the interest of God any more as a community of faith, and that this task or privilege was given to the church. Am I against the people of Israel? Absolutely not. God is the God of the nations: Israel, Palestine and Canada. But when there is injustice, there is no holy presence. Therefore, we are called to bring that holy light.

Third, sometimes we believe we are against God when we are not pro-Israel. I think this is not an accurate position. We need to be with God, who is against all injustice, be it in Israel, Palestine or Canada.

If being a Christian makes me against Israel, so be it. Our priority is with Christ, the king of the Jews and king of kings.

EDGAR RIVERA, MISSION, B.C.

FAMILY TIES

What's a mullet?

MELISSA MILLER

“**M**om, with your hair like that, it almost looks like a mullet,” my son opined.

“A fish?” I puzzled, self-consciously patting my hair, which did need a trim.

“A mullet,” my son repeated. “It’s a hairstyle. Long on the sides, flat on top.”

“A hairstyle?” I asked, bewildered. “The only mullet I know is a fish.”

Of course, the only mullet my 20-something son knew was a haircut. Another case of generational divide, as the world turns and language morphs into new meanings or new words at a dizzying speed, reflecting the dizzying changes occurring in society. My choice of words, especially dizzying, identifies me as being on the other side of 50. While I revelled in the word-plays of my youth, now I often find I’m clueless, uncertain of a word’s meaning, and as a result, off-balance. Now I understand the baffled looks I received from my elders when I splashed them with my youthful slang.

The children of my son’s generation are visual and auditory creatures. They are drawn to visual mediums: the Internet, computers and movies. They are less

likely to pick up a book for pure pleasure, and they’re probably getting their news from computers, rather than the daily paper.

These generational dynamics nudge their way into churches, of course. The word-dense worship services of many Mennonite churches lack the movement and visual dimensions that many



‘Because we are so happy to have our young people in church . . . then we can live with projectors.’

of our young are seeking. People in my own church encouraged me to use our new projection unit during worship, a stretch I was pretty sure I was unable to make, given my phobia of technology. Surprisingly, I loved the task of finding images, creating a set of slides and bringing it as a gift to worship. Not surprisingly, many of the young were drawn to the medium, and “heard” the Word of God in a way that made sense to them.

I once heard Evangelical social activist Tony Campolo bemoan the use of projectors in worship. “I hate projectors, don’t you?” he said, looking at the seniors

in the congregation. With his trademark comedic timing, he added, “When I get to heaven, if there are projectors, I’m turning right around and leaving. I hate them.”

After pausing for some rueful chuckles from his listeners, he continued, “But our young people love them, and so we’ll put up with them. Right? Because we are so happy to have our young people in church, singing and praising God, then we can live with projectors.”

Another generational divide gracefully managed.

In churches and in families, wherever

we stand on the generational divide, we lean on grace to get us through. Also helpful are compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, forbearance and love—words from Colossians 3, Mennonite Church Canada’s theme verses for this year. And I would add humour. After all, if my shaggy hair really had looked like a fish, that would have been pretty funny!

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

✉ Prime Minister responsible for funding cut to Kairos

RE: "KAIROS OUT \$7.1 million," Jan. 11, page 21.

Who is being served when *Canadian Mennonite* accepts the Harper administration's framing that "Kairos was notified that its project proposal for 2009-13 did not meet CIDA priorities," and this without even naming whose words were these? Any reader, myself included, who mistook these words as the reporter's assessment would be biased against receiving the full import of the very next sentence. The truth be told, the Canadian International Development Agency did not cancel funding. Neither mincing words, nor inflaming any, Kairos's loss in funding has Prime Minister Stephen Harper's approval, and is 180 degrees out of step with CIDA, which had approved Kairos's funding proposal all the way to the desk of Beverley Oda, minister of international co-operation.

**EDUARD HIEBERT,
ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER, MAN.**

/// Obituary

Annie Friesen

Dec. 11, 1923 - Sept. 24, 2009

Annie Friesen was born December 11, 1923 in Schönhorst, a village in the Mennonite colony of Chortitza, Ukraine. She was the third of five children born to Heinrich and Anna Unrau. Heinrich was a teacher and lived with his family in the teacher's quarters at the village school. As the Communist regime expanded its control over all aspects of life in the Soviet Union, many teachers were forbidden to teach. Consequently the family moved to the village of Kronsweide, where Annie attended elementary school before moving on to the school in Einlage. On August 3, 1938, Heinrich was arrested by the NKVD, Stalin's secret police, and never returned. The years that followed were very difficult for the entire family. Eventually, Annie took a job in the office of the local collective farm and was able to help support the family. After the Ukraine was occupied by the German army in 1941, the Mennonite churches were



reopened for worship and Annie began attending catechism classes. In 1942, she was accepted into the Teacher's College that had been opened by the Germans in Kiev and then moved to Germany to finish her training. Despite the separation, Annie managed to maintain contact with her mother, two sisters, and other relatives who had been forced to flee ahead of the advancing Russian army. She was instrumental in helping them make their way to safety in what became West Germany at war's end. After receiving her teaching certificate in 1944, Annie taught in several schools in Germany during the next few years. She was baptized on confession of her faith on June 9, 1946, by Ältester Heinrich Winter. In May 1948, Annie moved with her mother and sister Helen to the displaced persons camp in Fallingbostal and from there emigrated to Canada in August 1948. They arrived in Vineland, Ontario where they met their sponsor, Annie's uncle Peter Unrau, for the first time. Annie began attending evening English classes in St. Catharines where she met Isbrand Friesen, another Mennonite emigrant from the Ukraine and teacher in Germany. They were married on September 2, 1950 and moved into the house that would be their home for the next 59 years. God blessed them with four children, who have brought them much joy. Annie and Isbrand became active members of the St. Catharines United Mennonite Church. Here, Annie drew on her teaching experience from Germany and taught Sunday School and Saturday German School for more than twenty years. She was also very involved with the ladies auxiliary, the Maria Martha Verein, which was a source of many blessings for her. Ten years ago, Annie was diagnosed with heart disease, for which open heart surgery was recommended. From the first, she was reluctant to face the risks associated with this procedure and even more so when Isbrand was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Annie was determined to remain his primary caregiver until he passed away in January 2009. Even though the last few years had become increasingly difficult as Isbrand's condition deteriorated, Annie did not really recover from the loss of her life partner. Moreover, the unperformed heart surgery finally caught up with her and she was admitted to hospital on September 18 with congestive heart failure. Aside from maternity visits, this was Annie's first stay in a Canadian hospital. It also proved to be her last, as she passed away peacefully on September 24 to be with her Lord and Saviour. Annie is survived by her four children and their spouses and 11 grandchildren: Wally, Irma, David and Laura Friesen; Hardy, Ginny, Sarah, Rachel (Jared Lucas), Peter, and John Friesen; Ingrid, Rob, Anna, and Jacob Tiessen; Doris, Joe, Joseph, Matthew, and Ella Garrah. She is also survived by one brother and two sisters and one sister-in-law: Hans (Alice) Hildebrand; Tina (Franz) Dyck; Helen (Peter) Harder; and Mika Unruh.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Doell—Lisa Dawn (b. Dec. 22, 2009), to Ted and Brenda Doell, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Heide—Dexter James (b. Sept. 25, 2009), to Ben and Lisa Heide, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man.

Hofer—Noah Andrew (b. Dec. 16, 2009), to Melissa Hofer, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Aadan Ryder (b. Nov. 29, 2009), to Justin and Martha Klassen, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Kuttschutter—Gracie Marie (b. Jan. 9, 2010), to John and Nicole Kuttschutter, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Lennox Wideman—Callum David (b. Sept. 30, 2009), to Greg and Megan Lennox Wideman, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Martin—Austin Earl and Owen Leonard (b. Nov. 13, 2009), to Richard and Amanda Martin, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Narine—Evan Donny (b. Dec. 14, 2009), to Don and Corinne Narine, Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Patullo—Massimo Carmine and Nicholas Eli (b. Dec. 27, 2009), to Colleen Bauman and Mike Patullo, Ottawa Mennonite.

Pepper—William Robert (b. Dec. 12, 2009), to Bruce Pepper and Tina Wiens, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Reimer—Wesley James Braun (b. Jan. 13, 2010), to Erin and Micah Reimer, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., in Abbotsford, B.C.

Baptisms

Denny Schlichting—Springstein Mennonite, Man, Jan. 4, 2009.

Rebecca Ens, Trevor Jowett-Stark, Jessica Martens, Coryn Pankratz, Katrina Plenert, Hilary Schlichting—Springstein Mennonite, Man., May 31, 2009.

Deaths

Alden—Donna (nee Friesen), 49 (b. Sept. 7, 1960; d. Dec. 20, 2009), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Baer—Wayne, 80 (d. Nov. 24, 2009), Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Buhr—Walter, 77 (b. Sept. 24, 1932; d. Dec. 12, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Buschert—Donald Edward, 81 (b. March 16, 1928; d. Jan. 16, 2010), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Dyck—Susie (nee Thiessen), 97 (b. Jan. 3, 1913; d. Jan. 9, 2010), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Dyck—Wilhelm, 92 (b. March 11, 1917; d. Jan. 7, 2010), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Epp—Clara, 88 (b. Aug. 25, 1921; d. Dec. 11, 2009), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Fast—Peter, 78 (b. May 5, 1932; d. Jan. 5, 2010), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Fisher—Austin, 70 (b. June 27, 1939; d. Jan. 1, 2010), Didsbury, Alta.

Janzen—Edward, (Jan. 1, 2010), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Katie, 64 (b. Oct. 4, 1945; d. Jan. 10, 2010), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Janzen—Sieghard (Hardy), 97 (b. Oct. 20, 1912; d. Jan. 14, 2010), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Neufeld—Mary (nee Nickel), 85 (b. April 24, 1924; d. Jan. 7, 2010), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Petkau—Betty, 82 (b. Jan. 12, 1928; d. Jan. 16, 2010), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Snider—Paul Stanley, 78 (b. Dec. 15, 1931; d. Dec. 26, 2009), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Wiens—Nicholas, 85 (b. Oct. 29, 1924; d. Jan. 4, 2010), Glenlea Mennonite, Man.

Willms—Lydia (nee Berg), 82 (b. Sept. 17, 1927; d. Dec. 7, 2009), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

Poking the snoring parishioner

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

Being bored and even snoozing during the sermon is not a new issue. Acts 20:7-12 tells the story of Eutychus, a young man of Troas, who slumbered while the Apostle Paul “*talked on and on*” (NIV), eventually falling out of a third-storey window to his death—or so it seemed.



Content/Feeling (Chalice Press, 2004), found that there are three kinds of sermon listeners:

- There are those who like stories, evocative images and vivid language. These listeners want an experience; they want to be “moved” by the sermon.
- Another group is listening for the straight-up goods. These

listeners want the preacher to wrestle with a biblical or theological issue in a direct fashion.

- The third group of listeners will have their ears naturally attuned to the sermon

Throughout Christian history stories of people falling asleep or just being plain bored while the preacher holds forth are too numerous to count. These stories are sometimes meant to chide the sinful snoozer, but more often they are told to get a good laugh.

Church ushers in 17th century Britain not only collected the offering, but also had a long pole to poke the snoring parishioner with. Preacher and satirist Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) begins his sermon, “On sleeping in church,” with, “I have chosen these words with design, if possible, to disturb some part in this audience of half an hour’s sleep.” (*For the complete sermon, visit 4umi.com/swift/sermons/2/*.)

We could speculate on why people are nodding off in church. Some people are “nappers” and will nap in just about any setting where they are not physically active. There are different learning styles: those who are less auditory may easily tune out. Another factor might be the voice of the preacher; a “preaching voice” with a repetitive rising and falling cadence can easily lull some to sleep.

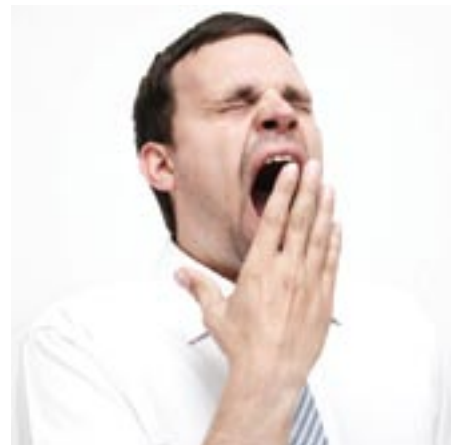
A recent study that focused on the listeners of sermons may shed some light on the issue of preaching and boredom. The Listening to the Listeners Project profiled in Ronald J. Allen’s book, *Hearing the Sermon: Relationship/*

Knowing how people listen is an important issue for preachers to be aware of, but Sunday morning boredom cannot be simply addressed from behind the pulpit.

simply because they love and respect the preacher.

In other words, if you are the kind of person who likes direct talk, you will likely tune out when the preacher tells yet again another story in her sermon. You are bored because the sermon does not get to “the point.” However, if your faith “comes alive” with a lively re-telling and fresh interpretation of one of Jesus’ parables, and the preacher is working through the Book of Hebrews in verse-by-verse mode, you may just begin to nod off. You are bored because there is “no feeling in the sermon, just words.”

Knowing how people listen is an important issue for preachers to be aware of, but Sunday morning boredom cannot be simply addressed from behind the pulpit. Listeners of the sermon share responsibility in making the sermon a true hearing of good news. The sermon



is not entertainment, and, like any kind of communication, requires active, not passive, listening.

Being bored on Sunday morning may have a lot to do with what we do the night before. How much sleep the listener has on Saturday night has a direct impact on willingness to engage in attentive listening.

Some churches strongly encourage members to read and study the biblical passage that will be the basis of the Sunday sermon. This puts the listener and the preacher “on the same page,” and will increase active listening.

Fortunately Eutychus lived to tell the tale of his fall from the window on the night that the Apostle Paul came to town and talked “*on and on*.” In Troas that night, the sermon was too long and at least one listener was too tired to listen. Nevertheless, the good news was preached and experienced. Thankfully God finds ways to work through and around our tired rhetoric and our sleepy eyes. ☺

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

STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

Light for the next step

BY JACK DUECK

After the agricultural exhibition, Stanley's editor says, "I'd like you to visit the McPhersons who won the ribbons for their sheep at the exhibition. There might be an interesting feature story there."

At a local café, Stanley asks about Ian and Mary McPherson. The responses are brief and varied: They're not from around here. They moved here from New Brunswick. We've had some problems with them, but the community rallied and set them straight. They win awards at the fair.

The McPherson farm throbs in spring renewal: lambs frisking about, ewes snipping the crisp new grass; young men mucking barns, training horses. Over mint tea on the verandah, Stanley asks, "What brought you to Western Canada?"

"It was a B&B that did it," Ian answers.

Chuckling, Mary explains, "Not a bed and breakfast, but a book and Bible study dubbed B&B by our priest. It gave Ian and me a 'new life map.' The discovery of Jesus and the Holy Spirit introduced us to thinking differently about everything: creation, our marriage, money. We enjoyed this new life immensely."

"So Jesus told you to move west?"

"Not really," Mary replies. "Our priest counselled us that the Holy Spirit gives light for only one step at a time. So with our new 'life map,' we decided to take a cross-country trip to learn more about Canada and its people, and to be ready for light for a next step. This small farm at a manageable selling price seemed a 'next step.' I raise sheep. Ian's specialty is raising quarter-horses."

Probing further, Stanley asks, "I hear that you also employ released prison inmates. Cheap labour? Or was this another step?"

"We believe it was another step," says Ian. "We were reading *Canadian History*



magazine with growing interest in the aboriginal story. Chief Joseph Brant was puzzled by the prisons whites built to lock away members of their community. Instead of isolating any, the Indians drew a circle including all. Even the delinquent would be disciplined through much conversation and communal control.

"We're not in competition with service professionals: social workers, psychiatrists, counsellors," he continues. "However, professional services still leave the client isolated in half-way houses, removed outside the pale of a healing community. We remembered that our priest used to quote the ancient Hebrews, 'Outside the tribe there is no healing.'

"Taking Jesus literally, our 'next step' was to visit inmates in a nearby prison," Ian explains. "As we became acquainted with inmates, we offered employment to a few parolees. We were amazed how beneficial the work with animals was for these fellows. It was a thrill to see Jimmy's face when horses whinnied at his footsteps approaching the paddocks."

"At this point, we thought it would be best to inform and include our community in this promising work," Mary interjects. "At a town meeting we were so pleased over the large turnout. To our shock, our enthusiastic presentation of our successful program was met by a sullen and hostile assembly.

"The loudest opponents were angry Christians," she tells Stanley. "Some

declared, 'We're trying to raise a Christian family. We can't have our children exposed to these dangerous convicts.' Another said, 'If we allow this, where will it lead? We could soon be overrun by perverts, even escapees. We need to take a stand now for our way of life.'"

Repeating what he told the community meeting, Ian explains that the employed parolees were not people imprisoned for violent crimes. "These are often just kids—19-year-olds from destructive homes—caught in delinquent behaviour," he says. "They respond to discipline of purposeful activity in community.

"We're not against the released convicts," a pastor responded. "Jesus died for them, too. Our mission is to proclaim the gospel. So it's not right to have a social program dumped on us here. That's why we pay taxes for halfway houses and parole officers to manage them."

"Did this shut your program down?"

Stanley asks.

"No" Ian replies. "We didn't need their permission, but we did naïvely think we could develop a community faith-based mission out of this. Unfortunately, now our employees do not get to socialize with church youths."

That fall local churches organized a bus tour for young people to visit a city mega-church, where an ex-convict regaled the entranced audience with tales of mob and underground

violence, ending the talk with lingo of being saved by Jesus: "And now I'm witnessing to the power of Jesus' blood to redeem even a murderer."

Turns out he was a con artist absconding with the offering monies. Back behind bars, no church members visit him now. ❧

Mennonite storyteller Jack Dueck can be reached by e-mail at eajdueck@gmail.com.



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Welcome Inn Church stops worshipping after 30 years

Second MC Eastern Canada congregation to close in a year

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
HAMILTON, ONT.

Welcome Inn Church in Hamilton is the second MC Eastern Canada congregation associated with a community centre to close in the last year. Warden Woods Mennonite Church in Toronto closed in June.

The Welcome Inn Community Centre began in 1966 as an outreach of Hamilton Mennonite Church, and was staffed with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) workers from the beginning. Born of a Bible study held by MVSers in 1978, monthly evening worship services at Welcome Inn began that year, with regular Sunday morning worship and Sunday School beginning in 1981.

Although the MVSers were encouraged to worship where they wished, their support in driving the community van on Sunday mornings, as well as in supporting the congregants—many who came with low income, social or medical problems—was key in the continued life of the congregation.

Both Tim Epp, who came as an MVSer in 1986 and served as the congregation's last chair, and Marv Friesen, the last pastor, noted that the demise of the MVS program in Hamilton severely reduced the congregation's capability to function.

Robert J. Suderman, then executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, noted that MVS was one of the programs that "were shed as a casualty of financial troubles in MC Canada's dramatic cutbacks" in 2003.

Although MVS was reborn as Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure, Epp noted that the program did not continue for any length of time in Hamilton due to a lack of financial and human resources.

The end of the program, together with a significant congregational crisis seven years ago, which led a number of key leaders and families to leave the congregation, and a pastoral transition, concentrated the work on fewer and fewer people.

Friesen called those who left, "stable contributors—leadership, money, a steady influence on the congregation."

According to Epp, at its height Welcome Inn had around 70 congregants, a number that had dropped to 25 at the end, with "an imbalance of gifts."

Leaders were in especially short supply. Both Friesen and Epp found the demands more than they could bear, with Epp pulling back early last summer and Friesen resigning effective Dec. 31.

The crisis this provoked involved MC Eastern Canada regional minister Al Rempel. He led the leadership and congregation through a discernment process, in which the congregation chose between ending all worship and supporting the development of a chaplaincy program overseen by the community centre.

Marion Rutter, a long-term member and former employee at the community centre, noted that the stark choice was difficult, and left some wondering why continued worship as a group wasn't an option. She had high praise for Rempel in how he led the congregation to make its choice in early November. Although they "may not have had time to help everyone to be comfortable with the closing," she, too, saw it as inevitable, adding that there was no energy to go into a pastoral search at the time.

The congregation chose to end regular worship and to support the community centre in developing a chaplaincy program.

Final worship services were held on Dec. 13 for former congregants and friends, and on Dec 20 for only the remaining congregants.

Rutter and Epp both expressed a great sense of grief and loss now that the congregation has closed. According to Rutter, there were loose ends both for themselves and for "the many who don't know protocols and rules" of society. It is "scary for some," she said, adding, the "needy people at Welcome Inn have nowhere to go" for worship now.

Friesen noted that one group has begun to attend a downtown United Church congregation. ❧

/// Briefly noted

North Leamington United Mennonite promotes interfaith bridge-building

LEAMINGTON, ONT.—A multicultural potluck lunch for around 40 people was held at North Leamington United Mennonite Church on Nov. 29 to celebrate the presence in the community of Mohammad and Haneya Kulaibi and their five children. Through a Mennonite Central Committee refugee sponsorship program, North Leamington is sponsoring this family who came to Canada after four years in a camp on the Syrian border. Present were many congregants who are volunteering their time and talents to help make the integration of this family as smooth and stress-free as possible. Also present at the lunch were members of a Muslim community in nearby Windsor. This time of interfaith bridge-building was arranged by Barbara Martens, an active and longtime member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) who has worked at establishing a close relationship with the Muslim community in Windsor.

—North Leamington United Mennonite Church Release



Retreating to rituals

By **KARIN FEHDERAU**
Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.

Enthusiastic singing and rhythmic worship marked many of the sessions during the third Prairie Winds Worship and Music Retreat held at the Shekinah Retreat Centre in mid-January. About 75 people from across Canada explored the emotional side of faith using in-depth sharing and an upbeat style not always found in some Mennonite churches.

Arlyn Friesen Epp, who works in the MC Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg, made sure he worked it into his schedule, attending the weekend event after several days of meetings in Saskatoon. "It's inspirational," he said.

Other participants weren't so sure. Trish Wiens, along with three young people from Yarrow United Mennonite, came to the conference hoping to find ways to bring life to their services. "It's not what I expected," Wiens admitted. "People choose a church because of the music," she pointed out.

The weekend promised to take a new look at rituals in the church using speakers from various Mennonite schools in Canada and the U.S. Attracting mostly congregational worship leaders, the conference seemed to draw those looking for a deeper experience of worship.

Ken Nafziger, music professor of Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia, spoke about baptism. "Rituals all have stories behind them," he said as he focused on the biblical account of Jesus' baptism. Admitting he appreciates the different ideas that come from writers outside the Mennonite church, Nafziger carefully explored the ritual of baptism using ideas from author Sarah Miles, who came to faith in Christ after growing up as an atheist.

After detailing his own baptism experience, Nafziger encouraged participants to share baptism stories with each other. In one group, participants represented three different generations; their accounts showed changes over time in the way some Mennonite churches practise baptism.

When an invitation to speak was thrown

open to the larger group, some participants spoke of painful memories with their official entry into the church.

"My baptism was such a disappointment," said Sharon Schultz, pastor of Eyebrow Mennonite in Saskatchewan. Others, too, shared difficult memories

associated with their own baptisms.

But despite embracing the good, bad and ugly of their faith struggles, much laughter and love seemed to permeate the room and draw participants together in a strong sense of community, as hearts were engaged during the worship weekend. ✎



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Written by Chris Craddock. Based on the novel by Governor General Award winning Miriam Toews. *Summer of my Amazing Luck* won the John Hirsch Award and was nominated for the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour.

A new 'school of thought' for Goshen College

Goshen will now reflect a more positive engagement in the world, president promises

BY JODI H. BEYELER

Goshen College Release
GOSHEN, IND.

The time for “yes” is here, said Goshen College president Jim Brenneman, who believes it is a new day at the school.

In his Jan. 15 chapel sermon, “Getting to yes and amen! The new GC ‘school of thought,’” based on II Corinthians 1:20-22, Brenneman juxtaposed the prior culture of dissent with a new culture of assent, and affirmed that both are needed.

“From 1924, by my reckoning, . . . until at least 1989, the normative school of thought at Goshen was that of the radical dissent,” said Brenneman. “There were more ‘noes’ than ‘yeses.’

Brenneman pointed to the earliest Anabaptists as the inspiration for dissent. “We came to such an ethos quite honestly,” he said. “They said no to the fundamental religious and civil order of the time. They rejected the church-state union, which had dominated Christianity for some thousand years. They championed human freedom and the separation of church and state, and they were persecuted and executed

for beliefs which have since been enshrined in all western democracies.

“Unfortunately, because so many of them were silenced and killed during those early years, they never really had the opportunity to try to put into practice a social or political model of how their beliefs might actually have played out in the world of nations and cultures where compromise can be seen as a positive norm.”

Manifestations of Goshen College’s “culture of dissent” include the publication of *The Anabaptist Vision* by Goshen College dean H.S. Bender, which called for true Christians to “withdraw from the worldly system and create a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church.”

In contrast, Brenneman told the story of philosopher J. Lawrence Burkholder—a 1939 Goshen College alumnus who went on to serve as Goshen’s 11th president from 1971-84—who was in attendance at the Jan. 15 event. When Burkholder wrote his 1958 dissertation, it went unpublished for

30 years and was nearly banned from public debate on campus at the time because of articulating a new “school of thought.”

This thesis “called for Mennonites and those trained at Mennonite colleges to become engaged in the civil, business, political and institutional establishments of the world,” Brenneman said. “In a bit of provocation, he asked, ‘What right has one to prophesy, without accepting responsibility for decision-making, management and accountability?’”

“Whereas the traditional rendering of the ‘Anabaptist Vision’ had ruled inadmissible participation in civic and national politics, Burkholder believed such participation in many circumstances was a high Christian calling, a worthy vocation,” Brenneman said.

Then as Goshen College president at the height of the Vietnam War, Burkholder made the decision—for the first time in the school’s history—to fly the American flag on campus, alongside a United Nations flag, “as an open door for active engagement with the community.”

Brenneman concluded by calling for a new day at the college, one in which both schools of thought have a home. “To side with one to the exclusion of the other is to settle for half-truths,” he said, adding, “But I believe at this time in Goshen’s history we need a lot more radical yea-sayers. We need to create a culture of assent alongside our historic culture of dissent.” ❧

Goshen College will play national anthem before sporting events

GOSHEN, IND.—Goshen College announced last month that it will play an instrumental version of the “Star-Spangled Banner” before select sports events on campus, followed by prayer. This decision will take effect in March, at the start of the spring sports season, and was made after discussion and deliberation over the past year. Providing a more hospitable atmosphere for athletic events was a primary reason for the recommendation and ultimately for the decision. “We believe this is the right decision for the college at this time,” says Goshen president Jim Brenneman. “Playing the anthem offers a

welcoming gesture to many visiting our athletic events, rather than an immediate barrier to further opportunities for getting to know one another.” In addition, the college sees the national anthem as a way that is commonly understood to express an allegiance to the nation of one’s citizenship. The college has shown that in the past in other ways: flying a flag on campus, praying for all men and women serving the U.S., welcoming military veterans as students and employees, annually celebrating the U.S. Constitution and encouraging voting.

—Goshen College Release

HELP FOR HAITI

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Canadian donations to Haiti relief top \$4 million

By Canadian Mennonite Staff

Personal donations by Canadians to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for earthquake-ravaged Haiti stood at \$4.2 million as of Jan 29, according to Rick Fast of the MCC Canada office in Winnipeg. With the Canadian government matching the Canadian donations, the total actually stands at \$8.4 million. The government will continue to match Canadian donations until Feb. 12. On top of the Canadian contributions, Americans have donated a further \$2.4 million US to the cause.

"We are gratified and humbled with the response," said Don Peters, director of MCC Canada operations, who had first set the overall-giving goal at \$1 million.

A 30-station appeal by Goldenwest Radio in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta raised \$210,000, while total contributions from Manitoba alone stood at \$1.5 million.

MCC Manitoba staff handled dozens of media calls in the first few days following the Jan. 12 disaster—from CBC French national television to local community newspapers—but the response has since fallen off dramatically.

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



Bryan Davis of CHYM FM in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., is busy at the mike taking call-in donations for MCC Ontario.

Local media in Kitchener, Ont., got into the spirit, too, setting up a donation call-in centre at the warehouse on Ottawa Street, where MCC relief kits were being assembled. All three Rogers-owned radio stations—570 Newstalk, KIX 106 FM and

'We are gratified and humbled with the response.'
(Don Peters)

Survivors, many of whom have lost their homes and are injured, stay in an open area as tremors continue throughout the day on Jan. 13 in the Narette zone of Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

MCC PHOTO BY BEN DEPP



HELP FOR HAITI

96.7 CHYM—were on site, while some 100 of their employees came in shifts during the day to assemble kits. With the help of local media in Kitchener, Ont., MCC Ontario's donations, as of Jan. 29, stood at \$1 million, said executive director Rick Cober Bauman.

"The listener response has been just amazing," enthused Christa Hicks, promotions director for the stations with a reach of 297,000 listeners in Waterloo Region. "Managers from the local Walmart and Hudson's Bay stores told me they had a run on relief kit items to the extent that they ran out of supplies."

Local church volunteers also came in droves to assemble the relief kits.

"Some 45 volunteers a day are signing up," said Trevor Adams, MCC Ontario material resources director, doing some 300 kits in the first four days. Kitchener's goal is to complete 5,000 of the expected 20,000 kits in both Canada and the U.S.

In Manitoba, provincial MCC staff were kept busy going out to speak to groups and organizations raising money for MCC, or collecting kits, said Fast.

MCC is still mapping out its response, which will include short-term relief plus recovery efforts over the medium- and long-term.

"We're looking carefully at how we can build peace, avoid violence and do good community development at the same time," said Daryl Yoder-Bontrager, MCC Latin America and the Caribbean director.

MCC's work in Haiti over the past years has focused on reforestation and environmental education, human rights and advocacy for food security.

MCC Haiti workers spend first night helping with search

In the minutes and hours following the Jan. 12 quake, MCC staffers in the quake zone began helping as they were able.

"We didn't sleep last night as we were pulling and digging people out of crumbled houses in our neighbourhood," wrote Alexis Depp in an e-mail on Jan. 13. She and her husband, Benjamin Depp, then searched for missing friends and co-workers.

"We're definitely in shock and can't begin to describe what the last day-and-a-half have been like here," she wrote. ☘

What goes in a relief kit?

- 4 large bars bath soap; leave in wrapping
- 1 plastic bottle shampoo (380 ml to 710 ml); place bottle in a re-sealable plastic bag
- 4 large bars of laundry soap (Fels-Naptha, Sunlight or Zote brands)
- 1 squeeze-tube toothpaste (minimum 130 ml); leave in box
- 4 adult-size toothbrushes; leave in packaging
- 4 new bath towels; medium weight, dark or bright colours
- 2 wide-tooth combs (15 to 20 cm)
- 1 fingernail clipper
- 1 box adhesive bandages (minimum 40, assorted)
- 1 package sanitary pads (18-24 thin maxi)



Edmontonian goes to Haiti with MCC disaster response team

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent

Sylvia Dening, who hails from Edmonton, Alta., cannot begin to fathom the destruction that the earthquake has caused Haiti's capital city, Port-au-Prince.

Dening lived in northern Haiti for 14 years—until 2006—working with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) on a reforestation project. When the earthquake hit, she told MCC that she would be willing to go to Haiti if it needed any more help. Shortly thereafter, she was on a plane to Haiti and spent a week there with a disaster response team.

Canadian Mennonite: What has drawn you back to Haiti?

Sylvia Dening: *When the earthquake happened, we said we would be willing to go if they had any extra work.*

CM: What were your initial thoughts of the situation?

Dening: *Haiti's overwhelming need. It's hard to know where to begin. This could be the biggest... well, it is the biggest crisis in*

the world right now. It's just immense.

CM: How, specifically, can Canadians help MCC relieve suffering in Haiti?

Dening: *Well, they can go onto the website (mcc.org) and donate money. We're coordinating relief efforts with the donations. We're also sending 100,000 cans of food.*

Churches can also put together relief buckets. You can also go onto the website and find out what to include like towels, sheets, flashlights and batteries.

Money is important because MCC has to pay for shipping the relief buckets. I believe we're shipping 20,000 of them. We're also hoping to send 20,000 tents and tarps, water filters, etc.

The easiest thing to do is send money at this point.

MCC is doing the best they can with what they have. It's all happened so fast. We are all hoping that the [money, school, and health kits] that we have donated will arrive soon. ☘

HELP FOR HAITI

Compassion more widespread than violence in Haiti

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE

Mennonite Central Committee Release

A group of Haitians found a six-year-old boy still alive in the rubble three days after the Jan. 12 earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He was weak but alive.

When Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker Ben Depp happened upon them, he was able to get a hacksaw and a flashlight that helped them complete the boy's rescue.

This kind of compassion—Haitians working together to help neighbours and strangers—is far more prevalent than the incidents of violence that are being reported on the national media, says Depp. “Most of the rescues that have happened have been by Haitians pulling their neighbours out of the rubble,” he notes. “A lot of the people who have been working don't have simple things like hammers, saws and picks, but they've pulled a lot of people out alive.”

Alexis Erkert Depp, who is also an MCC worker, says the violence she has heard about is caused by “truly desperate”

people who will do what it takes to feed their families.

As aid organizations struggle to roll out large-scale relief efforts in response to the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that levelled much of the capital city and the surrounding area, Haitians are still living in desperate circumstances.

At sunrise on Jan. 18, every free space—from streets to soccer fields—was covered with people sleeping outside, says Daryl Yoder-Bontrager, reporting what he saw as he surveyed a section of the city near where he is staying. Yoder-Bontrager, MCC area director for Latin America and the Caribbean, arrived on Jan. 16, along with three other MCC team members who will help Haiti's MCC staff to coordinate the initial disaster relief and recovery.

“It's hard for pictures to communicate the atmosphere of a city where thousands of people sleep in their yards or on the streets because they don't trust the structure of their houses, especially when the

aftershocks happen,” Yoder-Bontrager says in an e-mail.

The MCC workers who live in Port-au-Prince are doing all they can to alleviate the growing desperation for food and water in the community near their office. In the first few days, they were able to import a pick-up truck full of corn and sorghum from MCC workers in Desarmes, a town that was not damaged by the earthquake.

Depp reports that the MCC workers carried the food in their backpacks, handing it out discreetly to about 100 people, even as the workers try to buy and secure more food from the Dominican Republic and the Haitian countryside. Buying food is more difficult than expected because merchants are not accepting U.S. dollars as payment, and banks that would exchange money are closed.

Staff members are filtering water at the MCC office and passing it out to people. MCC ordered 1,000 water filters in the week following the earthquake that can each purify about 1,150 litres per day.

Erkert Depp is registering camps of displaced people so they can be matched with international aid that is coming into the country. Larger aid organizations are not allowed to move around the city without a military escort, but smaller organizations don't have the same restrictions. Through her blog, Erkert Depp has recruited others in Haiti to assist her.

“This is extremely important work since . . . people won't receive aid until these agencies know where they are located,” she states in her recruiting notice.

A larger MCC response is underway, with two shipping containers of canned meat being airlifted into Haiti and subsequent containers being shipped by sea. MCC will send at least 5,000 blankets and 20,000 relief kits.

Joining Yoder-Bontrager on the initial support response team are Kathy and Virgil Troyer of Orrville, Ohio, regional disaster management coordinators, and Sylvia Dening of Edmonton, a former Haiti representative. (See *interview on page 19*.)

MCC's Haiti team includes nine program staff and five support staff in Port-au-Prince and nine program staff in Desarmes. MCC's Haiti program has been in existence since 1958. ¶

MCC PHOTO BY BEN DEPP



Structural engineers sent by Mennonite Central Committee will spend up to four weeks evaluating homes in Haiti that were affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake, to determine if they are safe to re-enter.

MCC Alberta takes annual general meeting on the road

By DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

In Alberta, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) annual general meetings are often difficult to attend. Large distances of over a thousand kilometres separate places like Pincher Creek in the south from La Crete in the north.

"Wherever we have it, it's far away from most of the other people in Alberta," noted MCC Alberta director Abe Janzen.

So in January, the organization experimented with a condensed, travelling format. The meeting was shortened from 1.5 days to 2.5 hours, and it travelled to four locations: Edmonton, La Crete, Lethbridge and Calgary. A bus, rented for travel to La Crete, included staff, board members and constituents, giving them time to interact.

Where a traditional meeting had an average of about 120 people, Janzen estimates attendance for this year's experiment was 420.

"The comments that I got from people, and I made it a point in each meeting to approach people and ask, 'What do you think? Does this work?' And without exception, people said, 'Yes, this works,'" Janzen said.

Ruth Preston-Schilk, pastor of Lethbridge Mennonite Church, agreed. "I was pleased to not have to drive anywhere," she said. "I'm always glad for the brevity, compared to a whole day plus driving. In a way I think we covered the same sorts of things, but maybe we didn't have as much time to respond or ask questions."

Voting in four segments was not an issue.

"Our bylaws don't legally require the annual meeting to approve financial statements or budget by vote," explained board chair Randal Nickel. "They do require us to inform and interact with the constituents at the meeting and then to be accountable." By travelling to four different communities, MCC Alberta "was able to share this information with a lot more people,

and that is what we need to be doing."

However, a decision to dissolve a 1992 memorandum of understanding between Mennonite Mutual Insurance and MCC did need to be approved by vote. While the two organizations will continue in a spirit of co-operation, the termination acknowledges that they already operate independently. The motion was made and seconded at the first meeting in Edmonton, and then unanimously affirmed by vote at the others. If concerns had arisen, the board was ready to discuss them and set up a separate meeting if necessary.

The MCC Alberta board and staff will now evaluate constituency responses to determine what format the annual general meeting will take in the future. ❧

PHOTO BY HUN RYU



Betty Brown of Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, Alta., looks at Mennonite Central Committee's display at the organization's annual meeting stop in Calgary at Menno Simons School, one of four stops around the province.



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Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

Campaigning for peace

Local MPs and Saskatchewan churches next to be visited by Home Street Mennonite young people

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

The young people at Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, want to take advantage of Canada's prorogued Parliament this winter to visit every MP in their church members' ridings, in an effort to convince them of the need to establish a Canadian Department of Peace.

Over the past year, the youth group has used its meeting times to discern ways and means of moving this campaign along. They have talked with their families and congregation, and even brought a display to last summer's youth assembly, where they led a seminar on the topic.

Now they want to remind their MPs that Bill C-447, a bill to create such a department, passed first reading in Parliament.

"We want to remind them that this bill is in process. We don't want it to be lost," says Home Street youth pastor Kathy Giesbrecht.

"Because our young people come from all across Winnipeg, we want to show them that it is a huge group of people who want change," adds Peter Sawatzky, a youth member.

The group hopes to have these visits completed before the end of February.

During their school break in March, the youth group will be taking its message on the road. With the support of Mennonite Central Committee, the group will visit several Saskatchewan churches.

"We want to try and get them on board with the peace issue. It's important to let them know that they can play a role," says Sawatzky.

The youth group consists of about a dozen teens who have thrown their energy behind this issue. It is part of a growing international movement that now includes 30 countries, two of which have already

created departments of peace in their federal governments.

"The movement has been picking up momentum," says youth member Allison Baergen.

"We were shocked that so many people didn't know about this campaign, but we have received so much support and positive feedback," say Sawatzky and Baergen.

That support—and their own commitment to furthering God's kingdom by working for peace—keep them forging ahead. In addition to visiting their MPs and the trip to Saskatchewan, "we want to visit the other youth groups in the city this year," Baergen notes.

"I think the fact that we are youth and that we want to go and talk about this might help to make the politicians sit up and listen," says Sawatzky. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Churches call for Afghanistan peace mission

The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member, issued a brief late last year calling for an end to the war in Afghanistan through diplomatic and political means. The document encourages Canada to "mount a peace mission and to accord it the same level of political energy and commitment, along with requisite material support, as has been accorded the military mission to date." MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman said, "I wonder how the situation today might be different if, at the outset of this conflict, the resources spent on the military effort so far had instead been committed to nonviolent, non-militaristic engagement as this brief now proposes." A cover letter addressed to Prime Minister Stephen Harper and signed by Rev. Bruce Adema, CCC president, promises to "hold you and your government in prayer, as we hold the people of Afghanistan and the region in prayer."

—Mennonite Church Canada Release



Home Street Mennonite Church youth pastor Kathy Giesbrecht, left, and youth group member Allison Baergen study Bill C-447, an act to establish a Department of Peace in Canadian Parliament.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Looking back on a rich experience

James E. Horsch retires after 41 years with Mennonite Publishing Network

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Mennonite Publishing Network Release

Challenging, rich, full—those are the words that James E. Horsch uses to describe his 41-year career with Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN).

Horsch, who retired last fall as editor of Adult Bible Study, *Purpose* magazine and Mennonite Directory, among many other things, began his career with what was then called Mennonite Publishing House in 1968.

Over the decades he was responsible for developing and editing curricula for all ages, worship service bulletins, Vacation Bible School materials, devotionals, elective studies and books.

Looking back, Horsch says he enjoyed “a challenging, rich and full life in the world of Mennonite publishing. I experienced the broad scope of the types of editorial fields offered by MPN and, in the process, gained much knowledge of the workings, life and ministries of the Mennonite church in Canada and the U.S.

“I treasure the opportunity of working with many talented colleagues, as well as with many lay and professional workers and volunteers across the church.”

Horsch’s first assignment with MPN was to revise and upgrade the Mennonite Graded Sunday School Series. He then went on to edit two new children’s curricula—Herald Omnibus Bible Series and the Foundation Series—as well as updating the Herald Summer Bible School Series.

Other assignments included *Family Worship* and its successor, *Rejoice!* He also

assumed full editorial responsibility for the Mennonite Yearbook in 1975 (now Mennonite Directory); he served as its managing editor from 2003–09.

During his tenure, Horsch participated in several Mennonite church and ecumenical programs and events. This included serving as chair of the committee on the Uniform Series, a body that selects the biblical themes and texts for the International Sunday School Lessons used in the congregations of many communions in North America and around the world.

MPN executive director Ron Rempel says, “There is almost nothing for congregations that Jim didn’t have a hand in over the past 41 years. Generations of children, youth and adults have grown up benefiting

from the materials he helped create. He has left a lasting and valuable legacy in the church.”

“It’s been a great pleasure to work with James,” says Eleanor Snyder, who directs Faith & Life Resources, the congregational division of MPN. “I have appreciated his careful attention to detail as well as his professional responses to readers when they shared concerns about the materials he edited. He will be missed, not only for his expertise as an editor, but also for his warm, gentle, easy-going personality.”

Horsch has been succeeded by Sharon K. Williams, who will edit Adult Bible Study, and Carol Duerksen, who will edit *Purpose*. ❧



Horsch

*‘I treasure the opportunity of working with many talented colleagues, as well as with many lay and professional workers and volunteers across the church.’
(James E. Horsch)*

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ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

Worthy or not?

Avatar.

Starring Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana and Sigourney Weaver. Written and directed by James Cameron. Produced by James Cameron and Jon Landau. A Lightstorm Entertainment Release, 2009. Rated PG.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

Avatar, made by the director of *Titanic*, just won the Golden Globe for best picture and is on its way to becoming the largest grossing film of all time. It has already taken in more than seven times its \$237 million price tag.

Is it really that good, though? More important, is its strong humanizing message, its promotion of environmental concerns, its compelling spirituality and its fearless challenge of the U.S. military industrial complex exactly what we need to be watching in the 21st century, or is it just a predictably violent movie that will only be remembered for its groundbreaking 3D technical wizardry?

Few people think *Avatar* tells an original story. But like *Star Wars* before it, *Avatar* has captured the imagination of a wide audience, and people are returning for repeated viewings. Many are drawn to the beautiful rendition of another planet and culture, although much of *Avatar* felt too

much like an animated film to me; others are drawn to the romance or action.

I found the most fascinating parts of the film to be the scenes involving the goddess Eywa and the Tree of Souls. I believe they have much to contribute to a discussion about God.

I also appreciated the not-too-subtle critique of the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. At one point Jake Scully, the human hero, says, "I was a warrior who dreamed he could bring peace. Sooner or later, though, you always have to wake up."

Jake's character is the most well developed in the film. His honest, naïve nature is what allows him to literally walk a mile in the moccasins of another. Jake's transformation into one of the Omaticaya people lies at the heart of *Avatar* and suggests that we Christians need to learn what it is like to be a Muslim Arab without starting with our preconceptions.

So there is much to enjoy, discuss and commend in *Avatar*. Unfortunately, there is also a dark side to the film, most notably the redemptive violence needed to defeat the cardboard villains, the focus of the film's last half-hour. When the Omaticaya's Hometree is bombed, the "time for half-measures and talk is over" and it's time for violence.

Even Eywa sees no way out but to use the forces of nature to destroy the evil interlopers. By limiting even God to a violent response to conflict, Cameron is leaving our world in the hands of the very military industrial complex he apparently wants to challenge.

Giving the planet Pandora such a hostile environment with a warrior culture doesn't help. Why do we glorify warrior cultures like that of some aboriginal Americans or even the Klingons in *Star Trek*? There are many things we can learn from such cultures, to be sure, but the warrior mindset is not among them.

If *Avatar* fills its viewers with a sense of wonder, innocence and God's presence, and leads to humanization of the "other," care for the environment and a challenge to the powers of greed and war, then it is indeed a film for our time and worth watching more than once. But if it fills its viewers with hatred, thoughts of revenge and joy at the death of the enemy, or is mostly viewed as a joyride with awesome visual displays and lots of action and violence, then it is not worthy of its popularity or the Golden Globe. ❧

Vic Thiessen, until recently the director of the London Mennonite Centre, is a mission worker with Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

LIGHTSTORM ENTERTAINMENT PHOTO



Neytiri and Jake in a scene from James Cameron's Avatar.

FOCUS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Unexpected encounters with spiritual boys

BY ELSIE REMPEL

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA RELEASE

It was last Oct. 30—All Hallows Eve—and the students of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools were pulsating with the energy of the season. Some of them had already been to corn mazes and many were

PHOTO BY LINDA CLAASSEN



Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle School students walk the prayer labyrinth during an All Hallows Eve session with Elsie Rempel, director of Christian nurture for Mennonite Church Canada.

anticipating a time of trick-or-treating on the weekend.

To counter the darkness that often surrounds Halloween hype, the school held its first worship fair, a day of workshops on topics related to worship and connecting with God.

I had been invited to introduce Grade 3 to 8 children to praying with a 4.5-metre-square cloth labyrinth—a maze-like prayer tool. Symbolic of the pilgrim's journey, its concentric pathways and focused meditation/mediation stops bring the pray-er ever closer to God at the centre.

As 20 students waited for their turn to walk the labyrinth, they explored painting as a form of prayer. I wondered who would sign up, expecting this activity to be a “girl thing” that would attract more students from Grades 3 to 5 than from the middle school. But I was wrong on both counts.

Some interesting paintings developed. One painting by a 12-year-old boy began with random strokes of orange and black that slowly transformed into an impressive image of a burning bush. Later, this boy freely shared how surprised he had been at what developed. He recognized his connection with Moses, who found himself amazed to be standing on holy ground.

Another piece grew more and more intense with too much paint in moody colours. I placed my hand on the shoulder of this painter and commented, “Sometimes, strong emotions can come out through this kind of prayer, can't

they?” He confirmed this with an intensely whispered, “Yeah!” Group leaders helped him clean up the dripping paint as inconspicuously as possible and tried to stay out of the way of his encounter with the holy.

As the afternoon session began, I braced myself for an increasing level of energy among the group of 11- to 13-year-olds, most of them boys. But they settled into a quiet and reverent mood as they were introduced to methods of creating space for encounters with the holy. I encouraged them to bend down and pick up the olivewood carving of Jesus blessing the children, which awaited them at the centre of the labyrinth.

As they reached this position, many of them knelt down and some picked up the carving of Jesus. I was amazed to see two boys sitting together in the centre for several minutes, quietly holding this carving. I could tell they didn't want to leave. When the opportunity arose to walk the labyrinth a second time, they and three other boys returned. One, who had recently experienced a deep loss, was among them.

“We felt the Holy Spirit,” he said later of his time in the labyrinth.

The entire group of students remained subdued during the period of debriefing that followed the prayer walk.

Like the boy who had been surprised by the bush that had emerged from his painting in the morning session, I was surprised by the vibrant and energetic experience of holy ground that I had witnessed.

These particular boys are regularly exposed to worship music where they jump and shout, but they were more than ready to engage in contemplative activities. Did the more sedate activities of painting and walking provide enough action to channel their young male energy into conversing with Jesus? If so, it might provide the church with a valuable clue about young male ways of knowing and relating to God more intentionally. ❧

Elsie Rempel is the director of Christian nurture for Mennonite Church Canada.

FOCUS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Three acts of peace a day

Menno Simons Christian School
Release and Photo
CALGARY, ALTA.

Menno Simons Christian School, a Kindergarten to Grade 9 institution in Calgary, is focused on the theme of peacemaking. The mission of the school emphasizes teaching Christianity from the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition, of which peace is an integral component.

At Menno Simons, PEACEMAKERS means: Participants, Enthusiastic, Accepting, Christ-like, Encouraging, Mentors, Aspiring, Kind, Excellent, Responsible and Servants.

The mission takes on several components:

- Each grade takes a turn at planning, organizing and sharing its ideas of peace at chapels.
- Peacemaking is the central idea in the Christian education component of the school.
- Each class takes part in service projects throughout the year in and around Calgary, working for organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, Inn from the Cold, the Mustard Seed and Community Kitchens.
- The school is partnering with Mennonite Central Committee Alberta in



Grade 7 students Kennedy Krahn and Chantel Hertzprung record their daily acts of peace in their journals.

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implementing a program entitled “1,000 Acts of Peace” (not to be confused with a similar MC Canada initiative).

Students in all grades are recording three acts of peace a day for the entire year. The recording reminds students and staff of

their commitment to live as Jesus did, and to incorporate and spur everyone on to become more creative and intentional in their peacemaking lifestyles. Peace acts are recorded in journals that are made from recycled floppy disks and recycled paper,


a practical way of becoming peacemakers with the environment as well as in their own lives and in the lives of those around them. The school believes that peace can only come into this world through individual personal efforts, day by day. ☸

/// New staff

Betsy Petker new Rockway principal


KITCHENER, ONT.—Beginning Feb. 15, Betsy Petker will assume the role of principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener. A Rockway alumnus, Petker attended Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church in her childhood and youth, and is now an active member of Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Petker enjoyed 32 years of diverse and successful teaching and administrative experience with the Waterloo Region District School Board. Following 12 years as a principal in Waterloo Region public schools, she was employed by Wilfrid Laurier University’s Faculty of Education as program coordinator for the Laurier Enriched Academic Program. She has been an instructor with the Ontario Principals’ Council and is past-president of the Waterloo County Principals’ Association. “It is an honour to be offered the opportunity to become principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, and to extend my association with this well-respected educational community that has played such an important part in my own life,” she says of her appointment. “I look forward to working with the faculty and staff as we educate and develop young people who respect and value their role as contributing citizens of our global community.”
—Rockway Mennonite Collegiate Release





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Yellow Page Business Directory

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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.



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Calendar

British Columbia

March 20: Communitas Supportive Care Society presents "Mission and ministry: The next generation" conference, at Seven Oaks Alliance Church, Abbotsford. Keynote speakers: Tom and Christine Sine. Registration closes March 1. For more information, e-mail office@CommunitasCare.com.

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

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

March 5-6: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan annual general meeting, at Warman Gospel Church; (5) 7 p.m.; (6) 9 a.m. Keynote speaker: Martha Martens of Manitoba. Honouring John D. Friesen and Rev. Abram M. Neudorf (EMMC).

March 14: Evening of trios and quartets, at Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. Fundraiser for MCC.

March 21: RJC Chorale performs

at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, morning service.

March 27: Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising supper and silent auction, at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

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

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

March 6: "Blending music in worship" workshop, at CMU; 9:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information, or to register, call Shirley Thiessen at 204-487-3300 or visit cmu.ca.

March 14: Mennonite Community Orchestra and CMU choirs present Haydn's *Mass in Time of War*; 7 p.m., Loewen Athletic Centre.

March 21: Southern Manitoba CMU fundraiser featuring CMU Chamber Choir and Men's Chorus; 3 p.m., Winkler.

March 25: Verna Mae Janzen Vocal Competition, at CMU Laudamus Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

Ontario

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.

Feb. 19: 29th annual heifer sale put on by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc;

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

LEAD PASTOR

Richmond Park Mennonite Brethren Church is searching for the Lead Pastor whom God has chosen to lead us into the future. We are a multi-generational church of 250-plus that is seeking to faithfully make an impact on our city and surrounding area with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have recently completed a refocusing process and require an individual who can lead us through equipping and mentoring others for roles in ministry. Gifts should also include teaching and preaching.

We are located in Brandon, a city in Western Manitoba with a population of about 50,000 people, which is experiencing growth and increasing cultural diversity. Please forward resumes and inquiries to lysackd@mts.net. Closing date March 15, 2010.

at Carson Auction Facilities, Listowel, beginning at 11 a.m. All sale proceeds to MCC.

Feb. 19: Joseph Schneider Haus Museum, Kitchener, presents its annual Fellows Lecture, at 7:30 p.m. Topic: "From pioneering stewardship to green enterprise: Mennonite farming and

agricultural sustainability in Waterloo Region. Speaker: Christopher Yordy, M.Sc. in agricultural economics.

Feb. 20: House of Friendship Supermarket Blitz, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Kitchener-Waterloo supermarkets. Drop off your spuds or donations.

Feb. 26: House of Friendship

Community Potato Lunch, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kitchener, noon to 1 p.m. Lunch is free. Donations accepted.

Feb. 27: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Exploring the Possibilities Between" concert, featuring works by Tavener, Knudsen and Hopkins, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m. Tickets available online at DaCapoChamberChoir.ca.

March 5-6: Engaged workshop for

all engaged or newly married couples, Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank. For more information, e-mail denise_bender@yahoo.com.

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.

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

Hamilton Mennonite Church (www.hmc.on.ca) invites applications for the position of full-time lead pastor to begin Fall 2010. We are an active urban congregation of 96 members, prayerfully seeking a pastor with gifts in preaching, teaching and spiritual leadership. The successful candidate will be committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith and theology, and deeply rooted in biblical teaching. Persons with seminary training and a passion for pastoral leadership are encouraged to apply.

Interested applicants please contact:
MCEC Conference Minister
Muriel@mcec.ca or 1-800-206-9356

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Mennonite Church Manitoba is a community of 50 congregations seeking to live the Kingdom of God in the Anabaptist tradition. MCM congregations are found throughout Manitoba in urban and rural contexts. Our offices are located on the south campus of CMU in Winnipeg, where a staff of 10, together with a dispersed camp staff of 9, support Christian camping, evangelism and service, and leadership ministries.

Mennonite Church Manitoba invites nominations for the position of Executive Director. Our Church is looking for a leader with vision, a collaborative spirit and love for the church.

If you feel this calling for yourself, or would like to nominate someone who you feel would be well suited for this position, please respond to:

Hans Werner, Moderator (204) 487-2355 or
Executive Director Search Committee
Mennonite Church Manitoba
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1

LEAD PASTOR Graysville Mennonite Church

"A community striving to learn and live the teachings of Jesus Christ"

We are a country church located 10 miles west of Carman, Man. We seek a lead pastor able to start Spring 2010. Time commitment is negotiable between .5 - .75 FTE. We await the leading of the Holy Spirit as we seek a pastor committed to the Christian faith as exemplified in *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. We are a mature church of nearly 50 members emerging into a congregation of all ages. We seek a pastor able to serve all ages, willing to tackle the challenges of a truly rural church and recognize the value of cooperation with other Christian churches of all faiths.

Inquiries and resumes may be sent to: Cam Stockford, council chair, Graysville Mennonite Church, Box 31 Graysville, MB R0G 0T0; e-mail: stockfor@cici.mb.ca or visit www.graysvillemc.org.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ten Thousand Villages Canada is the largest retailer of unique, fairly traded products from around the world, with 50 locations across the country. We are starting our search for a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to help carry forward our mission to provide vital, fair income to artisans in developing countries.

The CEO will be highly skilled in retail operations management with demonstrated success in managing people, finances and processes within a dynamic and complex retail environment. In addition, the CEO will have previous experience with media/public relations, and be familiar with working with a Board of Directors. As our organization continues to experience rapid growth, we offer committed professionals the distinct opportunity to make a difference through Fair Trade.

Ten Thousand Villages Canada is a non-profit program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and accordingly, individuals considering employment should be able to exhibit a commitment to MCC's Core Values. This position is based out of New Hamburg, Ont., Canada.

To obtain a detailed description of this role and to submit an application via a cover letter and updated resume (in Word '97-2003 format), please contact: Ilda da Silva Storie via e-mail at ildadasilvastorie@mennonitecc.ca. Interviews are planned to be held between March - April 2010.

<http://www.tenthousandvillages.ca>

YOUTH PASTOR

Are you interested in being part of a supportive and supported pastoral team?

Do you feel led to help guide youth in their spiritual and life journey?

Are you excited about encouraging a life of Christian Service?

Nutana Park Mennonite Church is an intergenerational church of 250 people in beautiful and vibrant Saskatoon. We are welcoming applications to join us as YOUTH PASTOR. Preference will be given to those candidates with related education and experience in youth work along with a commitment to Anabaptist theology and the practices of the Mennonite Church.

Please see our website — www.npmc.net/youth — for more information.

**ACADEMIC DEAN – COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE**

This is a full-time Senior Administrative position which provides leadership in translating the vision and philosophy of Columbia into a dynamic community of learning, ensuring that the College provides quality programming and faculty. It is essential that applicants agree with CBC's Mission Statement, Responsibilities of Community Membership and Confession of Faith, and be prepared to join one of the supporting conference churches.

Visit www.columbiabc.edu/facultystaff/employment.html for the job description and application procedures.

**RESIDENCE COORDINATOR/ADMINISTRATOR
NEEDED STARTING SUMMER 2010**

The **Menno Simons Centre** is a residence for 22 Christian students attending the University of British Columbia and Regent College. The Centre is seeking to employ a married couple, who collectively would be expected to work the equivalent of one individual working three-quarters time. The position of Residence Coordinators is for a minimum of two years. The couple, both of whom are important to the Centre's community and student life, would live in the one-bedroom suite in the residence. Preference will be given to applicants who have attended university and are familiar with the Anabaptist tradition (e.g., Mennonite, Baptist). The couple is expected to participate in Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, which meets at the Centre. The coordinators oversee the room bookings, correspondence, deposits and cheques, building maintenance, Residence Assistants, and weekly community meal. The coordinators are guided by the Menno Simons Centre Committee, which is responsible to the Board of Directors of the Pacific Centre for Discipleship. This position will be available starting July 1, 2010, but must begin no later than Sept. 1. Letters of application and résumés may be sent electronically to rc2010@mennosimonscentre.com, or mailed to The Menno Simons Centre, 4000 West 11th Ave., Vancouver, BC, Canada V6R 2L3. For more information about the position, visit www.mennosimonscentre.com/rc or contact Jodie or Wes Smith, Residence Coordinators (604-224-5202) for a tour of the Centre. Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled; however, please provide application before Feb. 28, 2010.

Announcements

ZOAR MENNONITE Church (Waldheim) 100th Anniversary Celebration. Friday, July 2 - open house, barbecue supper and concert. Saturday, July 3 - late morning brunch and official Celebration Service. A catered supper, including reminiscing, will be open to all (small charge to cover costs). Former residents and the local community are invited to participate. If you plan to attend, please advise the office before June 1. Mail: P.O. Box 368, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0; e-mail: zoarwaldheim@sasktel.net; or phone: 306-945-2271.

Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, Sask., invites you to join us as we celebrate our **100th anniversary**, July 16-18, 2010. It will be a weekend of renewing old acquaintances, singing, worshipping and playing together as we remember the blessings of the past 100 years and anticipate the future. Further information is available through Elmer Balzer, Box 155, Langham, SK S0K 2L0, or by e-mail at zmchurch@sasktel.net.

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE****Notice of the 2010 Canadian Mennonite
Publishing Service Annual Meeting**

The 39th annual meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS), the non-profit corporation that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*, will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 13, 2010, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, 3471 Clearbrook Rd., Abbotsford, B.C.

On the agenda are votes on board actions and financial statements for the past year, and elections to fill any open CMPS board positions. The meeting is public, but voting is limited to CMPS members (who are all those who donated at least \$25 in the past year), and all current board members (see names and nominating bodies on page 3). Members who are unable to be present may complete the proxy voting form below and mail it to *Canadian Mennonite*, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7 before the meeting.

The annual report and audited financial statements will also be posted at *Canadian Mennonite's* website after the meeting.

Proxy Voting Form

As a member of CMPS, I hereby appoint:

_____ as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the CMPS Annual Meeting on March 13, 2010.

_____ Member's Name

_____ Member's Address

The murky pool reflects a wan winter sun



Ruskin's Pool 'B' by Pamela Leach

CMU professor turns a puddle into works of art

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

A Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) professor inadvertently became an artist when she stumbled across a puddle and saw incredible beauty in it.

The concept of water in its many forms is what Pamela Leach, a political science professor, captures in her digital photographic series on metallic paper, "Ruskin's Pool."

The series, interspersed with Leach's own poetry, was made public at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, located on the CMU campus, on Jan. 22.

Leach had always been an artistic person, but says she truly got involved in photography "by accident because [she] got obsessed with a puddle" located in Peanut Park in the Crescentwood area of Winnipeg.

To Leach, this "accident" turned out to be more of a "serendipitous spirit moving" that allowed her to be used as a vessel of the Holy Spirit for her own spiritual well-being and for that of others. She says the photos affect her profoundly because "visual images speak past word space into a more spiritual realm."

A theme she hopes her art will convey is that the beauty in the world "shows that love can extend to all, even when we least perceive it."

Although most of Leach's pieces document the natural changes that the puddle underwent over the course of a few weeks in 2008, some of the works document unnatural changes, including litter and water pollution.

That's why she named her series "Ruskin's Pool." In the 19th century, John Ruskin was the leader of the Arts and Crafts Movement as well as an outspoken critic of environmental degradation, especially water pollution.

"Ruskin called for a new relationship between the land and its people. . . he observed that we have been blinded to the full costs of our greed," Leach said in the gallery's newsletter.

Also appearing in the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery—following the same theme of water—is the photography of Sam Beardman with his series, "Water's Edge."

The exhibits run until March 6. ☘