



CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 5, 2010
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EDITORIAL

Words are powerful

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Speech seems to be on the public mind these days. As I write this, much of the Canadian press and Ottawa University seem to be in a spat over the sanctity of free speech springing from the invitation, then the cancelling, of right-wing American pundit Ann Coulter, who was to speak to the students.

"The university itself loses out when it lacks the courage to be a social laboratory," opined the *Globe and Mail*. "The University of Calgary is a 'beacon of light' compared to Ottawa's 'darkness,'" droned Rex Murphy, CBC's silver-tongued pundit, in praising the Calgary institution for actually following through on its invitation to let Coulter speak there.

South of the border, political leaders opposed to the newly passed health care reform bill have become so incensed that they have taken to employing the language of violence, such as John Boehner, the House minority leader, who declared that the passage was "Armageddon."

The Republican National Committee put out a fundraising appeal that included a picture of Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House, surrounded by flames, while the committee's chair declared that it was time to put Pelosi on "the firing line." And Sarah Palin put out an online map literally putting Democratic lawmakers in the cross hairs of a rifle sight.

While this war of words engulfs us, it might be instructive to examine how we use words in our own settings. We Mennonites, too, sometimes resort to the force of words to diminish each other rather than, as the Apostle Paul instructed the Ephesians, to "speak the truth in love . . . so as to build up the body."



Having just returned from visits to three of the area churches' annual general meetings, I have heard a lot of words. Many of them were inspiring, the imagery rich, oftentimes moving. I am remembering specifically Don Rempel Boschman's wonderful analogy of comparing God's "chosen people" to a "parade in which all participate and there are no spectators," when leading Mennonite Church Manitoba delegates in worship.

Or when Alan Kreider urged the MC Saskatchewan delegates to move from "exhortation to incarnation" in formulating witness language as they relate "authentically" to an increasing number of non-church-going neighbours.

Or when Terry Schellenberg, speaking to the MC Alberta delegates, compared so vividly the powerful influences of the dominant Roman Empire on new Christians in Paul's time to our consumer-driven culture of today.

But I also heard some discouraging words. I heard references to "rumours" floating around regarding styles of

leadership and an area church described as "still a patient in critical condition" after recovery from a "near-death" experience of division and strife. As a newcomer to the Canadian scene, I had to be brought up-to-speed on these histories.

That, perhaps, is a good thing, because I can bring a fresh set of eyes to these settings. Still, regardless of the past, the language bothered me. No stranger to conflict, I know all too well the destructive dynamics of church members walking away from each other when failing to agree on what is often camouflaged as "doctrinal" or "spiritual" issues. Our predisposition, as faithful disciples, to hold fast to our beliefs often trumps the call to keep in covenantal relationship with our sisters and brothers.

Let me suggest two antidotes:

- First, it might be helpful to see all of our work as, in the words of Alan Kreider, "God's kingdom-coming." He urged a spiritual discipline that he practises himself of praying that portion of the Lord's Prayer "your kingdom come, on earth as in heaven" three times daily—morning, noon and night. He asks God to show him where and how he is working rather than the other way around.
- Second, take heed of the words of Betty Pries, who, in working with churches through their lifecycle stages, says congregations should consider conflict as an ongoing dynamic. What matters is not that it exists, but how it is managed. Faithful people can disagree respectfully. She believes the church to be a place of "risk, searching, questioning and listening."

These constructs should give us some framework in choosing our words carefully for the building up of the body.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Tying violet ribbons for peace on a tree at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, are, from top left: Darcy Krahn, Lil Bartel, Trudy Rempel and Marg Werner. They joined worshippers in all Calgary Mennonite churches on March 21 in a pledge to witness for peace and 'acceptance of all people' after a year of violence in the city by white supremacist groups. See story on page 17.

PHOTO: DICK BENNER, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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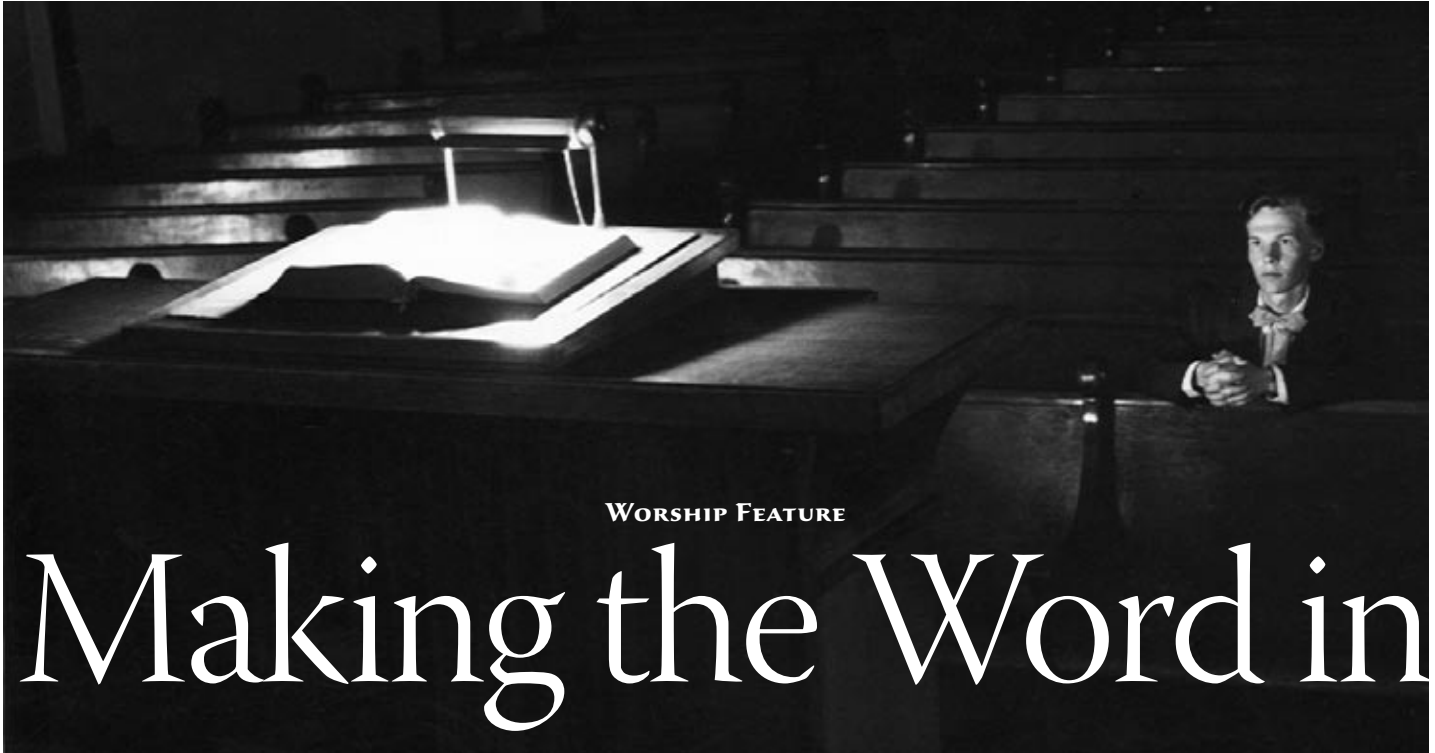
[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

An ocean prayer: **CHERYL WOELK**

391 (God's dirt): **PAUL LOEWEN**

Worth living for—worth dying for: **WILLOWMAN (AKA GENE STOLTZFUS)**. **THIS WAS HIS LAST BLOG POSTING BEFORE HIS SUDDEN DEATH ON MARCH 10. (SEE OBITUARY/TRIBUTES ON PAGE 20.)**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE



WORSHIP FEATURE

Making the Word in

By Christine Longhurst

The Word we proclaim in worship is not merely a record of how God once intervened in history—it is a living continuation of that intervention.

How much of your worship service is spent reading and hearing Scripture? 10 percent? 15 percent? More? Less?

In 2004, my doctoral thesis advisor, Constance Cherry, who teaches worship and Christian ministries at Indiana Wesleyan University, surveyed a wide variety of churches in the U.S. to see how much time was spent reading Scripture during worship. She discovered that in traditional, contemporary and “blended” churches, only 5 percent or less of the service was spent reading the Word of God. In most congregations, significantly more time was taken for announcements than for Scripture reading.

Granted, this was a study of American congregations. But I suspect a study of Canadian churches would look quite similar.

A history of reverence for the Bible

Throughout history, the reading and hearing of God’s Word has been an integral part of Christian worship. Early worshipping communities seemingly couldn’t get enough of hearing Scripture. In one of the earliest descriptions of Christian worship (155 A.D.) we read that “the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits.” By the beginning of

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK

worship come alive



the seventh century, a listing of suggested Scripture readings for each worship service (known as a lectionary) had been established.

The great Reform movements of the 16th century sought to keep Scripture at the very heart of the church's life and worship. Lengthy Bible readings—often a chapter or two at a time—were part of every worship service. Some churches even provided a running commentary alongside the readings, so that people could understand what was being read.

Tremendous reverence and respect for Scripture was demonstrated in many different ways: through the careful selection of gifted readers; in the reverent way in which biblical texts were handled in worship; in the spoken and sung congregational responses before and after the Word was read; even in the beauty with which Scripture was copied and

That the Word has an important legacy in Mennonite churches is apparent in the 1952 photograph on the opposing page. That legacy certainly continues in many places around the world today, if not so much in North America; in the photo above, worshippers at the Zion Church of the Messiah near Gabarone, Botswana, are asked to read Scripture "on the spot," according to photographer Dan Dyck. Worship workshop leader Christine Longhurst offers suggestions to churches that may be giving Sunday morning Bible reading short shrift, in order to revive the practice.

illustrated.

The reading of Scripture in worship was understood to be much more than just the sharing of information. There was a clear expectation that, when the Word was read, God was again speaking to the gathered community.

Is this how you experience the reading of Scripture in worship? Do you find yourself listening eagerly and expectantly, anticipating a word from God?

Reviving the practice

If your congregation is interested in strengthening the reading and hearing of Scripture in worship, here are a few ideas you might consider.

• **PRAY BEFORE THE READING OF SCRIPTURE.** Throughout history, congregations have prayed for the active presence of the Holy Spirit before Scripture is read. Traditionally, a prayer

before the reading and preaching of the Word was called a prayer of illumination. A prayer like this reminds us that we are dependent upon the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit if we are to hear the Word that God has for us.

• **USE MORE SCRIPTURE.** Instead of limiting the Scripture reading to the sermon text alone—as is the case in many congregations—consider using multiple texts throughout the service. Whether you follow the Revised Common Lectionary or devise your own reading plan, increasing the number of readings and their placement in the service can greatly enhance your opportunity to hear God's voice.

There are many places where Scripture texts can enrich worship: in a call to worship (Psalm 100); an invitation to praise (Psalm 33:1-4); a prayer of thanksgiving (Ephesians 1:3-14); an invitation to the offering (Psalm 116:17-18); a prayer of lament (Psalm 12) or confession (Psalm 51); the assurance of God's forgiveness following confession (Romans 8:1-2); a call to prayer (Psalm 55:16-17); the blessing of God as we leave (Numbers 6:24-26). Some congregations make a point of including a spoken or sung psalm in every service.

Reading the same passage of Scripture more than once in the same service can be very meaningful. Using different voices and translations can help us hear the passage in new ways. An entire worship service can even be built around

a single passage, exploring it textually, musically, dramatically and visually.

• **USE A VARIETY OF VOICES**—young and old; men, women and children; newcomers and life-long believers. What better way to illustrate that the Word of God belongs to the whole congregation?

• **ENCOURAGE AND EQUIP READERS TO READ WELL.** As is the case with other public ministries in worship, those who read Scripture should possess some natural gifts and be willing to work at improving their public reading skills.

Rather than being handed readings at the last minute, readers should be given a chance to study the texts and prepare them carefully in advance.

Some churches put together a list of guidelines to help readers in their preparation; others have found it helpful to create a readers group, in which individuals can receive feedback and encouragement in a smaller setting.

Two books that can help are Jack Hartjes's *Read the Way You Talk* (Liturgical Press) or Aelred Rosser's *A Well-Trained Tongue* (Liturgy Training Publications).

As is the case with other public ministries in worship, those who read Scripture should possess some natural gifts and be willing to work at improving their public reading skills.

• **USE DRAMA.** In 2001, Wanda Vassallo, a D.Min. student at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont., studied the effect of adding drama to Scripture readings. She discovered that people remembered and responded to Scripture readings much better when they were acted out in some way than when they were simply read.

Not all Scripture passages lend themselves to dramatic presentation, but many do. Costumes and sets are not always required; a simple readers theatre approach can also be effective. Michael Perry's *The Dramatised Bible* (recently republished by HarperCollins) does a wonderful job of presenting Scripture in a readers theatre approach.

• **INTERPRET TEXTS VISUALLY.** While we continue to value print and oral media, we live in an increasingly visual culture. Why not consider adding a visual component to Scripture readings? If your church is set up for video projection, you can easily access a wide range of traditional and contemporary art on biblical themes. (*Make sure you get permission if it is copyrighted.*)

A website like The Text This Week (textweek.com) offers a wonderful index

Pontius' Puddle



In one of the earliest descriptions of Christian worship (155 A.D.) we read that 'the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits.'

of online artwork linked to scriptural passages and topics. You might also explore the use of video; The Work of the People (TheWorkOfThePeople.com), for example, offers thoughtful video clips and is searchable by keyword or lectionary date.

• **SING SCRIPTURE.** Many of the hymns and songs we sing are scripturally based. Some are metrical settings of complete scriptural texts; others are paraphrases or clearly allude to biblical events or teaching.

Acknowledging the scriptural basis of the songs we sing—either verbally or in print—is a good way to highlight Scripture during worship. Churches that use bulletins can simply note the scriptural source beside the song title in the worship order. For example: “Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven” (Psalm 103). If you use video projection, it’s easy to simply note the relevant scriptural text on the first slide.

If you use hymnals, you can take advantage of the “Scriptural allusions and references” index at the back to help you find songs to match the day’s readings. If you sing more contemporary styles of music, you may need to do a bit more research on your own; while much praise and worship music is deeply scriptural, accessing scriptural references is not yet quite as easy.

• **ALLOW SCRIPTURE TO SHAPE PRAYER.** That is, allow the images and substance of scriptural passages to enrich the content and shape of your corporate prayer—what Russell Mitman in *Worship in the Shape of Scripture* (The Pilgrim Press) calls “the art of transposition.” If you are interested in exploring how Scripture can help shape worship leading, check out Mitman’s chapter on “Transposing the texts.”

Another wonderful source for learning to praying biblically is Laurence Hull

Stookey’s *Let the Whole Church Say Amen! A Guide for Those Who Pray in Public* (Abingdon Press).

• **LISTEN ATTENTIVELY, AND WITH ANTICIPATION.** The writer of Hebrews tells us that the Word of God is “living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

The Word we proclaim in worship is not merely a record of how God once intervened in history—it is a living continuation of that intervention. Those who read Scripture in worship are not merely teachers conveying information about God. Rather, they are the vehicle through which God’s Word comes to life again in the presence of the gathered people.

The last word

Aelred Rosser, author of *A Well-Trained Tongue*, once wrote: “The Word of God is

not a history lesson, though there is history in it. The Word is not a story, though it is full of stories. It is not a set of rules to live by, though there is much in it to guide our choices. No, the Word of God is a living and dynamic presence, achieving the very salvation about which it speaks even as the reader proclaims it.” ❧



Christine Longhurst has been studying, teaching and working in worship for the more than 25 years. In 2006, she completed her doctor of worship studies degree from the Robert

E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies in Jacksonville, Fla. She is currently a sessional instructor at Canadian Mennonite University and Booth College in Winnipeg. She spends much of her time offering workshops on worship and music to congregations across Canada. She can be reached at clonghurst@faithmatters.ca.

/// For discussion

1. What have been some of the more effective and less effective ways that you have heard Scripture read during worship? What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading longer passages? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a wide variety of people in reading Scripture?
2. What would it take for your congregation to use more drama, readers theatre or visual effects to enhance the use of Scripture in worship? Is the planning and energy required worth the effort? Is it better to have worship carefully scripted and planned, or to leave room for spontaneity?
3. Longhurst quotes Aelred Rosser, who says that “the Word of God is a living and dynamic presence.” In what situations have you experienced Scripture in that way? What does it take for the Bible to come alive? Is this more difficult for a “wired” generation?
4. The Bible tells the story of God’s people from earliest recorded time to the first century of the Christian era. If you were collecting stories of what God has done since then, what stories would you include? What would it take for such a collection of stories to gain the respect and authority given to the Bible?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attr: 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.

✉ Percentages of giving show 'what we value most'

RE: "SHOW ME the money" column, Feb. 8, page 9.

I was surprised to see that Mennonite Foundation of Canada stewardship consultant Kevin Davidson is calling "give 10 percent, save 10 percent and spend the rest" excellent financial advice. The message is further

/// Correction

Rick Zerbe Cornelsen's name was spelled incorrectly throughout the "In his father's footsteps" article, March 25, page 31. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

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reinforced by being highlighted in a larger colour font as the one thing that will stick in the mind of readers who don't have time to read the whole article.

Certainly, this is a challenging and excellent goal for many readers. However, there are also many of us in our Mennonite family and churches for whom it would be serious self-indulgence and poor stewardship to spend 80 percent of what we make.

Mennonite Foundation of Canada and other organizations would be limited in their ability to serve our communities and the world if all higher-income individuals gave only 10 percent.

Davidson states that "the percentages are not the issue." But the percentages are very much the issue. Depending on the capacity of the person or family, they are precisely the way to show "what we value most."

**REBECCA YODER NEUFELD,
WATERLOO, ONT.**

✉ Where Mennonites came from actually is important

RE: "DNA DOES not a Mennonite make" letter, March 8, page 13.

While questioning whether his non-Low-German-Anabaptist ancestry makes him any less Mennonite, Mark Morton declares, "I don't think that 'where we came from' matters one bit."

Such an anti-historical perspective is disconcerting on many levels, and its increasingly frequent voicing in Mennonite churches is particularly disheartening.

One would assume that, since Morton chooses to call himself Mennonite, he sees some value in the Anabaptist perspective or theology that we bring to the larger church family. The fact that Anabaptism survives to this day is thanks, at least in part, to those generations of Mennonite believers who evolved into an ethnic unit. My own Ésau ancestors were likely among Welsh Puritans who joined Dutch Mennonites before migrations began towards eastern Europe as a survival mechanism in the face of recurring persecution.

Had the movement not survived, there would have been no one to bring an Anabaptist perspective of the gospel to Africa, India or North America, or to Morton's own community.

The fact that Anabaptism survives to this day is thanks, at least in part, to those generations of Mennonite believers who evolved into an ethnic unit.

The majority of North American Mennonite churches still have a core of descendants of those survivors of history. While most are making very real efforts to open up, welcome and integrate believers of different backgrounds, this need not mean the denial of who we are and, yes, of “where we came from.”

I would invite Morton to celebrate this rich heritage while adding his own story to the ever-growing Mennonite story and his own “colour” to the Mennonite tapestry, without feeling he has to obliterate the rest of it in order to feel included.

BARRY ÉSAU, GATINEAU, QUE.

✉ Mennonite DNA Project detractors have over-reacted

IN THE MARCH 8 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, the merits of the Mennonite DNA project were brought into question in two letters: “Faith, not DNA, at the heart of being Mennonite,” and, “DNA does not a Mennonite make,” pages 12 and 13. While I concur with the points the writers make regarding the true basis of our Christian (Mennonite) faith, I do believe they have over-reacted or have not carefully read the article in question (“Piecing the Mennonite puzzle together one DNA at a time” article, Jan. 25, page 21).

The article is quite clear on a number of points that

FAMILY TIES

Putting the cat to sleep

MELISSA MILLER

Recently I took my sick cat to the vet, who diagnosed him as having a significant tumour lodged in his intestines. That explained the odd behaviour we’d observed, like him using the breadbox for a bed and the bathtub for a toilet. There were other signs of distress, including loss of weight and difficulties walking. I had prepared myself for euthanizing my cat, but it was still a hard step to take. I gave my consent to the kind veterinarian, and soon my pet had “gone to sleep,” as the euphemism goes.



Pet euthanasia is described as “a gentle death and a hard decision.” I can’t say if it’s a gentle death, although I’ve stayed with my three pets as they’ve died, and it seems to be peaceful enough. It certainly is a hard decision. On each occasion, part of what sustains me is knowing that the choice to end a painful life is preferable to seeing the pet continue to suffer.

There are a host of moral and ethical issues wrapped up in the small act of euthanizing a family pet, not the least of which is exercising the awe-full choice to end a life. There’s also consideration of the significant emotional and financial resources that are tied up in such an

action. And there’s a set of questions to ponder, including the different values we assign to different animals. Cats and dogs get a place of affection in the family home. Pigs and chickens become dinner.

While I give some attention to these questions, mostly I return to a belief that pets are like friends in furry coats. They’re part of God’s good and beautiful creation. The liveliness and affection of

Most Christians say that God is the giver of life, and we leave to God the timing of our deaths.

my animals has sustained me through some of the hardest times of my life, and I know I’ll continue to make a place for them in my home.

As I was preparing for my cat’s end, I was also saying goodbye to human friends dying in the early months of 2010. While some of them died suddenly, without warning, others died after months of declining health and great struggle. They and family members agonized over the steps of dying and faced questions about the quality of life: what measures to take to maintain life, and what interventions to decline. When we are walking with our loved ones who are suffering and facing

the end of life, we may wonder about euthanasia. If I can humanely euthanize my pet, to end its suffering, can I humanely euthanize a loved human being?

Most Christians say no. Most Christians say that God is the giver of life, and we leave to God the timing of our deaths. To take on the role of medically causing or assisting in a human death is to usurp God’s role. And trying to be God has been a human failing since Adam and Eve tasted forbidden fruit in the garden.

Our medical technology gives us many complex choices, but we, as a human

race, have not developed the same level of complexity to guide our decisions. Our technology is driven by desires to control life and death, to reduce suffering or avoid pain. We see much good in technology, but our world includes suffering and pain, and we, as Christians, confess that God is in control. Our human task is to find our way through these contradictory values and tensions, to arrive at compassionate, moral decisions.

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

dispel Dave Metcalfe's apparent concern, one which he finds "quite disturbing," namely that I Timothy 1:4 is a biblical basis on which to dismiss all pursuits of genealogical information. It is made very clear that this project is "exclusively for people of Low-German Mennonite background," the inference being that there are Mennonites who are not of Low-German background. The article clearly states that the project "aims to determine the number of common male ancestors for each Mennonite [Low-German background] ancestor, the number of female Mennonite common ancestors, and the deep ancestry for each." At no time is there any assertion that this project will somehow

have a bearing of any kind on our faith, whether inherited or adopted.

I'm sure both letter writers are aware of the fact that many people—not only Mennonites—share a passion for genealogy with the Mennonite DNA project's "scientists." Neither University of Guelph chemistry prof Glenn Penner nor Tim Janzen, a doctor in Portland, Ore., believe, or have stated, that their Christian faith is grounded in DNA. And the fact that this project has been called "the Mennonite DNA Project" is no more presumptuous than calling a particular congregation, "First Mennonite Church."

DAVE LOEWEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Counting the cost of retirement

MIKE STRATHDEE

Are you somewhat jealous of your teacher friends, who, in their early 50s, are already counting the days, only a few years away, when they can say goodbye to their day job while enjoying a full pension? Do you wonder how your circumstances will ever make retiring possible?

It is pretty difficult to find any biblical support for the modern notion of retirement—turning our back on work at a certain age. God made us to be productive. But society has taught us all to look forward to retirement, if not how to plan for it properly.

Concerns about retirement are increasingly common in media and government discussions, as

the largest generation of Canadians ever approaches and enters its retirement years: Fear about not having enough is a dominant theme. One recent poll of Canadians aged 50 and over found that about half of them weren't sure that their pensions, government and otherwise, would provide them with a comfortable

retirement.

Part of that pessimism may relate to ever-increasing expectations of what a "comfortable retirement" means. Most North Americans now view as necessities many things that previous generations would have called luxuries, or in many cases, not even have dreamed of. The financial industry contributes to retirement fears and gloom by insisting that people need to save \$1 million or more to avoid being in dire straits in the autumn and winter of life. Hearing what seems an impossible goal induces paralysis and denial for some.



Only a third of Canadians put money into an RRSP this year, and 30 percent haven't yet started saving for retirement.

It is also true that many of us aren't making retirement savings a priority. Some may be better off paying down debt or contributing to the new Tax Free Savings Account (especially people earning \$36,000 a year or less). Only a third of Canadians put money into an RRSP this year, and 30 percent haven't yet started

saving for retirement. This suggests many people don't have the cash to save for retirement or are spending it on other things.

The picture is not all bleak, however. Actuary Malcolm Hamilton says even people who start saving for retirement at age 50 with their debts paid off, and make large contributions every year until they retire, will be okay. He thinks many Canadians can live comfortably on a much lower retirement nest egg than what other expert voices claim. Saving \$300,000 in an RRSP while receiving full Canadian Pension Plan and Old Age Security benefits, a retired Canadian would have an annual income of about \$30,000 after tax.

What's the church's role in all of this? Will leaders help people to live within their means, save for later years and maintain God-honouring expectations? Help us, O Lord, to number our days and to count the cost of getting there.

Mike Strathdee is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

✉ Trusting in Jesus' blood alone, not Mennonite bloodlines

RE: "FAITH, NOT DNA, at the heart of being Mennonite," and, "DNA does not a Mennonite make" letters, March 8, pages 12 and 13. I would like to thank Dave Metcalfe and Mark Morton for the godly replies to the "Piecing the Mennonite puzzle together one DNA at a time" article, Jan. 25, page 21. At the time I had noticed this article I could not bring myself to read it. Sadly, I have mourned because of the effect of a genetic disorder known as hypo-phosphatase linked to this bloodline. It has taught me to trust in Jesus' blood alone. Maybe that is why this horrible disease exists.
DONNA NEUSTAEDTER, BRANDON, MAN.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Blank—Elizabeth Anne (b. March 4, 2010), to Martin and Jean Blank, First Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta.

Friesen—Lauryn Georgia (b. Feb. 21, 2010), to George and Jennifer Friesen, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Janzen McMinn—Annika Eve (b. Dec. 24, 2009), to Melana Janzen and John McMinn, Toronto, Ont.

Wiens—Zelda Marie (b. Feb. 2, 2010), to Tim and Laura Wiens, Grant Memorial Baptist, Winnipeg.

Zehr—Georgia Elizabeth Joan (b. Jan. 31, 2010), to Matthew and Avelea Zehr, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Marriages

Isaac/Petit—Tabitha Isaac and Dennis Petit, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Feb. 6, 2010.

Deaths

Boese—David, 86 (b. Oct. 8, 1923; d. March 7, 2010), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Brenneman—Art, 75 (b. April 19, 1934; d. Feb. 17, 2010), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

Epp—Ken, 47 (b. Sept. 22, 1962; d. Feb. 16, 2010), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Janzen—Ella (nee Heinrichs), 79 (b. Feb. 11, 1931; d. March 8, 2010), Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

Krause—Katie (nee Enns), 82 (b. Nov. 14, 1927; d. Jan. 3, 2010), Bethel Mennonite, Aldergrove, B.C.

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.

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Martyrs Mirror: Reflections Across Time

June 8–10, 2010



The conference, marking the 350th anniversary of the first publication of the Anabaptist martyrology *Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians...*, will feature plenary speakers James Lowry, Julia Spicher Kasdorf, Patrick Erben, and Sarah Covington. It will include presentations on spirituality, accounts of women, translation from Dutch to German, history of the first edition in America, and the work's reception among Anabaptist groups, as well as background on author Thielemann van Braght and illustrator Jan Luyken.

For more information or to register, visit www.etown.edu/youngctr, e-mail youngctr@etown.edu, or call 717-361-1470.

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THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

A few words away from danger

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

Preaching can be physically dangerous. The preacher standing alone at the front of the gathered church is highly vulnerable. Tomatoes, chickens and rocks have been thrown at preachers over the years. Guns have even been brandished, and hecklers have made death threats from the back pews.

Preachers in the Reformation era—whether Catholic, Protestant or



spoken up in college classrooms and in Mennonite pulpits on the issue of sexual abuse has received death threats!

The violence done or threatened against preachers suggests, at a minimum, that spoken words are powerful. These days we are tempted to say that words are empty and

devoid of meaning, or that visual media have replaced the power of the spoken word. Perhaps, but spoken words—be

nonviolent activity, but preaching is not a non-resistant activity. Preaching should clearly name and resist sins, wounds and powers that are contrary to the good news, even if a few listeners in the pews have tomatoes at the ready.

In the end, throwing tomatoes or rocks at the preacher is a dangerous activity, but the real danger is the gospel itself—for it radically confronts in love. The gospel is a grace-filled event that confronts, cuts through and judges us at the same time it transforms and speaks a radical word of love.

In worship we are calling on the all-powerful God to mold us, deliver us from evil and bring on the kingdom. These are not casual actions we are calling on God to perform. There is much at stake in our worship, even if we do not seem to see or acknowledge it. Perhaps we should carry tomatoes to church as a way to show that what is done, sung and preached in worship actually matters. Or, at the very

In worship we are calling on the all-powerful God to mold us, deliver us from evil and bring on the kingdom. These are not casual actions we are calling on God to perform.

Anabaptist—were often just a few words away from clear and present danger. Much was at stake: The Trinity, the sacraments and church hierarchy were life-and-death issues. Any sermon that deviated from what was considered normative from the viewpoint of the listening congregation (or the mob on the street) could result in verbal abuse or the pitching of any objects at hand, like rocks or eggs.

Preachers of other eras have faced considerable risk as well. Charles Wesley writes in his diary in June 1746 that in one town he was allowed to share the sacraments, but was threatened if he dared preach. Martin Luther King and Oscar Romero are likely the most public examples of the violent blowback that can occur when a liberating gospel word threatens the status quo.

But even closer to home, a Mennonite woman in North America who has

they words that incite violence, words that preach peace, or the encouraging words of political leaders (“Yes we can!”)—continue to shape people and communities.

The apostle Paul made a fascinating connection between preaching and violence, or more properly, between preaching and nonviolence. After his Damascus road experience, Paul intentionally exchanged a violent strategy for a pacifist strategy: preaching. Charles L. Campbell, professor of homiletics at Duke Divinity School, argues in *The Word Before the Powers* that preaching in the early Christian church was a conscious alternative practice to violence: human speech, as opposed to coercive action, was the way that the gospel of Jesus Christ would be communicated, shared and made present. The Word is mightier than the sword.

Preaching is, by its very nature, a

least, we should be sitting on the edge of our seats listening for the catastrophe of judgment and love that God is bringing our way.

Annie Dillard writes of the dangers of such worship in *Teaching a Stone to Talk*: “On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of the conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke [in worship]? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it. . . . It is madness to wear ladies straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews.” ❧

Allan Rudy-Froese is a doctoral student in the area of homiletics—the art and theology of preaching—at the Toronto School of Theology. He can be reached at allanrf@rogers.com.

STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

Thinking outside the law

BY JACK DUECK

In May 1974 the idyllic farming community of Elmira, Ont., was breathing spring's resurrection. Shrubs were in bud; robins rhapsodized at their completed nests over the expectation of new life; seed catalogues were set aside for the real thing. Elmira was a church community, a region at peace with neighbours, where doors were not locked, all in the harmony of law and order.

But an early morning rampage by two drunken teenaged hooligans vandalizing 22 homes and businesses one May day shattered the idyll. They broke plate glass windows, slashed car tires, smashed store windows and destroyed a church cross. Stunned community members called police and their insurance adjusters. Someone had seen the two thugs on their lawn and around breakfast time the police picked them up for questioning.

Five years before, Mark Yantzi, a young Mennonite of Amish background, had completed a B.A. in sociology from the University of Waterloo, Ont. Uncertain on a choice of profession, he agreed to a volunteer stint with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Doug Snyder, then executive director, assigned Yantzi to the court as a fill-in probation officer, writing pre-sentence reports on offenders for the judge, listing the nature and time of the offence and a history of previous citations. To him, the process seemed like a veritable chute into jail for those charged.

Finding himself living and working in two kingdoms—the court, with its laws, and MCC, with its “in the name of Christ” slogan—Yantzi soon noticed that in the Canadian legal system a property



offence is an offence against the Crown, and the law deals only in guilt and punishment, not in the human complexities of offender and victim.

Yantzi and another MCC employee, Dave Worth, became troubled by a law blind to the human dimension. Yantzi wondered aloud that “it would be neat for offenders to meet their victims and take responsibility for their actions.”

Worth thought it not only a great idea, but he suggested putting it into action in the Elmira case, offering a solution rather than mere evaluative criticism. With his pre-sentence report, Yantzi included a suggestion that it might be more helpful to the teens, their victims, the community and the state if the perpetrators faced their victims to apologize and make a commitment to make restitution.

Judge Gordon H. McConnell, known for being tough on offenders, called the idea interesting, but without precedent in law he was initially reluctant to take it under consideration. However, a few days later he agreed to remand sentencing on two conditions: that the boys meet the victims to apologize and that they make restitution for damages not covered by insurance.

Knocking on 22 different doors, the teens—with Yantzi and Worth behind them—did what one of them called “the hardest thing we ever did.” They faced each of their victims. Some were shocked, others expressed anger, while

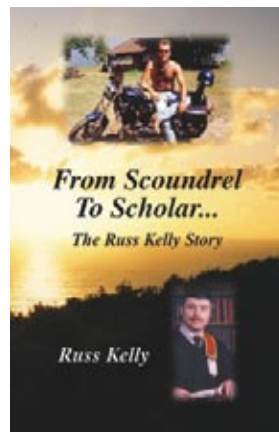
still others admitted to a desire to whip them. But they quietly identified themselves as offenders and made their apologies. Then they offered to repay each victim.

After working hard to raise the money, the teens again knocked on the 22 doors presenting each victim with a certified cheque. One older lady, who lived alone, invited the four in for milk and cookies, telling them how terrified she had been that night. Never expecting to actually see the money, she promised to donate it to another worthy cause.

This mustard seed planted in the rocky soil of the law germinated and grew into a tree of life-giving branches. First, the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program. This program, in turn, spawned Community Justice Initiatives, which today operates 17 programs and became a template for victim-offender programs across Canada and the U.S.

It also effected a change in the law. In 2003, the Canadian government replaced the Young Offenders Act with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and the Canadian Criminal Code was amended to include restorative justice provisions in sentencing.

Russ Kelly, one of the Elmira offenders, wrote in his 2006 autobiography, *From Scoundrel to Scholar . . . The Russ Kelly Story*, “It



still amazes me that something so wrong could result in something so good that has affected many lives in a positive way.”

Did Yantzi and Worth plan for big changes in society and government law more than 35 years ago? “No, we just wanted to address this one case,” Yantzi replied.

The kingdom of God, it seems, is truly like a mustard seed. ☼

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

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

New residence hall to be built at CBC

By AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Fundraising for a new residence hall, estimated to cost \$3.5 million, is underway at Columbia Bible College (CBC).

The four-storey residence for 134 students will be located on a section of campus that now contains several houses. This location was chosen to maximize campus life participation, being only a half-minute's walk from the dining room, classrooms and library. The suites are planned in a modular style allowing several students to live in each suite.

The capital campaign began last November, and currently the college is working on raising the middle million. The CBC board is working to have the needed funds in hand before construction can begin.

"We will start building when the money is in place," says CBC president Ron

Penner. "It depends on how God leads and prospers."

In 2004, the college demolished two outdated residences that had to be removed to permit expansion of the student centre. Currently, the college has only one residence hall, Columbia Hall, which houses female resident students. Male students are housed off campus in nearby apartments.

Penner emphasizes the importance of campus life for CBC students, adding that students who must live off campus in apartments don't really feel the same sense of being a part of college life. "The lessons learned living in residence are priceless," he says, adding, "Our definite hope is that students will be in a top-notch residence setting that will foster their sense of safety and community." ❧

'We will start building when the money is in place. It depends on how God leads and prospers.'

(CBC president Ron Penner)

/// Briefly noted

School, camp benefit from successful fundraisers

Two Mennonite institutions recently experienced a satisfying show of support from the Mennonite community in Saskatchewan. On March 7, a Guys 'n' Pies event raised almost \$16,000 for Rosthern Junior College from a cake auction and separate donations. The evening included the musicianship of the Buncha Guys men's chorus along with a male group from the school. Paul Thiessen auctioned off a total of 15 cakes, while people consumed a variety of pies. A second fundraiser, held two nights later in the same area, was for the Youth Farm Bible Camp; it netted \$8,000. The money will be used to move the current Eigenheim Mennonite Church building to the camp property, to serve as the camp's new chapel and office space, while a basement to be dug under the building will serve as guest rooms, bathrooms and meeting space. The move will take place sometime between this fall and next spring, depending when Eigenheim's new church is built.

— BY KARIN FEHDERAU

DRAWING COURTESY OF COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE



An artist's rendering of the new Columbia Bible College residence, anticipated to cost \$3.5 million.

Church may be 'on to something'

During 'Sabbath rest' Whitewater Mennonite discovers 'just how few things are really necessary'

By Canadian Mennonite Staff

It's been six months since Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain, Man., laid aside its committee work, to rest, read Scripture, and engage in prayer and fellowship with one another as part of the congregation's year-long "Sabbath rest."

"All decisions or work that is deemed 'nonessential' has been deferred for the year and all other necessary issues and decisions are discussed at monthly congregational meetings," explains pastor Judith Doell.

"In Leviticus 25, God's people were instructed to observe a year of jubilee; a year of Sabbath rest away from the regular work of getting ahead, and a year where freedom and release became the main activities of the community," she says, adding, "We at Whitewater Mennonite Church wondered what a year of jubilee might look like in our context. What would it look like in our context to stop our regular church work, and seek a new sense of freedom and release in our life together?"

A year ago, Doell told *Canadian Mennonite* that the decision to explore a new approach was because the church structure had become too cumbersome.

Since the year of jubilee was proclaimed last September, work that the congregation mutually determines as "essential" is accomplished through voluntary sign-up sheets.

"Our motto through all this is: 'If no one signs up, we just don't do it,'" Doell says. "This is accompanied by: 'No judging!' If someone is not volunteering their gifts this year, we will assume they need a Sabbath rest."

To the congregation's surprise, Doell says Whitewater Mennonite is discovering "just how few things are really necessary."

"We might actually be on to something,"

she suggests. "Didn't Jesus say to Martha, 'You are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her' [Luke 10:41-42]? We are trying to learn what it means to sit at the Lord's feet." ❧

From a release by Whitewater Mennonite Church and files from Manitoba correspondent Evelyn Rempel Petkau.

❧ Briefly noted

Saskatchewan historical society meeting profiles EMMC

This year's Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan annual general meeting focused on the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC). As part of the activities, tributes to the late EMMC pastors John D. Friesen and Abram M. Neudorf were given by family members. Keynote speaker Martha Martens from Winkler, Man., showed slides of all the EMMC church buildings in Canada, both open and closed, and shared extensively on the history of the conference. The historical society decided to increase its membership rates: annual memberships are now \$30; two-year memberships are \$50; and the three-year rate has been raised to \$75.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

❧ Staff change

MC Canada appoints new executive secretary of support services

WINNIPEG—Vic Thiessen has been appointed as Mennonite Church Canada's new executive secretary of support services as of April 1; he replaces interim executive secretary Louie Sawatsky. The position will eventually transition to chief operations officer. Thiessen has significant experience in many aspects of administration, most recently as the director of the London Mennonite Centre in England, where he worked for seven years. Before that, he was the director of the Welcome Home Community in Edmonton, a government-funded Mennonite social service agency working with young families in danger of losing their children to children's services, for five years; he also founded the Rockmere Christian Study Centre in New Brunswick and then co-directed it for six years. Thiessen was instrumental in organizing the Root and Branch Radical Christian Vision Network and has chaired the Network of Christian Peace Organizations, both in the U.K. He is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the University of Manitoba, both in Winnipeg, and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. He brings with him a strong passion for the work of the church, for what it means to be Anabaptist in today's world, and for the church to relate to young adults in a way that genuinely includes and involves them, according to MC Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman. Thiessen continues to be *Canadian Mennonite's* regular film reviewer.

—Mennonite Church Canada Release



Thiessen

Board changes at Canadian Mennonite

By **DICK BENNER**
 Editor/Publisher
 ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Tobi Thiessen, a stay-at-home mom from Toronto with an M.B.A. degree, was elected chair of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (which publishes *Canadian Mennonite*), at the annual meeting of the 12-member board held last month at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. During her first term as a member-at-large, Thiessen was treasurer for the board.



Thiessen

Thiessen succeeds Larry Cornies, a journalism professor from London, Ont., who decided to step down after six years on the board. Cornies stays on the board, however, representing Mennonite Church Eastern Canada until that area church's annual meeting later this month.

New members elected to the board are:

- Carl Degurse, a writer-editor for the *Winnipeg Free Press* newspaper; and
- James Moyer, a retired Agriculture Canada research scientist from Lethbridge, Alta.



DeGurse



Moyer

Degurse fills the seat left by Joanna Reesor McDowell of Stouffville, Ont., who decided not to run for a second term.

Moyer, representing MC Alberta, fills the unexpired first term of Doris Haysom Daley, a western cowboy poet, who resigned in December 2009.

Les Klassen Hamm of Saskatoon, Sask., was elected to fill the vacated treasurer position.

Margaret Ewen Peters of Hanley, Sask.,

continues as vice-chair in her second term as a member at large.

Ed Janzen of Abbotsford, B.C., beginning his second three-year term representing MC Canada, continues as secretary.

John Goosen of Delta, B.C., representing MC Canada for a second term, chose not to stand for another term. MC Canada will name his successor later this year. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Myths about abuse exposed at MCC workshop

LEAMINGTON, ONT.—“Building healthy relationships within the family and church” was the theme of a Jan. 30 workshop, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and led by Gavin Michaels, a Christian counsellor who has worked with community service agencies in southwestern Ontario. More than 20 people from various Mennonite churches met at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, for the event. “To be our authentic self requires us to embrace a journey with a risen Saviour, Michaels said. “We were created with a core longing to experience God at our deepest levels; anything less would leave us with an internal void.” He presented many myths and facts about abuse among Christians, which reminded participants that, even though the church has been talking about sexual abuse for years, many myths are still alive. Participants were left with questions like, “How do you forgive abuse?;” and, “How do you report it?” The Amish resource on setting healthy sexual boundaries, “A fence or an ambulance,” was distributed. Books were available on building self-esteem for children and adults. Hearing first-person accounts of the journey from being abused to living life out of abusive situations proved inspirational for many.

—By **RUTH BOEHM**

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FRONT COVER STORY

Violet against violence

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
CALGARY, ALTA.

Melanie DeSouza-Cook, the wife in a mixed-race marriage, knows first-hand the sting of discrimination in Calgary. She has had obscenities and racial slurs hurled at her in the grocery store. Some neighbours are uncomfortable with her family living in that part of the city.

But DeSouza-Cook, a Catholic by faith, her husband Derek Cook and their eight-year-old daughter refuse to be cowed by fear. DeSouza-Cook has just self-published *A Family of Ice Cream*, written primarily for her daughter, who, three years ago, asked why their local Calgary community couldn't have a "blue ribbon" service to

celebrate the different races in their church and neighbourhood.

Blue turned to "violet," but that service came to pass on March 21, as Foothills joined other Calgary Mennonite churches to focus on the topic of racism and pray for peace in their worship services. Worshippers were given violet ribbons to wear as an expression of their peaceful dissent to the ideology of white supremacy and hate so evident in this city over the past year. More than 2,000 ribbons were distributed at services throughout Calgary.

After tying their ribbons to a tree, worshippers were given a violet ribbon to take

home with them. Those ribbons contained a pledge: "Today, I will reject all forms of hate; respond to all with peace and nonviolence; work with justice, peace and compassion for all people; stand with those who are victims of hate and racism; see God in every person I meet"

The event was initiated by the Calgary Mennonite Inter-Ministerial Association, which chose March 21 because of its significance as the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. With a strong statement opposing race hatred (*see sidebar below*) and the special worship emphasis Sunday, the association issued a call for peaceful responses to the rise of white supremacist activity in the city.

"We are deeply concerned about the spread of hate activity in the city and the rise in violence associated with it," said Doug Klassen, senior pastor at Foothills and chair of the inter-ministerial association. "We believe we are called to speak out against injustice and advocate for peace, and witness against all forms of violence." ❧

Excerpt from a joint statement of the Calgary Mennonite Churches concerning white supremacist activity in Calgary:

As local members of the Mennonite church that forms a worldwide community of faith and life that transcends boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language, we offer the following statement of beliefs:

1. We believe that all people are created in the image of God and that all humanity shares a common ancestry.
2. We believe that God cares for creation and has consequently expressed a universal love for all humanity. As such, we are called to live in peace with one another, and the mission of humanity is to build a just and peaceful world in the likeness of God, whose work is peace.
3. We believe that no portion of the Earth belongs to any one particular people or group. The Earth is the Lord's, and we serve as stewards of a portion. Consequently, we believe that racism is violence and a violation of the integrity and harmony of human relationships.
4. We believe that no one can be whole in a broken world and every part of our being is affected by the world that we inhabit. Racism is a "dividing wall of hostility" that prevents all humanity from sharing in the cosmic good.
5. We believe that we are called to speak out against

injustice and advocate for peace in solidarity with the oppressed, and witness against all forms of violence, including hostility between races.

6. We believe that God's ultimate goal is to reconcile all creation to himself, and this includes all peoples. Consequently, we believe that we are called to seek reconciliation between peoples while ensuring that past injustices do not continue.
7. We also acknowledge that, historically, church leadership has failed to speak out against injustice and has often remained silent in the face of oppression and violence.

A call for reconciliation

As members of the Christian faith community, we therefore:

- Reject publicly and completely the doctrine of racial supremacy and hate, both as individuals and collectively as a faith community;
- Affirm our belief in nonviolence;
- Call on all persons and institutions to move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people, and seek reconciliation between all peoples in our community; and
- Express our solidarity with those who have found themselves the victims of racial supremacist ideas or actions, or the ideology of hate, and call all people to show love and compassion to the stranger in our midst.

Introducing Muslims to Jesus

Self-proclaimed 'Christian of Muslim background' speaks of his conversion experience

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

WINNIPEG

When Christians proclaim the unique claims of God to Muslims, it often goes awry when they bring Jesus into the equation, according to Emmanuel Ali El-Shariff, who says it is inconceivable—even sacrilegious—to Muslims to say that Jesus is the Son of God.

At the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) public lecture series, “Proclaiming the unique claims of Christ: Negotiating the Christian-Muslim interface,” that took place last month, El-Shariff, who was born and raised a Muslim in Sudan, examined how Jesus can be extremely offensive, and yet at the same time amazingly moving, to people who practise Islam.

After 26 years of being a Muslim, El-Shariff now believes that changing his view of Jesus from only a prophet was the first step towards accepting Christ as his personal Saviour, and is the first step for most Muslims.

It is important to build off of the Jesus spoken about in the Koran, El-Shariff said; otherwise, Muslims more often than not reject the claims. Verse 3:49 of the Koran is a good place to start, he said, noting that this verse opened the door to Christianity for him. It states that Jesus was a messenger to the people of Israel and that he created a clay bird, breathed into it, and, by Allah's permission, the clay bird became a real, live bird. Later in the verse, Jesus says, “I heal



El-Shariff

those born blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead by Allah's permission.”

“This was the verse that started elevating Jesus Christ, to think of him as more than a messenger,” El-Shariff told the CMU crowd. “If you are really planning on proclaiming the unique claims of Christ to Muslim people, this is your verse,” he said.

Another thing that helps Muslim people understand

the Bible, especially Jesus, is the examples it provides, as well as the stories. “The Koran never gives any explanations, and no examples. The Bible has examples and stories,” he said, explaining that the story of Lazarus “made Jesus very distinct to me.”

Another thing that opens Muslims up to the possibility of accepting Jesus as the Christ, he said, is that Jesus was the only one to claim to have authority over sin. El-Shariff thought that he understood the concept of sacrifice because Muslims believe in sacrificing, but the idea that Jesus would die to take away all of his sins made him think, “Hey, I would give him a chance,” he said.

El-Shariff became a Christian in 1995 when Christian missionaries visited him and they had discussions about the Bible and the Koran. When he could ask questions freely, El-Shariff was surprised, as many of his questions about Islam ended with him being punished. When he asked a teacher at school why Muslims need to

pray towards Mecca, he said, “[The teacher] thought I was blaspheming and I was suspended for a week.”

When a friend of his wrote a poem about Allah's laws of punishment years ago (including the line, “You cut off my hands, you cut off my legs, are you God or a butcher?”) El-Shariff said his friend was executed for blasphemy.

Because of these reasons and more, El-Shariff said he became a Christian and his life was changed “without doing the five prayers [toward Mecca], without fasting for 30 days, and without doing anything the Koran asks.”

“Jesus miraculously intervened in my life,” he concluded.

El-Shariff is a teacher and public speaker, and is deeply involved in evangelism and media ministry. He also established the Evangelism by Correspondence Network. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Growth at Eden requires more space

WINKLER, MAN.—Two of the newest programs of Eden Health Care Services have grown so rapidly in the last three years that additional space is being built to accommodate the increased activity. Eden's newest program, run in partnership with four congregations, is Mennonite Addictions Services; it provides biblically based, cultural and language-specific counselling and support for individuals, couples and families experiencing challenges due to addictions. The growing number of requests for this service from across the region has now stretched the ministry beyond the capacity of the existing Eden office space in downtown Winkler. At the same time, Eden's Segue employment program has also grown at a rapid pace, requiring more space for vocational assessments, and group and classroom activities. Both programs will expand into available space next to the Segue and Eden Health Care Services offices. —Eden Health Care Services Release

El-Shariff now believes that changing his view of Jesus from only a prophet was the first step towards accepting Christ as his personal Saviour.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Celebrating abilities

Carrying the Paralympic flame represented the spirit of international games for Peace Mennonite Church member

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

When Bonnie Sawatzky rolled her wheelchair down the student union plaza hill just after lighting the Paralympic torch at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver last month, she remembers a crowd of people surrounding her. “Go, Bonnie, go!” they yelled.

“It was the most amazing experience and quite an honour,” recalls Sawatzky, a member of Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., and associate professor of orthopaedics at UBC. “My friends, family, and students from my lab and class came out to celebrate with me. I felt so special.”

With controversy surrounding the millions of dollars spent on British Columbia’s hosting of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, and with some Mennonites wondering if the games’ inherent emphasis on nationalism and winning are in line with a Christian worldview, Sawatzky has her own opinion.

“The games are about celebrating abilities,” she says. “Yes, it’s expensive, and we, as Mennonites, are socially conscious of this fact. However, if one considers the immense expense of [different] countries’ war efforts, the Olympics is much less expensive and brings the world together to celebrate their athletes and just enjoy some competition.”

Sawatzky also notes that a spontaneous spirit of fun and celebration in Vancouver surrounded the games: “For Canada, it brought us together. The world needs reasons to come together and put aside their political differences for a change.”

For Sawatzky, carrying the flame was a memorable and thrilling experience that represented the spirit of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (the latter are elite sporting competitions for athletes with



Bonnie Sawatzky, a member of Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., was the first to carry the Paralympic torch upon its arrival in Vancouver. She is pictured with her supporters and Leon, her service dog.

disabilities that follow the international Olympic Games in the same city). She reminds herself, “It’s not about me, it’s about the Olympians doing these amazing things. Whether they recognize it or not, God gave these [athletes] the gift of abilities and the flame symbolizes that spirit. We are amazing creatures of God.”

Sawatzky first learned about her

potential involvement through a phone call from the Paralympic Organizing Committee last Christmas Eve. “That was a Christmas present in itself,” she admits.

Just as the torch for the Olympics travelled across Canada, so did the Paralympic torch. The flame had come from Greece to Ottawa, and then went to Montreal and Toronto before coming to B.C. The last day before the Paralympics began,

UBC PHOTO BY MARTIN DEE

the flame arrived in Vancouver and Sawatzky was the first person to carry it that day. Each torchbearer carried the flame a distance of 300 metres.

Although not active as an athlete now, Sawatzky did participate in sports in earlier years. “I loved cycling and swimming prior to a car accident in 1993,” she says. “However, I was born with a birth defect called arthrogryposis, a spinal cord disease similar to polio. It affected my hands and feet. I competed in the B.C. Summer Games and also did a triathlon for fun. In 1993, I had a car accident which [injured] my hip and generally left me very weak, so I now use a wheelchair to get around outside of home.”

Sawatzky used to run with her first service dog, Phoenix, who has since passed away. She is also a member of the Disabled Sailing Association.

A member of the UBC Faculty of Medicine, Sawatzky does research in the field of spinal cord injury. She also leads a provincial network called the Disability Health Research Network. ❧

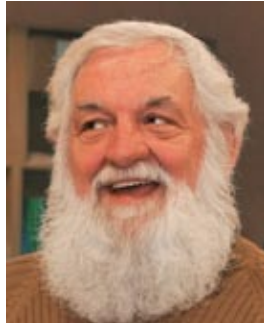
OBITUARY

'Little by little there will be change'

Gene Stoltzfus

Feb. 1, 1940 – March 10, 2010

From Christian Peacemaker Teams Releases



Gene Stoltzfus, the founding director of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), died of a heart attack in Fort Frances, Ont., while bicycling near his home on the first spring-like day of the year. He is survived by wife Dorothy Friesen and many peacemakers who stand on the broad shoulders of his 70 years of creative action.

Stoltzfus was at the heart of those who planted and nurtured the vision for teams of peacemakers partnering with local communities in conflict zones to build justice and lasting peace. This vision grew into CPT, with Stoltzfus playing key roles in CPT's founding gathering of Christian activists, theologians and other church

leaders at Techny Towers outside Chicago in 1986.

Two years later, he became the first staff person of the newly formed organization, and continued as CPT's director for the next 16 years. In the early years, Stoltzfus and CPT's steering committee experimented with various approaches to activate faith-grounded peacemaking. Through the early 1990s, he gave leadership to solidifying the vision and practice of sustained teamwork in situations of lethal conflict. During the late '90s and

early years of this decade, he guided CPT through its growth and maturation as an organization supporting nonviolent action around the world.

Stoltzfus travelled to Iraq immediately before the first Gulf War in 1991, and spent time with the Iraq CPT Team in 2003 to facilitate consultation with Muslim and Christian clerics, Iraqi human rights leaders and families of Iraqi detainees, all the while talking with American administrators and soldiers. The team's work contributed to the disclosures of abuse at Abu Ghraib Prison that gave impetus to the still-tentative worldwide movement for military forces to attend to the rights and protection of civilians and prisoners.

From mid-December 2001 to mid-January 2002, Stoltzfus and current CPT co-director Doug Pritchard were in Pakistan and Afghanistan listening to the victims of bombing and observing the effects of 23 years of violence—much of it fed by forces from outside Afghanistan.

CPT PHOTO



Gene Stoltzfus talks with Shia women in Najef, Iraq. The women were pleading for help in finding missing relatives.

Tributes

Gene was a special person. He was also my friend. By chance, I met him on March 7, just a few days before he died. He and Dorothy were in Winnipeg, and decided to attend worship at my church before heading back to Fort Frances. After the service we spent a few minutes reminiscing about old friends and old times. We promised to stay in touch. That won't happen, now that he is gone. But Gene Stoltzfus's legacy lives on.

JOHN LONGHURST, WINNIPEG

Gene Stoltzfus was indeed larger than life . . . His spirit, courage, warmth and humble, engaging nature will live long in the hearts of many, from co-workers in the struggle for peace and victims of oppression around the globe, to the children of Emo, Ont., who thrilled to his role of jolly, white-bearded St. Nick.

THOMAS FRIESEN, VANCOUVER, B.C.

The message of Gene's death touched me deeply. I know him since the Techny consultation in 1986. Just over a year ago I sat with him at the kitchen table at my home. We talked about getting CPT involvement going in the Netherlands. He was a great help in that starting

phase. His presence in congregations and a conference showed a rare mix of empathy, humour and personal conviction. For each audience he had a special way to approach dialogue. This example will stay with me as a guiding image of how to work for peace.

MAARTEN VAN DER WERF, CPT support group, Netherlands

I like to thank God for having had the opportunity of meeting Gene last year in Berlin. He was an inspiration for my congregation, the Berlin Mennonite Congregation, and for my work.

MARTINA BASSO, director of the Mennonite Peace-center of Berlin and pastor of the Berlin Mennonite Congregation, Germany

“Where have you been all these years?” asked an Afghan leader, articulating the voices of others around the globe.

Stoltzfus’s commitment to peacemaking was rooted in his Christian faith and experience in Vietnam, where he served as a conscientious objector with International Voluntary Services during the mid-1960s, when U.S. military action there was escalating. He recalled watching the helicopter personnel unload their cargo of bloodied bodies. He said this experience set him “on the search to make sense of life and death where the terms of survival, meaning and culture approve and even train for killing.”

He had to ask himself if he was willing to die for his conviction of loving the enemy just as Vietnamese and American soldiers all around him were being asked to give their lives in order to achieve peace and security.

In the early 1970s, Stoltzfus directed a domestic Mennonite Voluntary Service program with a view to engaging with the social justice and peacemaking needs of that day. He recognized then the enormous importance of local, disciplined, trained

community and congregationally based peacemaking efforts.

Later that decade, he and his wife co-directed the Mennonite Central Committee program in the Philippines during President Marcos’s martial law era, focusing on human rights and economic justice. The couple then went on to help establish Synapses, a grassroots international peace and justice organization in Chicago, to connect the United States and people in the developing world.

Stoltzfus grew up in Aurora, Ohio, then a rural town in the northeast part of the state, where his parents gave leadership in a Mennonite church and his father was the pastor. He graduated with a degree in sociology from Goshen College, Ind., and earned master’s degrees in south and southeast Asian studies from American University, Washington, D.C., and divinity from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Stoltzfus and Friesen lived in Chicago for 25 years until his retirement to Fort Frances. After retiring from CPT, he travelled widely to speaking engagements,

blogged regularly at peaceprobe.wordpress.com, and made twig furniture and jewellery as a contribution to the greening of the world.

The closing paragraph of Stoltzfus’s final post on his blog is an expression of his conviction and hope: “Every one of us is impacted by a dominant culture which insists that military or police force will make things right. Every day, that culture tells us that dirty tricks, usually done in secret, are required for our survival. After all, it’s argued, someone has to do this dirty work. It’s called a noble work and . . . mercenaries are required for the work. It will take an expanding worldwide but grassroots culture reaching beyond national borders to fashion a body of Christian peacemakers to be an effective power to block the guns and be part of transforming each impending tragedy of war. Little by little there will be change.”

More than a hundred locals attended his memorial service at Emo United Church in northwestern Ontario. Other memorials were held around the world in the U.S., Jerusalem, the Philippines and Iraq. ❧

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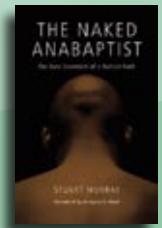
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ARTBEAT

New book gives greater voice to minority Reformation traditions

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Release
ELKHART, IND.

Walter Sawatsky, professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), has edited proceedings of two ecumenical consultations in a newly released book, *Prophetic and Renewal Movements: The Prague Consultations*, published by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

This volume includes the proceedings of the two most recent consultations in a series that began in 1985. These consultations

offered for the first time a place for voices from minority Reformation traditions to be heard within the larger context of ecumenical conversations. They started with participants who represented European Reformed movements nearly 500 years ago—the First (Hussite) Reformation and the Radical Reformation.

Through sponsorship by WARC, the Lutheran World Federation and Mennonite World Conference, the consultations expanded to include participants from

a broader sweep of Reformed churches. The volume just published includes proceedings of the sixth consultation, which met in Strasbourg, France, in 2000, and the seventh, which met in Prague, the Czech Republic, in 2003.

“The conversations began with minority churches, and the integrity of the discussions gradually attracted Lutherans and other groups,” explained John Rempel, associate director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS. Because the marginalized churches had been participants from the beginning, “they remained on equal footing in the discussions,” he noted. Sawatsky, in his work of editing and facilitating publication of the proceedings, “has carried them forward to an audience that would not otherwise know about it,” Rempel concluded.

Sawatsky said that the consultations gave participants opportunities to consider how they have lived with their histories. The Reformation groups asked themselves and each other, “What failed? What got tested and proved worthwhile?” Sawatsky said that his emphasis “was to notice how we talked with each other, and how ecumenical fellowship and dialogue changed us.

“Change processes that matter develop slowly,” he continued, “but some transformations happen when more of us learn to think differently.”

Sawatsky and Rempel both believe this volume can be helpful as the different Reformation traditions prepare to celebrate their 500th anniversaries. ❧

PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN



The four choirs of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), together with the Mennonite Community Orchestra, performed classic works by Mendelssohn and Haydn and lesser known pieces at the March 14 “Choral Connections” event at CMU. Soloists included Dave Dueck (tenor), Kelsea McLean (soprano), Katie Doke Sawatzky (mezzo-soprano), Amanda Bruneau-Schroeder (soprano), DeLayne Toews (tenor), and Jorge Hidalgo (baritone and conductor for one piece); the soloists were all CMU students or alumni.

/// Briefly noted

Len Enns nominated for Juno Award

WATERLOO, ONT.—Len Enns, conductor of the DaCapo Choir and music professor at Conrad Grebel University College, has been nominated for a Juno Award for his composition, “Nocturne,” from the choir’s *Shadowlands* CD. “Nocturne” is nominated in the “classical composition of the year” category. The piece was composed specifically for the DaCapo Chamber Choir by Enns back in 2005. The text Enns used is from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, in which Lorenzo is describing the music of heaven to Jessica. “I tried to recreate, in the music, a moment of engaged, energized, near-magical reality,” Enns says. “The closest picture of this is stars playing hide and seek with the curtains of northern lights on a prairie winter night.” Enns and his wife plan to attend the Juno Awards ceremony in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, later this month.

—Conrad Grebel University College Release

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FOCUS ON SUMMER

UpComing

Combines called back to Winkler for another world-record harvest attempt

WINKLER, MAN.—Four years after Winkler hosted more than a hundred combines in an attempt to set a record for harvesting 65 hectares, the rural southern Manitoba community is at it again. On Aug. 7, World Harvest for Kids 2010 hopes to bring together more than twice as many combines to harvest 97 hectares and hopefully set a record this time. An adjudicator from Guinness World Records is to be in attendance to determine if the event can set a record for “the most combines working simultaneously in one field.” The current record is held by a group of Irish farmers, who harvested a field of wheat with 175 combines. Children’s Camps International of Winkler is sponsoring the event, and hopes the harvest record attempt will raise awareness and funds for the international evangelical children’s camping ministry. For more information about this event or ministry, visit ChildrensCampsInternational.com.

—From a Children’s Camps International Release

CMU cyclists to pedal for foreign student aid

WINNIPEG—A team of five cyclists, made up of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) faculty members and alumni will race from Vancouver to Winnipeg in pursuit of ultra-marathon cyclist Arvid Loewen, to raise money for international student financial assistance and international practicums. Hot Pursuit 2010 begins on July 17, when CMU’s team of five will try to overtake Arvid Loewen, who is racing for the Mully Children’s Family Charitable Foundation, which helps abandoned and orphaned children in South Africa. Team CMU will race around the clock, attempting to cover 2,400 kilometres in three-and-a-half days. CMU director of enrolment Abe Bergen says, “Many [international] students wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for our financial awards program. Monies raised through Hot Pursuit 2010 will strengthen support for international education.” For more information, or to sponsor a Team CMU participant, e-mail hotpursuit@cmu.ca.

—Canadian Mennonite University Release



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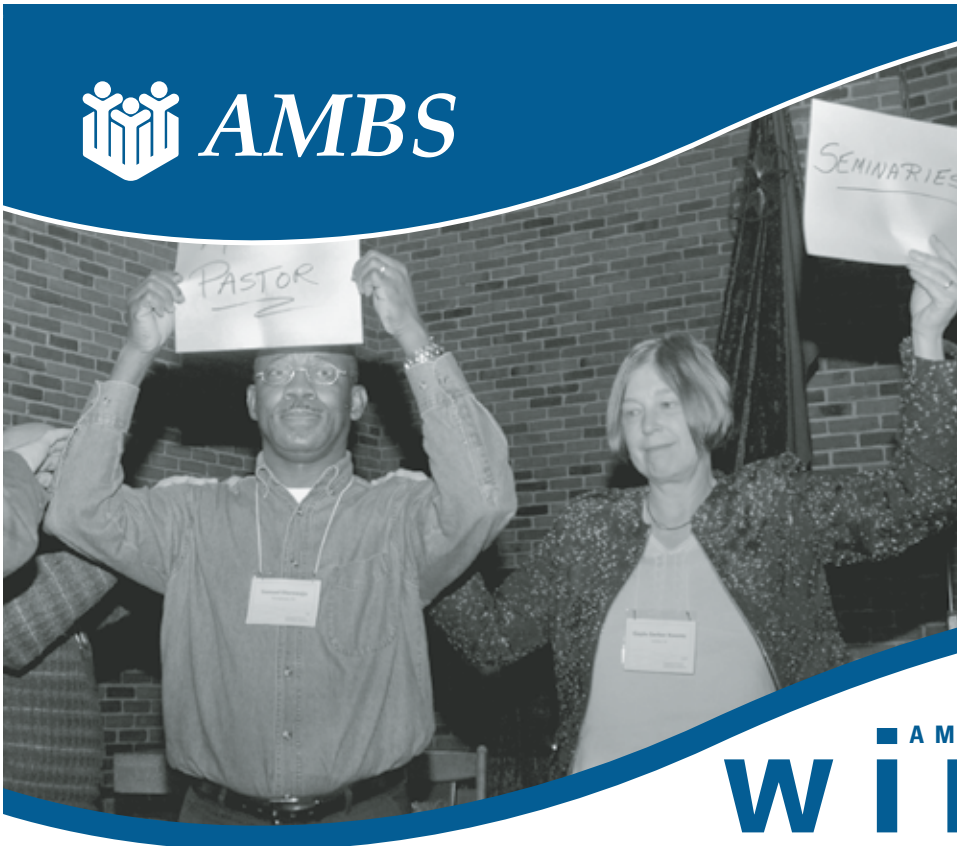
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AMBS



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Panorama

Spring 2010
Volume 20 Issue 2

AMBS
window

Sustaining strong and vibrant congregations

Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, associate dean for leadership education

"Engaging Pastors will transform seminary-church connections through sustained interaction between professors and pastors. Our learnings will feed into our formation of pastors and serve as a primary vehicle for AMBS strategic planning even as we support the ecology of ministry."

This bold claim served as the mission statement for the Engaging Pastors project, which AMBS coordinated from 2005 through 2009.

Lilly Endowment, whose grant funded the program, emphasized that strong and vibrant congregations need:

- high quality pastoral leadership
- theological education
- a network of institutions that must work collaboratively in addressing challenges and in maintaining strong and vibrant religious communities, including congregations, regional and national judicatories, colleges and universities, seminaries, independent agencies, retreat and

conference centers, publishers and other supporting organizations. This network is the "ecology of ministry."

Engaging Pastors created time and space for sustained conversations about ministry so that people from different points in the network—pastors, professors and area church, conference and denominational leaders—could learn and benefit from these exchanges, and so they could begin to imagine new ways of working collaboratively.

When we established the program we decided to build in a lot of entry points, so we had ten separate programs within the larger Engaging Pastors grant.

Over the last five years after each "engagement," we received reports from participants. As someone who is charged with reading all these reports, I assure you that it is almost mind-boggling how many of these pastor-professor conversations occurred,

and I can attest to the transformative power of these conversations for both professors and pastors.

Others also read the reports, looking for recurring questions and issues, and three themes emerged. (See page 2) The Summative Conference, December 1 to 3, gave us an opportunity to test these and explore them further with pastors, denominational leaders, leaders of regional conferences and area churches, and educators from Mennonite ministry and theological schools.

We brought together representatives of each sector of the church charged with preparing and sustaining pastors—denominations, schools, and congregations. We discovered that our learnings from Engaging Pastors resonated with these leaders but that more conversation is needed to move forward. Although the grant period is over, I pray that the conversations will continue for the sake of sustaining strong and vital congregations. ●

Engaging Pastors: What we learned

Dorothy Nickel Friesen



In the opportunities I had to meet with professors and other pastors through the Engaging Pastors program over the last five years, I discovered that both pastors and professors were surprised to discover all kinds of things.

We love our congregations! We were surprised to articulate so easily that most of us truly love our work and our small part in the larger picture of discipleship, faith formation and experiencing the closeness of the reign of God.

Professors were startled at how important they were to forming pastors. The reality that AMBS

grads (in this case) were now life-long friends was matched only by remembering classes, worship in the chapel, spiritual direction and faith-shaped classes and prayers that stayed with them. In short, the person of the professor and the person of the pastor have an impact on each other's lives in ways we had not articulated.

We found out how narrow our contexts are. Professors saw how Anglo they were when faced with the Seminario Bíblico Anabautista in Dallas. What micro-world was imagined when teaching a routine class in Elkhart? What good was AMBS to an immigrant, undocumented Hispanic pastor in Dallas?

We were surprised how easily we learned from each other, how thirsty we were for each other's passion for Jesus Christ, how much we looked to the same Bible for guidance, how much we loved to talk with each other.

We were surprised by each other's loneliness. No one prepared us for those first years in ministry—alone, isolated—with few peers to have discussions with. How much we missed the classroom in spite of the grumbling about heavy reading loads and endless reflection papers and long class periods. And no one told professors that they would study by themselves a lot and would counsel individual students a lot and would feel they were teaching in isolation often convinced that their discipline was the most critical for the students.

We were surprised that no structures exist for regular conversation between academy and judicatory. There are no formal exchanges, no structures, and little encouragement to become engaged. We are all wandering students, full of expertise, but we do not find a classroom where we sit down together.

Conclusion: For the sake of the church, let's engage professor and pastor. For the sake of the God's mission in the world, let's continue to not just talk but let's create new ways to call leaders, new ways to form leaders, and new ways to be leaders. It's a surprising time that we just might be the ones to shape a new generation of Mennonite leaders.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is conference minister for Western District Conference. She also has been a pastor and associate dean of AMBS. She is with Joel Miller, pastor of Cincinnati (Ohio) Mennonite Fellowship, in the photo at left. ●

On the front page: Samuel Olarewaju, pastor of Berean Fellowship Church, Youngstown, Ohio, represented a missional pastor surrounded by church agencies and organizations that support him. Gayle Gerber Koontz represented seminaries, and others in their small working group took the roles of conferences and area churches. In this final activity of the Engaging Pastors Summative Conference, each working group illustrated some aspect of support for pastors and congregations in the ecology of ministry. ●

Engaging Pastors key learnings

Engaging Pastors provided opportunities for sustained conversation and collaboration among AMBS faculty, pastors and denominational, conference and area church leaders. From these experiences over the last five years, several common learnings emerged:

- **Key learning 1:** The practice and teaching of ministry is strengthened when pastors and professors regularly engage each other;
- **Key learning 2:** There is an urgent need to strengthen pastoral, biblical and teaching authority in the church;
- **Key learning 3:** The church and seminary need to equip pastors and professors to read and engage their missional contexts with joy.

To see more about Engaging Pastors, visit the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/engagingpastors Follow the link to the Engaging Pastors blog for reflections from participants about these three themes. ●

Key learnings affirmed but further discussion is needed

Megan Ramer, a member of the Summative Conference Listening Committee and pastor of Chicago (Ill.) Community Mennonite Church, observed that each of the three key learnings (see page 2) names a breach in the ecology of ministry. “The first learning identifies a disconnect between the academy and the church. The second learning identifies a disconnect between pastor and church—the church at all levels, but particularly the congregation. Learning three identifies a disconnect between the academy, church and pastors, and missional contexts.”

The listening committee also included Noel Santiago, executive minister for Franconia Mennonite Conference; Jack Suderman, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada; and Sara Wenger Shenk, acting dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary and president-elect of AMBS. They concluded that the key learnings were affirmed by participants of the Summative Conference, but the second learning needs more clarification and discussion.

Key learning 1

The listening committee heard a strong “yes.” They noted several themes emerging from working groups: 1) the critical role of conference and area church ministers in bridging the gap between pastors and professors; 2) the importance of the first five years of ministry for continued formation

and learning; and 3) the need for substantive, ongoing support and mentoring for pastors.

Key learning 2

This learning garnered much less consensus, with more nuanced support. There was ambiguity about what the statement means and ambivalence about the notion of authority itself. “What is urgent is that we don’t have a common understanding of authority and the multiple dimensions of authority,” the listening committee said. “Engagement with this learning has the most potential for substantive change; this one goes to the heart of the matter.”

Key learning 3

Missional engagement and joy feed each other, some participants noted. Themes from working groups included: 1) the importance of looking at the ecology of ministry comprehensively, including parts that weren’t represented, such as Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Economic Development Associates and interim pastors; 2) we need leaders (conference and area church ministers, professors) who are *missional* leaders. The committee suggested, “Let’s be willing to make new mistakes in going forward. Might we place higher value on creativity, innovation and risk, rather than success in forming good leaders?” ●



Top: Cyneatha Millsaps, pastor of Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., and Don Yoder, director of admissions, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, participated in one of 16 working groups that met multiple times during the conference to grapple with issues raised by the key learnings.

Bottom: Brenda Hostetler Meyer, pastor of Benton Mennonite Church near Goshen, Ind.; John Rempel, AMBS professor; and Jerry Buhler, area church minister for Saskatchewan, were among the 100 pastors, church leaders and theological educators who met in Summative Conference working groups to reflect on how the church can better support pastors and foster vibrant congregations.

Your gifts at work

Joon Hyoung Park is a first-year student at AMBS, originally from Korea but more recently from Vancouver, B.C. With financial help from Mennonite Church Canada, AMBS and other sources, he and his family moved to campus last fall, and both Joon and Shim Beack, his wife, are taking seminary classes, while their daughters are studying at nearby Bethany Christian High School.

Gifts from friends across the church are important to keep tuition costs low, especially for students with families, international students and students preparing for service and ministry assignments. Tuition provides 17 percent of the funds AMBS needs each year and AMBS relies on contributions for 41 percent of annual income. Thank you for your gifts which help keep study affordable.

To read Joon’s story and the stories of other students at AMBS, please see www.ambs.edu/admissions/why-choose-ambs/student-stories ●



alumni news

Ordinations: **Rachel Siemens** (Master of Divinity 2007) First Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio; **Ruth R. Harder** (Master of Divinity 2007) Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.; **Juanita Laverty** (Master of Divinity 2007) Hanover Mennonite Church, Hanover, Ont.; **Char Harris Allen** (Master of Divinity 2005) Elder in the United Methodist Church.

Jean Killeffer Hess (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 2004) recently launched StoryShare, a business providing oral history interview services for individuals, businesses and institutions.

David Voth (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 1980) authored the book *Quality Victim Advocacy: A Field Guide*, published by Workplace Publishing. He has been director of Crime Victim Services, Ohio, since 1985. The book is a guide for measuring and improving quality and outcomes in crime victim service programs.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary 3003 Benham Avenue
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www.ambs.edu

Spring 2010 Volume 20 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker
Photographers: Mark Gingerich, Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.



A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

President's Window

George R. Brunk, III, Interim President



During a small group discussion that was part of the Engaging Pastors Summative Conference, a seasoned leader of a major Mennonite Church USA area conference observed that this was the first time he had engaged in sustained interaction with seminary personnel around key issues of church life. I know for a fact that he had been in settings where organizational questions of pastoral training were discussed, but, true, there was no time given for substantive sharing about the deeper questions of the church's health, including the role of church leadership in those matters.

This situation is the reason why this novel language of the "ecology of ministry" (see the articles in this issue) is important. Ministry is part of a complex system of structures, relationships and policies that define how we do church. Ministry cannot be considered in isolation from the network of interactions with other parts of church life.

Because the seminary's mission is focused on ministry preparation, the seminary is part of that larger system. In some ways this is all obvious enough. What is significant here is not just the recognition of this ministry-

in-a-web reality but the question of how to work the connections in more fruitful ways.

The call for strengthening the ecology of ministry, as reflected in the discussions of the Summative Conference, comes at the time that our denomination is reviewing its organizational patterns. This creates an ideal time for a serious look at how we improve the structures of communication that link leaders at the denominational and area conference/area church levels, local pastors in the congregation, and the pastoral and theological training programs.

The Engaging Pastors program at AMBS has demonstrated how fruitful this engagement can be between pastors and seminary. It points to what could happen at the other levels of the system. The better flow of interaction would first of all build strong trust. In that context, but only then, can we do effective problem solving. Our denomination has leadership development as one of its priorities. All the more reason then to tend the network that is the "ecology of ministry." ●

panorama

Several sessional faculty members are teaching at AMBS during spring semester, augmenting the regular AMBS teaching faculty.

James R. Krabill teaches *The Spirit World* and *the Global Church*. He holds a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from AMBS and a Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham in England.

Paul Keim teaches *Beginning Hebrew*. He is on the faculty of Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., and holds an M.Div. from AMBS and a Ph.D. from Harvard.

Joe Kotva teaches *Thinking Ethically*. Joe has an M.Div. from AMBS and a

Ph.D. from Fordham University. In his recent work he has focused on medical ethics and health care access.

Joni Sancken is co-teaching *Foundations of Worship and Preaching* with Rebecca Slough, AMBS academic dean. Joni studied at AMBS and received her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and her Ph.D. in homiletics from the University of Toronto in 2009.

Perry Yoder, AMBS professor emeritus of Old Testament, co-teaches *Biblical Foundations for Peace and Justice* with Mary Schertz, professor of New Testament, in four weekend sessions during the semester. ●

Calendar

British Columbia

April 23-25: Junior youth IMPACT retreat, at Camp Squeah.

May 1: Women's Inspirational Day, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

May 6: CBC Friends of the Library Lectures feature Marlene Epp, author of *Mennonite Women in Canada*, and Gareth Brandt, author of *Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality*; at the CBC Library, Abbotsford, at 6:30 p.m.

May 8: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. lecture with Marlene Epp, author of *Mennonite Women in Canada*, at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m.

May 27,28: Lenten Vespers with the Abendmusik Choir; (27) Emmanuel Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (28) Knox United Church, Vancouver. Both concerts at 8 p.m.

May 28: Fundraising dessert evening for Communitas Supportive Care Society, at Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m. Featuring Father's Daughter. For more information, call 604-850-6608.

Alberta

May 25-27: Summer Training Institute for Church Leaders presents "Holy conversations: Strategic planning as a spiritual practice for congregations," with keynote speaker Gil Rendle; at Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton. For more information, visit conciliationservices.ca.

Saskatchewan

April 18: Carrot River Mennonite Church celebrates 50 years in Carrot River. Worship service begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a full day of events. For more information, or registration forms, e-mail crmc@sasktel.net or debbergen@sasktel.net.

April 20: MC Saskatchewan pastors gathering with speaker Irma Fast Dueck.

April 28: CMU/RJC fundraising banquet and concert, at Osler Mennonite Church; banquet at 6 p.m., concert at 7:30 p.m.

May 1: MC Saskatchewan Missionfest tour to churches in Regina and

Aberdeen.

May 9: RJC spring concert.

May 25-28: MC Saskatchewan continuing education event. Speaker: Wilma Bailey. Topic: "Lamentations."

June 5-6: Aberdeen Mennonite Church centennial celebration.

June 6: Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising concert with House of Doc.

June 11: Steve Bell concert at Prairieland Exhibition, Saskatoon, at 7:30 p.m.

June 11-12: MCC Relief Sale at Prairieland Exhibition, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

April 18: Eden Foundation fundraising Four on the Floor concert featuring Winkler Men's Community Choir; at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

April 24: CMU spring concert, at Loewen Athletic Centre, 7:30 p.m.

April 24: CMU celebration dinner.

May 8,9: Southern Manitoba Choral Society presents a "Saengerfest," at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church (8), and Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church (9); both events begin at 7 p.m.

May 9: Mother's Day fundraising dinner at Camp Assiniboia.

May 15,16: Faith and Life Choirs concerts; (15) Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; (16) Steinbach Mennonite Church.

May 21-23: Camp Moose Lake work-a-thon.

May 28-30: Birding retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Ontario

April 11: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp annual general meeting, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m.

April 11: 2010 bi-national Mennonite Schools Council mass choir concert, at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7 p.m. For tickets, visit centre-square.com online, or Rockway Mennonite Collegiate or MSCU in person.

April 14: Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre hosts a book launch for *On Spirituality: Essays from Shi'i-Muslim Mennonite-Christian Dialogue III*, at the Toronto School of Theology on the University of Toronto campus, at 4 p.m.

April 16: Ham dinner fundraiser at

Hamilton Mennonite Church for the MCC meat canner; 5 to 7 p.m. MCC displays, Hope Rising music concert. For more information, call 905-528-3607 or 905-387-3952.

April 17: Watchmen Quartet perform at Kitchener MB Church, 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call 519-698-2091.

April 17: Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada spring Enrichment Day, at Leamington United Mennonite Church, from 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Speaker: Liz Koop. Theme: "Bolivian Mennonite women: A vision for the future." To register, call Florence Jantzi at 519-669-4356.

April 18: Menno Singers presents an a cappella hymn sing at Mannheim Mennonite Church, Petersburg.

April 23-24: Engaged workshop for all engaged or newly married couples, Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. For more information, e-mail denise_bender@yahoo.com.

April 23-24: MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, Niagara Peninsula. For more information, call 519-650-3806 or e-mail mcec@mcec.

ca.

April 24, 25: Pax Christi Chorale presents Mozart's *Requiem* at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 7:30 p.m. (24), 3 p.m. (25).

April 27,28: Bäretswil Church Choir, a Reformed church choir from Zurich, Switzerland, performs at St. Jacobs Mennonite (27) and Crosshill Mennonite (28); both concerts begin at 7 p.m.

April 28: MC Eastern Canada will hold "A day of quiet prayer" at Cedar Springs Retreat Centre, Stratford, in conjunction with the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada. For more information, call 519-880-9684 or e-mail mennospiritdire@gmail.com.

May 1: Bethany Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, hosts "A friend's hand: Healing in community (Recovering from abuse)," with keynote speaker Canadian Mennonite columnist Melissa Miller ("Family Ties"). For more information, or to register, call MCC Ontario toll-free at 1-800-313-6226 or e-mail eileenh@mennonitecc.on.ca. From 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

UpComing

Online stewardship course available from Eastern Mennonite Seminary

HARRISONBURG, VA.—Eastern Mennonite Seminary is offering an online course for anyone who works with church finances. Beryl Jantzi, stewardship education director with Mennonite Mutual Aid/Harrisonburg, will teach "Money, Ministry and Me" from May 3 to June 23. The course will begin with basic budgeting and financial-planning strategies, then identify stewardship educational resources that can be used in congregational life to help leaders and church members develop a stewardship plan for different life stages and for the congregation. "In a Canadian study, parents indicated that they felt better equipped to talk about sex, drugs and alcohol than talking to their kids about finances," Jantzi said. "This course will help anyone concerned with the church of today and tomorrow think through their own values and how to communicate those values to others. . . . The allure of consumer culture is only getting stronger, and if we hope to keep our values alive in the area of Christian stewardship we need to become more intentional in teaching about money." Registration for the course will be accepted until filled or through April 30. For more information, or to register, visit emu.edu/seminary/distancelearning. —Eastern Mennonite Seminary Release

May 8: Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake presents its ninth annual Springfest, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Includes bake sale, silent auction, book sale, garden centre, inflatable bouncer game for kids, live music, barbecue and café.

May 8: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Verdi's *Requiem*; Centre in the Square, Kitchener; 7:30 p.m.

May 8: Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo fundraising breakfast and annual meeting, 8:30 to 11 a.m. Keynote speaker: Dena Moitoso. Topic: "Understanding suicide and how it affects our community." Call 519-886-9690 by May 3 to reserve a ticket.

May 15: Annual "Paddle the Grand River" event for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. For more information, visit slmc.on.ca.

May 15, June 13: Menno Singers, with Mennonite Mass Choir and soloists, present Haydn's *Creation*, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. (May 13); Riverstone Retreat Centre, Durham (June 13). For more

information, visit mennosingers.com.

May 25-29: View "Quilts for the world" at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church—part of the Quilt & Fibre Art Festival: Waterloo Region & Beyond. View the work of talented local quilters, daily demonstrations and a gift boutique. Proceeds to MCC. For more information, visit stjacobs.com or call toll-free 1-800-265-3353.

June 4-6: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Begins at 7 p.m. (4) and ends at 3 p.m. (6). For more information, call 519-669-8667.

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

UpComing

Mennonites and modernity the topic of historical conference at Bethel

NORTH NEWTON, KAN.—Historians and scholars from across Europe and North America will gather at Bethel College on June 25 and 26 for a conference that will shine a light on a heretofore neglected area in Anabaptist and Mennonite historical study. "Marginal or mainstream? Anabaptists, Mennonites and modernity in European society" will look at such questions as: "Over five centuries of Anabaptist and Mennonite history, to what extent did this often-marginalized community nonetheless provide models or stimuli for important developments in European economics, politics, religious practice, gender relations or other areas?"; "What did Mennonites have to offer that interested, aided or offended the world?" and, "How did Mennonites experience and help to shape industrialization, urbanization, capitalism, imperialism, feminism, republicanism, nationalism, institutionalization and Enlightenment rationality, or were most Mennonites happy to stay on the margins of European modernity?" Presenters for the conference include Michael Driedger, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont.; Ernie Hamm and Jeremy Koop, York University, Toronto; and Karl Koop, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. To register, visit bethelks.edu and follow the "Mennonites and modernity" link.

—Bethel College Release

Classifieds

For Rent

Retreat cottage on the Little Mississippi River for rent, **Bancroft area**. Daily or weekly. Call 519-471-3309 or e-mail kaecee@rogers.com.

Announcements

Cassel Mennonite Church of Tavistock, Ont., will be having a 75th Anniversary Celebration - **From the Past Will Come the Future** - on May 7, 8 & 9, 2010. Come and enjoy a weekend of music, speakers, memories and food. For more information, contact: Duane and Nicole Swartzentruber at swartzhomefarms@execulink.com; Cassel Church at 519-462-2251 or casselmc@execulink.com; or check out our website at www.casselmc.com.

Salem Mennonite Church of Tofield, Alberta is **celebrating 100 years** as a congregation on July 24 & 25, 2010. We would love to have you help us celebrate this historic and joyous event. Pre-registration by May 31, 2010 is imperative so we can properly plan for our time together. For further information and/or to pre-register contact Joe & Elaine Kauffman by mail: Box 212, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0, by telephone: 780-662-2344, or by e-mail: jolane72@gmail.com.

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.

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

Housing Wanted

Housing: Returning MCC family of five looking for housing (3 bedroom) near the University of Waterloo starting in August. Please contact Kurtis Unger at kunger@tanzania.mcc.org.

Employment Opportunities



CARETAKER POSITION

Job opportunity for a couple or individual to serve as Caretakers of the **Canadian Mennonite University Braintree Creation Care Centre** buildings and grounds in East Braintree, Man. Position comes with a three-bedroom house and monthly stipend. Call 204-487-3300 or e-mail kreddig@cmu.ca for more information.

YOUTH/ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Eden Mennonite Church is located in Chilliwack, B.C., one hour east of Vancouver. We are a congregation with an active membership of about 150 people with diverse ages and occupations.

The Youth Ministry focus is to equip, train, teach and counsel both the youth and youth sponsors. Associate pastor responsibilities are: to be involved in other ministries within the church such as leading music or worship, preaching and teaching.

Qualifications: Degree in Youth Ministry/Biblical Studies.

Application deadline: May 15, 2010.

Apply to Brian Goertzen: bmgfarmer@yahoo.ca.



MANAGING CURRICULUM EDITOR

Mennonite Publishing Network seeks a full-time Managing Curriculum Editor. Primary responsibilities include developing, managing and editing curriculum and other publications with the Faith & Life Resources imprint. Must have training and/or experience in education, theology and editing. Preferred location in Elkhart or Goshen. Other locations will be considered. Mid-July start date. Contact Ron Rempel for more information: rrempel@mpn.net or 800-631-6535.

LEAD PASTOR

Calgary First Mennonite Church, located in central Calgary, invites applications for a full-time **Lead Pastor** position. Our congregation seeks an applicant with a commitment to Mennonite theology and to the practices of the Mennonite Church. We seek a spiritual leader with the gifts of preaching, teaching and pastoral care. Related education and experience in pastoral leadership is a priority.

Please direct resumes to our Pastor Search Committee
Contact: Marguerite Jack – mjack@netkaster.ca.

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



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Information Technology Technician

• full-time position

Financial & Student Services Advisor

• full-time position

Volunteer Coordinator

• part-time volunteer position

www.cmu.ca/employment.html
204.487.3300 hrdirector@cmu.ca



Stewardship Consultant

MFC seeks a full-time Consultant to work in its St. Catharines, Ontario office. The successful candidate will be responsible to promote

biblical stewardship of financial resources and to provide charitable gift and estate planning services.

The successful candidate will:

- Support and incorporate MFC's core values of stewardship in personal life
- Communicate effectively with individuals and in public presentations
- Have knowledge of, or ability to learn, charitable gift and estate planning
- Be creative, organized, and self-motivated in balancing multiple projects
- Be willing and able to contribute as part of an inter-dependent staff team.

A start date for the position is negotiable. Processing of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Submit resumes to:

Darren Pries-Klassen, Executive Director
22-595 Carlton Street, St. Catharines, ON L2M 4Y2
fax: 204-488-1986
dpklassen@mennofoundation.ca

Mennofoundation.ca



LEADERSHIP OPENINGS FOR MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PROGRAMS

MCC REPRESENTATIVE IN ASIA:

BANGLADESH in Dhaka (June 2010)

MCC REPRESENTATIVES IN AFRICA:

BURKINA FASO in Ouagadougou (Jan. 2011)

CHAD in N'Djamena (Jan. 2011)

ETHIOPIA in Addis Ababa (Jan. 2011)

MOZAMBIQUE in Beira (Jan. 2011)

MCC REPRESENTATIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

LEBANON AND SYRIA in Beirut (June 2011)

MCC REPRESENTATIVE IN EUROPE:

SOUTHEAST EUROPE in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (June 2011)

FOR ASIA AND AFRICA, CONTACT BECKY STAHLY: rss@mcc.org
FOR MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE, CONTACT MARSHA JONES:
mj@mennonitecc.ca

In a 'blaze' of glory

CMU women's teams win 2010 provincial volleyball, basketball championships

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NADINE KAMPEN

Canadian Mennonite University Release

WINNIPEG

More than 300 spectators packed the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Loewen Athletic Centre on March 6 to witness the CMU Blazers women's basketball team down Red River College 70-26, to win the 2010 Manitoba Colleges Athletic Conference (MCAC) title.

CMU's Christie Anne McCullough was named tournament MVP.

At the same tournament, the top-rated CMU men's basketball team earned a silver medal, losing 70-65 to the Red River Rebels in the final game.

The week before, the CMU women's volleyball team captured gold at the provincial college championship held in Brandon, defeating St. Boniface in three straight games in the semi-finals before taking the final match against Red River three games to one.

Evelyn Kampen was selected as the 2010 MCAC most valuable volleyball player of the year and player of the game in the conference final.

The men's volleyball team earned a bronze medal, downing Assiniboine Community College in straight games.

The CMU Blazers men's hockey team came one game short of "three-peating" as the conference champions, losing in this year's final to the Assiniboine Community College Cougars by a score of 7-4, a loss that earned CMU a silver medal.

The game was actually closer than the final score would indicate, as Assiniboine's last two goals were scored into an empty net after the Blazers pulled their goalie in the dying minutes in an unsuccessful attempt to get the equalizer. ☼



The Canadian Mennonite Blazers basketball team (photo above) and volleyball team (photo below) won their respective 2010 Manitoba Colleges Athletic Conference titles.

