

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Celebrating womens stories

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EDITORIAL

'Bombs bursting in air'?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

James Brenneman has dropped a bombshell.

At first blush, I decided not to join the fray over Goshen College's decision to play the American national anthem at some sporting events, considering it something of a local theological/educational debate. Like the raging healthcare reform debate across the border, I thought Canadians might be at best amused or, at worst, detached from my homeland's unique political complexities.

That is, until I reviewed the many Canadians joining the total of 1,260 online protesters to the move, and upon an after-church conversation with a fellow congregant, Ramon Rempel, who teaches world religions, church history and philosophy at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.

"We [in Canada] have always looked to the the American Mennonites to keep the separation of church and state focused and high profile in our Anabaptist theology," he told me. "Because here in Canada, where Mennonites have become more integrated into the political system, we seem less concerned about the dangers of nationalism and the ensuing militarism."

Not a little surprised at this observation, I looked closer at who was protesting the Goshen College action and concluded that it has hit a raw theological nerve not only among its alumni, but also in the wider binational church, globally and across denominations. Not only Mennonites—but numerous Catholics, Presbyterians,

Episcopalians, Methodists, a Jew, and even an Independent Fundamentalist Baptist—signed the protest petition, but it triggered responses from across the globe: Colombia, the U.K., Australia and Kenya.

Such a theological tremor has to be grounded in deep layers of the cultural/religious terrain, I told myself. The playing of a national anthem with lyrics like "bombs bursting in air" was offensive enough to people with little loyalty to Caesar, but there had to be a root cause for this vigorous pushback.

I found it in a Jan. 15 convocation speech by Goshen president Jim Brenneman, in which he laid out the pretext for the "anthem" move. In framing the case for turning from a "culture of dissent" to one of saying "yes" (selectively) to the dominant culture, he called for a "new school of thought that adds value to our education by inviting us to become responsible constructive agents in all of the many professions available to us."

That might be a good idea if Brenneman weren't touching something deep within the DNA of practising Anabaptist Mennonites—a commitment to a peace witness in an increasingly militaristic and violent world, be that in the U.S. and Canada, or dictator-run countries around the globe. Non-Mennonite Christians, devoid of this DNA, are increasingly coming "home" to a 500-year-old belief system that has consistently resisted and witnessed to the heavy hand of empire.

Brenneman's new model is not meeting with widespread approval. Instead, it has revealed the fault lines of an ongoing theological debate at the college, and in the wider church, for decades. It was telling and well-orchestrated for Brenneman to invite and applaud past Goshen president J. Lawrence Burkholder, a person he cited as seeing "engagement in and with the world" as a way of serving Christ by loving the neighbour with greater effectiveness and by helping to change the intellectual and political systems from within the civic and cultural institutions."

By contrast, Brenneman said, "the other Goshen College school of thought, as argued by John Howard Yoder, called for a certain 'social irresponsibility' by Christians separated from the world in order to be witnesses to the world." Burkholder, he posited, "thought such a clean separation from the world was illusive, if not illusory."

This debate of some 60 years ago now is outlined with candour in American scholar Theron Schlabach's new historical account of Guy F. Hershberger and Mennonite ethics, *War, Peace and Social Conscience*, in which the author highlights a rift between Hershberger and Burkholder: "Ideally, Burkholder's critique might have helped greatly to deepen and enrich Mennonite ethical thought and deliver it from naïveté, most notably that Mennonites could be non-political.

"Hershberger, might, in turn have helped Burkholder develop a still-biblical and compelling form of pacifism for the coming generations," Schlabach opined. "Instead, the two scholars remained sceptical of each other's intellects and tended to fragment Mennonites' ethical message."

Mennonites are still fragmented on this issue. Playing the national anthem merely sets it to music.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Members of the Swastini Dance Group swirled over the stage at Victoria Park Pavilion in Kitchener, Ont., on March 27 as part of the "Women's stories/Women's hope: An international celebration" of fair trade hosted by Ten Thousand Villages and Mennonite Economic Development Associates. See Focus on Fair Trade section beginning on page 27.

PHOTO: DAVE ROGALSKY, 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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Sidebar articles also explore how Mennonite organizations handle donations from gambling sources and how one pastor copes "between dice and a hard place."

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

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4215 (The feminist): **PAUL LOEWEN**



Chances are . . . you worship with a

BY DEBORAH FROESE

They're advertised on billboards, on radio and television. The kiosk in your local grocery store or shopping mall sells them. Your local charity wants you to buy one to help it out? Buy what, you ask. A lottery ticket, of course.

Or your daughter's basketball team needs money for new jerseys? Just join the game pool.

Bored, perhaps? Check out live entertainment at the casino—and while you're there drop some money into a video lottery terminal (VLT) or try your hand at blackjack.

Or if you really want to be discreet, check out poker.com.

*'When I was gambling I would ask God to help me cover up the money I'd lost so I wouldn't have to lie about it. . . . I completely lost touch with faith in anything.'
(Sandra*, a former problem gambler)*

'The hidden disease'

Wagering on a hoped-for outcome—the definition of gambling—has a broad range of appeal: from dreams of ending financial struggles to the spark of an adrenaline rush or a temporary escape from everyday challenges. Christians are not exempt.

Barry Andres, executive director of rehabilitation and recovery addiction and mental health with Alberta Health Services and a consultant for the development of Mennonite Publishing Network's Close to Home pamphlet, "Dealing with Gambling Addiction," says that there are no statistics available for the number of Christians who gamble. He suspects, though, that they would be similar to national statistics as they are for other social issues.

It's hard to tell, as compulsive gambling has been called "the hidden disease" nobody wants to talk about.

Changes to Canada's Criminal Code in 1985 expanded the scope of provincially managed gambling, and since then gaming has morphed into a multi-billion-dollar industry that permeates all segments of society. According to Statistics Canada, gambling—not including wagering on horse races, charity-driven



gambler

lotteries and other local fundraisers—drew in about \$13 billion in 2008 after paying off the prizewinners. Over half of that income was pure profit.

The highest prevalence of gambling appears to be in areas where there are large concentrations of VLTs and permanent casinos, according to a 2005 article in *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. In Alberta and some other regions of Canada, VLTs are everywhere, even in family restaurants, tempting those who would not otherwise consider games of chance.

'I'm putting my faith in God to take care of me and my family.'

(Garry Janzen)

Gambling can 'take over'

As with other disorders and addictions, faith and an active community can be strong protective factors.

"Faith could be a barrier to experimenting, but the guilt and shame associated with it may make it more difficult to seek treatment," Andres speculates. "Christians don't get a pass."

Doug* can attest to that. Raised with a deep faith and commitment to God, he had a strong work ethic and solid

reputation that eventually led to a position of trust and seniority with his employer. He never considered gambling—until he went to Las Vegas on a business trip and threw a few dollars into a slot machine. He pulled the handle and instantly won big.

The sudden wave of euphoria he experienced was compounded by flashing lights, ringing bells and the crowds who gathered around to congratulate him. Doug was hooked. "It was the biggest rush you could ever imagine," he admits.

For 10 years, Doug gambled often

and on the sly. "Almost every time I did something that I knew was wrong—'smooth' somebody for money or spend long periods of time away from my family gambling—I would think back to the principles that I believed in way back when. I knew God was watching and there would be consequences, but the addiction took over," he says.

'I completely lost touch'

While Doug gambled for the adrenaline rush he experienced, Sandra* hit the slot machines to escape low self-esteem. "It allowed me to relax and not think about things," she says.

Her addiction developed over a period of years. "By the time I was 22 or 23 I was playing more consistently," she says. "I went over my spending limit and began to gamble more often—once a week, twice a week—mostly VLTs."

Sandra lied about how much she was spending and how often she was gambling. "When I was gambling I would ask God to help me cover up the money I'd lost so I wouldn't have to lie about it. I couldn't see how anybody could love me, even my children, my husband and friends," she says. "I completely lost touch with faith in anything."

The more Sandra gambled, the more deeply she became mired in guilt and helplessness. It was only when her husband discovered the truth and directed her towards counselling that she began to break free. Through Gamblers Anonymous and its 12-step program, Sandra's faith in God was eventually renewed and she learned to cope with her addiction.

Gambling affects more than gamblers

Pollster Harris-Decima reports that 81 percent of the 25 million Canadians over the age of 18 played a lottery game in 2008. In the same year, 47 percent of them participated in other gambling activities, such as casinos, sports betting and bingo; that means that Canada could have more than 325,000 gambling addicts—slightly fewer than the population of London, Ont. And this does not include those who gamble online, something for which the Canadian Public Health Association says there are no statistics.

Andres says that problem gamblers generate about one-third of Canada's

gambling income and he estimates that they comprise 3 percent to 5 percent of those who gamble.

If all of these figures hold true for the church, chances are that in a congregation of 100 adults, most will have purchased a lottery ticket at some point and at least two of them will have experienced problems with gambling.

But the impact of gambling is not limited to addicted or problem gamblers. The total number of people affected expands dramatically when family members,

friends and workplace peers are factored into the equation.

Byron Rempel Burkholder, editor of the Close to Home series, notes that gambling was discerned by the series steering committee to be one of 20 personal problems Christians may try to hide. Others include pornography, bullying, child abuse, addictions, debt, depression and eating disorders.

Because addiction is often viewed as a sign of weakness, guilt and shame compel problem gamblers to keep their

Because addiction is often viewed as a sign of weakness, guilt and shame compel problem gamblers to keep their addiction a secret.

What do Mennonites do with gambling donations?

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite organizations tend to agree that gambling is wrong, but few policies are in place to respond to donations of gambling revenue. Perhaps this is because of a prevailing sense that such donations are rare or non-existent, and could be dealt with on a case by case basis if the need arises.

"Mennonite Church Canada has not yet, to my knowledge, dealt with a situation in which the question of accepting lottery winnings has needed an answer," says Mennonite Church Canada general secretary Robert J. Suderman. "If it would happen, we would process our response as we usually do: at the general board level." That process would include biblical study, dialogue, prayer and, if necessary, broader consultation.

Area churches in Eastern Canada, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have no set guidelines on gambling either, although Jim Shantz, conference pastor for Mennonite Church Alberta, says, "It may be a timely issue for us to address . . . as there seem to be casinos springing up like weeds all across the province. Particularly vulnerable have been our native communities."

MC Manitoba has a written fundraising policy that prohibits the executive director from accepting donations "from private or public sources that involve games of chance, offer substantial rewards or prizes, or are part of events that would be deemed inappropriate by the membership . . ."

The Manitoba area church has had the opportunity to consider its approach in the past: once through the potential donation of monies raised through a quilt raffle and another time in regard to a provincial grant of which about 3 percent was generated through a lottery. Executive director Edgar Rempel says that, because lottery winners are highly publicized, area churches would probably be aware of a lottery-based donation. However, he says that, as a rule, "we as an organization don't ask the person where they got the money."

Rick Fast, director of communications for Mennonite Central Committee Canada, concurs. He says that MCC does not ask donors what they do for a living, but they also do not accept grants or donations that they know come from lottery funds. "During the Haiti earthquake we had an offer from an organization in Winnipeg that holds bingo events and we graciously declined the offer—and they were understanding," Fast says.

Lois Nickel, director of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) programs and region relations, speculates that if the organization was aware of a gambling-revenue-based donation, it would be examined at the board level and probably turned down because a large number of MDS constituents would be opposed to it. But she raises the question of how to tactfully ascertain the source of a financial gift without asking the donor. "That would seem rude," she says.

Whether or not organizations accept private donations based upon gambling revenue is one issue. Acceptance of government funding is another. Gambling profits form a percentage of provincial coffers across the country, and those funds are used to support healthcare, education and other programs that may directly or indirectly affect Mennonite organizations and their members.

addiction a secret.

"It's easy to hide," Doug admits, since compulsive gamblers—unlike alcohol or drug addicts—have few if any outwardly visible signs.

"I couldn't confide in anyone," Sandra says. "It was a very secretive thing"

At Gamblers Anonymous, Sandra met a number of people who told her they pulled away from church while they were gambling because they felt so guilty and unworthy. "I've heard them say they feel abandoned by God because they're struggling so hard," she says.

She suggests that the most important thing churches can do is to recognize the fact that members are not immune to gambling, and to talk about it without being judgmental.

Sandra has come to terms with the fact that gambling is here to stay. Her husband still buys lottery tickets and other members of her family gamble. "I have to learn to live around it," she says.

Gambling especially attractive to young people

Despite its dark side, the future of Canada's gaming industry looks bright.

Andres reports that the prevalence of gambling among young people is about twice what it is for older adults. Although those figures are consistent with other risk factors at that stage of life—like drinking, smoking or driving without a seatbelt—younger gamblers have a greater risk of addiction, although he isn't sure to what degree.

For many, it's about entertainment. They seek the adrenaline rush and social interaction, but the gratification of winning can drive some to go further. Andres points out that young people who aren't old enough to gamble may play video games instead, sometimes over the Internet, which can lead to Internet gambling. "They're connected, interacting with peers. There's a thrill associated with it," he says.

Sandra has noticed the connection, too. "You can sit there and not have to

associate with anything outside the video game," she says. "It's so easy to switch between video games and gambling. Gambling gives you a very similar feeling."

Gambling for 'good'?

Those who believe gambling is wrong can still be drawn into it for noble reasons.

Mennonite Church British Columbia executive minister Garry Janzen was torn when his son's hockey team chose hockey pools for fundraising. Wanting to support his son, but strongly opposed to gambling, he bought into the fundraisers with a commitment to return any winnings to the team. He won once. The hockey pool organizer was flabbergasted when Janzen returned his jackpot.

"It was completely outside of his realm of thinking," Janzen chuckles, saying, though, that he would personally rather work to earn a living than depend on chance. "I'm putting my faith in God to take care of me and my family."

Many people may side with Janzen's perspective, but the money generated by gambling fills more than individual pockets. Across Canada, provincial gambling revenues seep into crucial programs. Last year in Manitoba alone, more than \$230 million went to programs providing healthcare, education, community and social services, and economic development.

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation website states that "gaming proceeds support Ontario's hospitals, amateur sport, recreational and cultural activities, communities, provincial priority programs such as healthcare and education, and local and provincial charities and non-profit organizations through the Ontario Trillium Foundation."

Thus the tentacles of the gaming industry are so far-reaching that, chances are—whether you play the odds or not—you've benefited from someone else's loss. ❧

'Faith could be a barrier to experimenting, but the guilt and shame associated with it may make it more difficult to seek treatment. Christians don't get a pass.'
(Barry Andres)



* Pseudonyms

Deborah Froese is
Mennonite Church
Canada's news director.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Caught between dice and a hard place

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

ALBERTA CORRESPONDENT

I've never resisted selling chocolates or magazines for my children's school, but this time was different. "Would you volunteer a few hours of your time at our casino fundraiser?" the letter asked. Only two nights of parent volunteers at a local casino and our school could earn about \$40,000 towards computer equipment or playground upgrades.

I was tempted. It's less hassle and raises more money than hawking chocolate. My kids would benefit. I benefit from lottery funds that go into local library, recreation and social services in my community. Since I'm already part of the system, why do I balk at this direct participation in the gambling industry?

I hesitate because the social costs of gambling concern me. In our society, where two or three out of every 100 people have gambling problems, I'd be naïve to think this does not hurt my congregation. I suspect the costs of ruined relationships, financial struggle and heartache outweigh the benefits of the industry.

I've admired Alberta Catholic school boards for courageously weaning themselves from lottery money. The Evergreen board, East of Edmonton, ended its reliance on such funding in 2004. Back then, the Hinton newspaper reported board chair Gerald Bernakevitch as saying, "What message does it send to students when you teach social justice and then use casino funds to pay for school equipment?"

Our Mennonite institutions face difficult funding questions as well.

Byron Thiessen, principal of Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary, says, "We've never considered gambling as a

fundraiser at all. I do know that our board would not consider it."

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, however, does accept some government funding from lotteries. After long discussions at the board level, a decision was made that it would not be fair to deny immigrants such government funding.

I support both institutions in their decisions and find myself a bit conflicted and wandering in grey areas.

I support both institutions in their decisions and find myself a bit conflicted and wandering in grey areas. So what can I do with my discomfort?

Lorraine Turchansky, director of communications and public relations for the Catholic Archdiocese in Edmonton, suggests advocating "with the provincial government for sufficient levels of school funding so our schools don't have

to resort to fundraising for computers or music instruments or things that are essential for the learning process."

A member of my congregation, Barry Andres, is executive director of rehabilitation and recovery addiction and mental health with Alberta Health Services. He says, "I think the church's role is one of helping sort out a response based on conviction and calling, and in bringing awareness to the issue of the harms of gambling and the entrenchment of gambling revenue with charity fundraising."

There are no simple answers, but that the church must have a voice is clear. My responsibility is to talk about the issues. I need to be open and caring in offering support to those who suffer from gambling-related problems. I should encourage my government to properly fund schools so parents are not asked to

participate in the casinos. I will not buy lottery tickets. I need to tell my school why I do not volunteer for the casino night, and perhaps I need to be part of inventing a healthier alternative. ❧

Besides her role with Canadian Mennonite, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld is co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

❧ For discussion

1. What have been your experiences with lotteries, sports pools or raffles? Do the people of your congregation participate in and support these activities? How do you respond when charities use this type of fundraising?
2. Some people believe gambling is harmless entertainment. What are the dangers of gambling? What do you teach your children about games of chance? Is it okay to gamble if you give your winnings to a good cause, as Garry Janzen chose to do? What should be the position of the Mennonite church?
3. How would you respond if your local municipality was planning to approve a casino that would bring in substantial tax dollars? Would you apply for funds raised through gambling for a charity you believed was important? Why or why not? Does it matter that governments raise substantial revenue from lotteries?
4. What message should the church give to society about gambling? How could your congregation help a member who was a problem gambler?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

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

✉ Accuracy of Mennonite DNA article disputed by participant

SINCE I HAVE been quoted in two letters in the March 8 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* ("Faith, not DNA, at the heart of being Mennonite," page 8, and, "DNA does not a Mennonite make," page 9), I should set the record straight with respect to what I did and did not say at the presentation in Vineland, Ont., which was reported on in the Jan. 25 issue under the headline, "Piecing the Mennonite puzzle together one DNA at a time":

- First, I did not at any point mention Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. This was done by the person who was asked to introduce me.
- Second, I never stated, "Who we are and where we come from are very important." If this statement was made, it was made by someone else and is incorrectly attributed to me.
- Third, I should point out that I was also quoted out of context as saying "exclusively for people of Low-German Mennonite background." This is very unfortunate, in that it gives the impression of elitism, and that was certainly not the intent.
- Also, for the record, the meeting took place on a Saturday afternoon, not a Saturday morning.

There are many hundreds of genealogists and amateur historians among the population of those who are descended from Low-German Mennonites. These are hobbies which are inexpensive and challenging, can be intellectually stimulating, and are simply good clean fun.

I would hope that the disparaging comments made by the two letter writers will not discourage anyone from engaging in these activities, including

participation in the Mennonite DNA Project. Many of us have our definition of what "Mennonite" means. I think it is unfortunate that some feel they have to publicly complain when something like the DNA project does not fit into their own definition.

GLENN PENNER, GUELPH, ONT.

✉ Manitoba Colony leaders to blame for Bolivian 'tragedy'

RE: "LAMENTING FOR Bolivia" articles, March 8, pages 18-19.

Both articles deal with the tragic situation in the Manitoba Colony of Bolivia. They carefully talk about "alleged" victims and perpetrators and Leona Dueck Penner laments that North American Mennonites have been "slow to respond to suffering" following allegations of mass rape there last year, and she asked God to forgive us "our lack of compassion."

I'm confused. If it is only "alleged," then why have a service to "lament" the suffering of our sisters in Bolivia? Our failure to feel compassion is entirely due to our lack of information about the tragedy there. Why have we not heard more about it in our Mennonite media? How is it possible that their leaders did not suspect anything in such a closed society? Yes, there were a few short articles, but never anything hinting at this scale. I have the feeling that the people who suspected something hoped that this would somehow go away because it was too ugly to bring out in to the open.

We feel a great deal of compassion, but the word "compassion" does not adequately describe what many of us feel. "Disgust" and "outrage" would be more accurate, but these words would be considered too harsh and judgmental by some.

Al Kehler, conference minister for the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, referred to the horrible pain those charged have caused over the last 10 years, but goes on to say that, "when you go to these prisons and you look into the eyes of these young men, they are as much a victim of their society as the women are."

What we should lament is the terribly misguided leadership in the colony that has created these conditions and we should be clear that the failures lie mainly with the spiritual leaders—because nothing of any importance happens if they do not approve, or at least tolerate, it. We should also lament and condemn the unwillingness of our leadership here in North America to confront the leaders of the colony with clear and understandable language that some of what they teach has no foundation in the Bible, and that their warped interpretation of how God wants us to live is doing a

great disservice to their people. We should feel guilty for not speaking out.

Cal Redekop sums up how most of us may feel about this problem and also identifies some, but not all, of the causes responsible for the present conditions in this colony. He then asks how we, as Anabaptists, should respond. His answer is that “we from other

Mennonite traditions repent of our own personal, organizational and denominational hypocrisies, sins and failings. Thus, we need to recognize the ways we have contributed to the failure of the Old Colony leaders to solve their problems.”

No doubt we would all agree that there is much about us that needs improving, but I fail to see how I

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The gospel in three parts ... times three

PHIL WAGLER

Before reading any further, answer this question: What is the gospel? You didn't do it, did you? You just kept reading. Bad reader. Return to line one.

Thanks.

Many Christians go into blushed silence when asked to articulate the good news of God's reign. However, if we are to be cracked pots spilling out this glorious message, the gospel must be understood and lived. To that end, let's look at three unique, yet interrelated biblical images of the gospel.

- First, Paul describes the gospel as rooted in the historical event of the three-part passion of Jesus: *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”* (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

To begin, the gospel is about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is historically enacted and foretold. The gospel is deed and word. The good news is the culminating event of God's declared commitment to transform the dust and grime of the world.

- Second, Paul describes three radical

implications of this gospel event. He begins with our own resurrection: *“[B]ecause of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions”* (Ephesians 2:4-5).

This results in our participation in God's renovation of the world: *“[W]e are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do”* (Ephesians 2:10).

And, further, the gospel event ushers in reconciliation: *“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two [Jew and gentile] one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility”* (Ephesians 2:14).

The gospel event of Easter brings with it the implications of resurrection (new

the “love chapter.” Sadly misused at most weddings, I Corinthians 13 is primarily about how the church lives out the good news. Paul declares: *“[N]ow these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”* (I Corinthians 13:13).

The gospel, founded on the historical Easter event and implying the transforming implications of resurrection, renovation and reconciliation, is now brought to its climax. How do we live this out? In three parts:

- First, by clinging in faith to what happened according to the Scriptures and sharing that with our world unashamedly.
- Second, by offering the hope of God's good works to our world to initiate now what will one day be fulfilled.
- Third, and most gloriously, by expressing this the same way God expressed himself to us: through love.

So, what is the gospel? It is the historical event of Easter in three parts: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is the radical implications that event entails in three parts: resurrection, renovation and reconciliation. And it is the



The good news is the culminating event of God's declared commitment to transform the dust and grime of the world.

life for those dead in sin), renovation (our participation in God's work in the world), and reconciliation (our becoming a new people defined not by our ethnicities or traditions, but by Jesus).

- Third, to the Corinthians seeking to understand how to function as a “good news people,” Paul erupts poetically in

way we live it out in three parts: faith and hope, all crowned, salted, expressed and sourced in love.

Phil Wagler is still awed by God's good news and seeks to live it out with the churches of Kingsfield in Huron County, Ont. (phil@kingsfieldcommon.ca).

have contributed to the leadership failures in that part of the world, either directly or indirectly. Here again is an attempt to soften any criticism for fear of offending.

The article ends with the advice that we should work out our differences in love. It sounds great, but likely won't do much to alleviate the suffering of those women and children that Abe Warkentin called the "least among us."

ERNIE NEUFELD, LEAMINGTON, ONT.

✉ Going without computer or cell phone a good experience

RE: "COMPUTERS, CELL phones and camps" editorial, March 8, page. 2. I couldn't agree more with editor Dick Benner's stance of recommending a camp experience to our youth. I will also add that I have benefited greatly from my volunteer experiences at camp, and fully appreciate the opportunity to go 10 days without a computer or cell phone myself.

TOM BILESKI, WATERLOO, ONT.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Seated among the unsettled

WILL BRAUN

There are people who feel entirely settled in their lives. They feel confident about their location, occupation and calling in life.

Then there are the rest of us. We're not so sure. We're not sure where to live, what to study, who to marry, where to work, when to retire, which church to attend, whether to apply to Mennonite Central Committee or what our calling is. We spend an inordinate amount of time pondering these decisions, possibly wishing for audible directions from on high.

I count myself seated among the unsettled. Finding myself at a career crossroads, to put it euphemistically, I am considering several completely different options. Adding to the uncertainty is the fact that my wife and I want to move from Winnipeg. Last weekend we toured southern Manitoba, looking for a town that might suit our fancy, our skimpy budget and our blurry sense of calling. We've also researched possibilities in Central America.

I feel both excitement and pressure as I consider the options ahead. Part of the excitement is that I feel like I have been given much in life—health, education, work experience—and I'm eager

to use this privilege for good. This is the Mennonite way. As for the pressure, with infinite options, seemingly infinite factors to consider, no shortage of ethical tangles, and much at stake, the decisions seem daunting.

In my own process of discernment I'm trying to focus on two things. The first is an oft-quoted line from Fredrick Buechner, a Presbyterian pastor and writer. "The place God calls you to," he writes, "is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

My second point of focus comes from



[H]ow, practically, does one discern one's piece of the world's pain or one's point of deepest gladness?

a book written by Elizabeth O'Connor in the 1970s. She encourages those who seek God's calling to find that piece of the world's pain that is ours to carry. This frees me to focus on a specific calling without feeling overwhelmed by the endless needs of the world.

But how, practically, does one discern one's piece of the world's pain or one's point of deepest gladness? What I have found helpful is a simple practice from the Jesuit Ignatian tradition. It's called the

"examen of conscience." In simplest form, it requires a quiet moment at the end of the day. In that moment, you prayerfully go over the events of the day in your mind. Then you consider which two or three moments were most life-giving. These are briefly recalled and, ideally, noted in a journal. Then you consider which moments were most life-taking. Again, these are noted, without going into detail.

Alternatively, you can ask when you felt most alive and least alive, or when you experienced God and when you didn't. The idea is to offer gratitude for the positive things and to let go of the negative.

During periods in my life when I have mustered the discipline to do the examen, I have found it a valuable way to both identify patterns and then be drawn towards life-giving choices. Unlike my

younger years, when I would just hope for a vaguely spiritual inclination that I would deem "God's will," the examen offers a specific way in which to be attentive to that which God says to us through our daily experience. It is still not as good as the ever-illusive audible voice from above, but it's as close as I hope to come.

Will Braun lives (for now) in Winnipeg and can be reached (for now) at wbraun@inbox.com.

✉ Raising rural issues applauded by pastor of rural church

THANKS TO PHIL Wagler for writing, and to *Canadian Mennonite* for publishing, “Pastoring the flock out along the fenceline,” March 8, page 5.

The issues of spiritual life, health and growth are very real to rural churches and Wagler touched on many of them. As pastor of a very rural church, Cassel Mennonite, I applaud the effort to raise those issues within our consciousness. Our church has probably a dozen families that draw their principal living from farming, many that work in agriculturally related “fields,” and lots of retired farmers, too.

Ours is an urban-oriented society and that is not surprising, given the urban/rural demographics. Population in rural areas has been in decline for many years, although statistics suggest that it is levelling off. Youth leave for urban centres to pursue higher education and jobs. But more disturbing yet is the assumption that “urban is cool” and “bigger is better,” and that nothing can be less cool than a small rural church. When many people decide to live in the country, they seek out the largest, most “urbanized” church that is handy.

Wagler points out that “rural folk are not dumb.” So true. The older folks may have had to drop out of school early in order to work the farm, but “smart” and “dumb” have nothing to do with education. Some of the least clever people I have known could string quite a row of academic letters behind their names. On the other hand, some of the wisest and most spiritually insightful people I have ever met had only an eighth grade education and lived on a farm. Discussing issues of faith with them brings a very different perspective.

Rural ministry and life are genuinely incarnational. Much of Jesus’ ministry takes place in rural communities. He continually uses rural images and farming metaphors in his teaching and preaching. He talks of farmers and land, seeds and sheep, planting and harvesting.

Farmers at our church tell me, “I never feel as close to God as when I’m farming. I’m working God’s

creation and feeding his people. I’m in tune with God’s purpose because I see seasons change and new life spring up from death.”

The pulse of the land and change of the seasons are part of us. Living rurally puts people in touch with God and creation most intimately.

So visit a country church sometime. We’re here every Sunday. And even though we might not have the impressive numbers, or the diversity of “programs,” and you’ll likely get a lot of mud on your car, you will be surprised by what we experience in the way of spiritual life, health and growth once you get to know us.

JIM WHITEHEAD, R.R. 1, TAVISTOCK, ONT.

✉ Satisfying the soul more important than quenching thirst

AFTER READING CHARLIE Smith’s “Mennonites urged to move away from evangelism” letter, Jan. 25, page 8, I was struck by how little we seem to have in common.

If I understand his views correctly:

- He believes that salvation through Christ is not needed if you have peace and justice.
- Having a relationship with God is irrelevant when addressing personal or global challenges.
- Belief in God can be meaningful, but not necessarily for everyone.
- There are many gods and belief in any one of them is okay.

The conclusion I am drawing from these views is that God only exists in people’s minds, and only in some people’s minds at that. If that were true, then God and evangelism should be an afterthought, and justice and peace would be much more important.

However, the one I serve is Lord over all, and that is why we have the greatest commandment: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.*”

Peace and justice are not entities unto themselves, and unless they are informed by God they become some free-floating morality that can be swayed in any direction.

Jesus did not suffer and die on the cross so we could have justice and respect and three square meals a day. Jesus warned his disciples that they were going to “*drink the cup I drink*” (Mark 10:39), meaning they also were going to suffer.

The kingdom of God is different than this world. The Red Cross and Amnesty International do good work, and the church shares in this burden.

Jesus could have given the Samaritan woman normal water, but instead offered her spiritual, living water that does not run out (John 4:10). As Christians, we have our example.

LAWRENCE WIEBE, ROSEMARY, ALTA.



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/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Leis—Laine Corrine Marie (b. Feb. 11, 2010), to Nikki Gray and Scott Leis, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Penfold—Ellen Mae (b. March 8, 2010), to Joshua and Rebecca Penfold of Muskoka Woods, Ont., Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Unger—Ella Mary Rain (b. March 11, 2010), to Kurt and Carla Unger, Glenlea Mennonite, Man., in Tanzania.

Marriages

Bergen/Erb—Joyelle Bergen and Russell Erb (Glenlea Mennonite, Man.), at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck, Man., March 20, 2010.

Deaths

Baergen—Henry Allan, 63 (b. Dec. 17, 1946; d. Dec. 29, 2009), Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Bergen—Dora (nee Regier), 90 (b. Oct. 16, 1919; d. March 22, 2010), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Braun—Hella Helena, 84 (b. April 27, 1925; d. March 17, 2010), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Dean—Christina Frances (Tina) (nee Knee), 78 (b. Feb. 7, 1932; d. March 22, 2010), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Dueck—John K., 91 (b. March 21, 1918; d. Jan. 22, 2010), Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Erb—Frieda (nee Erb), 98 (b. Jan. 5, 1912; d. Feb. 21, 2010), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Ewert—Charlotte (Lottie), 93 (b. Feb. 20, 1917; d. March 28, 2010), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Jantzi—Ezra, 79 (b. Dec. 18, 1930; d. March 13, 2010), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Janzen—John, 95 (b. Jan. 13, 1915; d. Feb. 6, 2010); Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Knechtel—Alma Fern, 84 (b. Aug. 1, 1925; d. Jan. 28, 2010),

Mannheim Mennonite, Ont.

Leis—Harold Alvin, 85 (b. Oct. 30, 1924; d. March 22, 2010), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Rogalsky—Margaret (nee Harder), 86 (b. Oct. 6, 1923; d. March 12, 2010), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Russon—Albert (Ted), 69 (b. Oct. 27, 1940; d. March 21, 2010), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Turucz—Joe, 92 (b. Feb. 12, 1918; d. March 8, 2010), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

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.

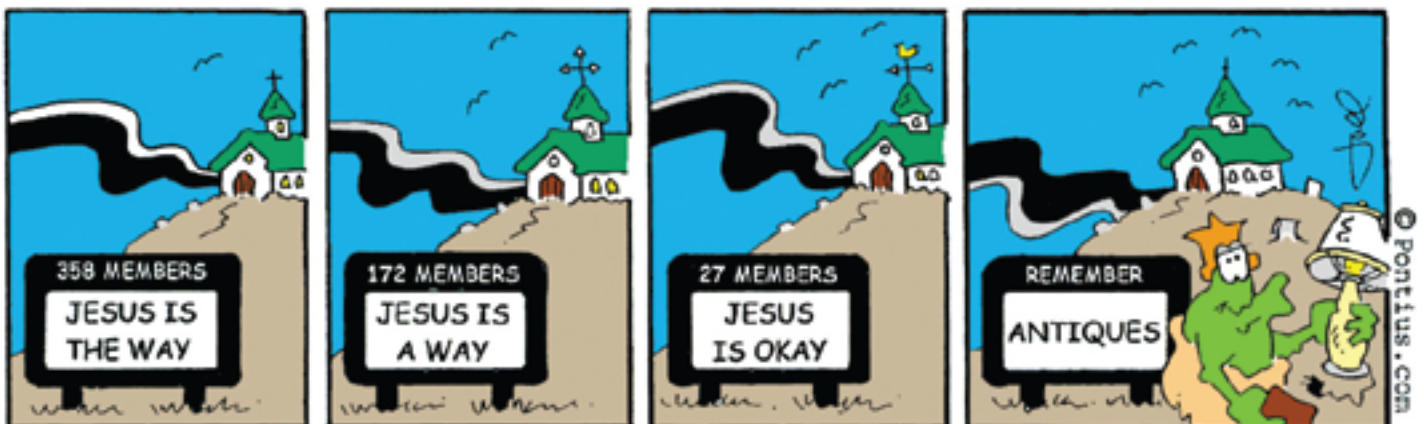
/// Correction

Gordon Allaby, pastor of Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., was never a member of the U.S. navy. Incorrect information appeared in the “‘Breath of Life’ for MC Saskatchewan” article, March 22, page 17. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error. Allaby applied to be a conscientious objector in 1971 and is a strong opponent of the military and military service.

/// Clarification

Esther Regehr was co-editor of the *Schoenbrunn Chronicles*. Her name was not included in the article, “Experiencing the Chaco through *Paraguay Primeval*,” March 22, page 32. Concert organizer Carol Ann Weaver regrets not mentioning Regehr during the performance’s closing credits when the other contributors were listed.

Pontius' Puddle



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

From 'life support' to 'blessed'

MC Alberta cuts Valaqua, Rosthern Junior College funding; committees receive at least what they requested

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
CALGARY, ALTA.

In his welcoming comments to the 2010 Mennonite Church Alberta delegate sessions, Erwin Wiens, pastor of the host Trinity Mennonite Church, described the area church, made up of 16 congregations spread across the province, as a "patient on life support."

But as the assembly progressed, it became apparent the patient was very much alive and sometimes kicking. The theme "Reclaiming Jesus, gladly wear the name," was on nametags with "Jesus" in bold print. At first glance, it appeared all delegates were named Jesus, a vivid reminder of whom Christians are called to emulate.

Opening the business session, outgoing chair Walter Wiebe commended committees for their work. "They've been pushed very hard this year. They do the things that you as individuals can't do," Wiebe said.

Subsidies being reduced

Camp Valaqua presented a detailed 10-year plan for the continuation and growth of its programs, facilities and structures. Highlighting the detailed financials was a new subsidy plan. While the 2009 subsidy was \$111,066, MC Alberta budgeted \$100,000 for 2010 and will continue reducing it by \$10,000 a year until it levels out at \$50,000.

The change encourages Valaqua to increase programming and income, while allowing the area church to free up funds to pursue other initiatives. The immediate practical impact is an increase in summer camp and rental rates. Most week-long summer camps will go up by \$50 per camper this summer.

A 2010 budget line cut Rosthern Junior College funding from \$22,000 last year to \$12,000.

Committee funding consistent

MC Alberta finances, while tight, are in good shape. Treasurer Lois Epp reported, "This year all committees received what they requested or slightly more. . . . This matches the activity levels expressed in the committee reports."

Another notable change for 2010 is the introduction of new budget lines for external reserve funds. These lines will accept donations towards specific mission project initiatives.

Committee reports

The Congregational Leadership Committee, charged in 2009 with polling congregations to develop job functions and identify candidates for a conference youth ministry, came instead with an alternative suggestion. Based on its research, a "missional turn" was suggested as a greater need. The committee will continue to discuss this direction together with the pastors council. The council, made up of all MC Alberta pastors, intends to increase the frequency of its meetings, perhaps to once a month, in order to discern a missional church agenda for the province.

The Community Building Committee challenged delegates to foster a culture of call and encourage young people to attend Mennonite schools. Written suggestions on how schools and churches could better cooperate were collected.

Joanne De Jong, a member of Missions and Service Committee, got delegates enthused about three projects:

- An Anabaptist student community in Calgary;
- A possible church plant among refugees in North Edmonton; and
- An Anabaptist peace centre.

The members of the committee are all new in 2010, and De Jong noted that, although this was intimidating, they were encouraged to get moving, even with small projects. "It's easier to steer a moving car than one that is standing still," she said.

Leadership proposal

Towards the end of the sessions, a proposal to task Walter Wiebe, past chair of MC Alberta, as a "volunteer" to assist committees to achieve their goals, and to frame a discussion about the positives and negatives of establishing an executive director position, was met with some opposition. The opposition was not based primarily on the merits of the proposal, but more on the fact that it was sprung on the delegates just "20 minutes before the end," as one delegate put it.

Questions from the floor focused on process and the suggestion that the executive committee was running ahead of the delegates.

"I thought the executive served the interests of the congregational delegates and not the other way around," is the way another delegate framed it.

In the end, the proposal died for lack of support.

The executive committee decided to circulate the proposal in writing to the individual churches and postpone the decision regarding Wiebe until the 2011 assembly.

'Don't forget you are blessed'

In closing, keynote speaker Terry Schellenberg, external vice-president of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, noted that it seems "you continue to feel the trauma of 2000," the year when MC Alberta was in crisis regarding the issue of homosexuality and what to do about the differing views of member churches.

He ended on a positive note, though. "I think at times you forget you are blessed. You are doing a lot. . . . You are not perfect, but why should you be?" he said, urging the assembly to focus on Jesus Christ, their centre. ☿



Schellenberg

Two views

Goshen College professors present contrasting opinions on playing the national anthem

By RICHARD R. AGUIRRE

Goshen College Release
GOSHEN, IND.

United in their commitment to pacifism, the teachings of the Mennonite church and extending Christian hospitality to others, two Goshen College faculty members presented conflicting opinions on playing the national anthem before sports events at the college.

The half-hour convocation, “Perspectives on the anthem,” took place on March 24, the morning after the national anthem was played at Goshen for the first time before a college sports event.

Joe Liechty, professor of peace, justice and conflict studies and chair of the department, said he grew up uneasy about patriotism. Despite his misgivings, Liechty said he supported playing the anthem before campus sports events to promote the welfare of the college community.

He drew a distinction between hospitality at a Mennonite church and a Mennonite college. “To the 45 percent of our students who come from other religious traditions, or no religious traditions, we say, ‘If you can embrace our core values—that we seek to nurture graduates who are Christ-centred, passionate learners, servant leaders, compassionate peacemakers and global citizens—even in fact if you can just tolerate and respect the core values, you are part of this learning community. You are not simply suffered. . . . You are not a guest; you are family.’”

Because of that, Liechty said Goshen College should accommodate reasonable requests, such as playing the anthem. “When I think about what the anthem means, I conclude that it does not have a fixed, inherent meaning.”

He said that since the college has decided that the anthem will be followed by the reading of the Prayer of St. Francis, “it would be hard for anyone to go away with



In honour of the inaugural playing of the American national anthem at a Goshen College sporting event, students Taylor TenHarmsel, left, Sean Doering and Nate West also adorned their chests with the American flag.

the idea that Goshen College supports militarism and nationalism.”

Kathy Meyer Reimer, professor of education and chair of the department, disagreed, stating that Goshen’s decision to play the anthem had removed “one of the symbols and sacred rituals borne out of Anabaptist convictions about nationalism. The anthem controversy also speaks to how we make decisions, both large and small, when there are conflicts between what we feel is asked of us by our faith and by the good country in which we live.”

She said those who approved of playing the anthem in order to extend hospitality to non-Mennonite student-athletes and coaches may have actually made the college less hospitable. “If we want people who are not familiar with Anabaptism to understand some of the assumptions basic to practices that happen at Goshen College, we need to be clear and willing to talk about the core Anabaptist beliefs that become rituals,” she said.

Meyer Reimer also suggested that the anthem is too closely linked to national loyalty and to militarism to be played without sending a mixed message at the college, which promotes compassionate peacemaking and global citizenship. The

college also should promote pacifism more strongly, she said.

“Our not playing the anthem should have been more clearly linked to living out biblical passages of ‘you shall not kill,’ ‘blessed are the peacemakers,’ and ‘love your enemies and do good to those who hurt you’—prophetic, costly, biblical principles upon which the teachings in Anabaptism were founded,” she said. “As Goshen College engages our country and our culture, we decide on many issues whether to assimilate or to live in alternative ways—when to be people of assent and when to be people of dissent.”

Liechty, on the other hand, said that he believes the college can play the anthem without undermining its commitment to peace. “By just about any comparative measure, it’s hard to imagine a place where peace has a more prominent role, where it is more honoured, more reflected upon, more acted on,” he said. “We can afford to honour the desire of community members who want to play the anthem. For those of us who have wanted not playing the anthem to be a witness in relation to militarism and nationalism, we will need to find other ways, and we can.” ❧

GOSHEN COLLEGE RECORD PHOTO BY DIETRICH EITZEN

Grateful for God's mercy

Niagara celebrates 30th anniversary of the arrival of its Laotian community

STORY AND PHOTO BY ANDREA EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

A host of Mennonite and civic dignitaries graced St. Catharines United Mennonite Church on March 27 to celebrate with Lao Christian Fellowship the 30th anniversary of the Laotian community in Niagara.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario was represented by executive director Rick Cober Bauman, Niagara regional representative Clarke Fretz and refugee program coordinator Moses Moini. Local MP Rick Dykstra, MPP Jim Bradley and St. Catharines mayor Brian McMullan recognized the day with their words, as did Thongsouk Vongphakdy, president of the Lao Association of Ontario.

Kuaying Teng, senior pastor of Lao Christian Fellowship since 1994, and Ken Gazley, pastor of St. Catharines United

Mennonite, spoke at the service that included traditional Laotian dancing. This was followed by a cake-cutting and dinner of Laotian food prepared by the congregation. Highly visible were the vibrant plum, pine and persimmon silks of the traditional Laotian dresses wrapping many of the women and children in the congregation.

Rather than honour the merits and accomplishments of the community, those involved chose to recognize and be grateful for "God's grace and mercy," words repeated throughout the day. For Teng, this event was a "celebration of God's love in action."

Southinh Luangrath, along with his wife and young daughter, comprised one of the very first Laotian families brought to the region in 1978 under Canada's historic

A former Buddhist priest, it took a spiritual experience Luangrath likens to having had the Buddhism exorcised from his body and replaced with a love for Christ, for him to seek Jesus.



Traditional Laotian dance was a highlight of the March 27 service at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, Ont., that celebrated the 30th anniversary of the arrival of Laotian refugees in the Niagara Region.

Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. This effort, largely helmed by MCC, allowed 20,000 Laotians to flee Asia with the help of individual citizens and groups. Laotians seeking temporary refuge in neighbouring countries after the Vietnam War and the expansion of communism in their home country were among the first to move.

Moini referenced the "horror and untold

/// Briefly noted

'A new beginning' for Mennonites in Laos

After two years of prayer and preparation, the president of the new Lao Mennonite Conference of Canada (LMCC) and a delegation of other Canadian Mennonites recently spent two weeks in the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, where they met with numerous government officials. They made the trip to promote their vision of starting Mennonite churches in the country of their birth and to help their homeland. LMCC president Chinda Kommala presented the government officials with a copy of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, and in return received a copy of the government guide for the management and protection of religious activities in Laos. "It was a historic moment to meet with socialist leaders of Laos and openly talk about church," noted Brian Bauman, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada mission minister, who was part of the Canadian delegation. The LMCC is very encouraged that this meeting may have marked a new beginning for Mennonites in Laos, according to Kommala, although he noted that many Christian leaders doubted the wisdom of meeting directly with the Laotian Religious Affairs Committee. The next step is to present a proposal to the country's director general asking for registration of the Mennonite church in Laos.

—Lao Mennonite Conference of Canada Release

struggling of the ‘boat people,’” as the Laotian refugees were called at the time.

Luangrath and his family were the first to be sponsored by St. Catharines United Mennonite, with much help from then pastor H.P. Epp. Luangrath attended Bible studies and went on to found Lao Christian Fellowship with the second family of refugees sponsored by St. Catharines United Mennonite. A former Buddhist priest, it took a spiritual experience Luangrath likens to having had the Buddhism exorcised from his body and replaced with a love for Christ, for him to seek Jesus.

Services began in 1980 at Grantham Mennonite Brethren Church. A pastoral change only a few weeks later led the group to move to St. Catharines United Mennonite. Bibles and song books in the Laotian language were obtained. After sharing space with St. Catharines United Mennonite for almost 15 years, the fellowship was able to a move to a new location

across town in 1995 with help from the Laotian community and various arms of MCC.

Today, Ontario’s Laotian community is a real success story, counting among its

members lawyers, doctors and business people who came to Canada with nothing. Luangrath knows it is time to give back to the church, community and country that has made this possible. ☞

☞ Briefly noted

Ask and you shall receive: Simple invitation swells Sunday school

Three years ago, Sharon Schultz, pastor of Eyebrow Mennonite Church, Sask., was praying for her tiny congregation and asking God to send a few more people. One of three churches in the area, and the only Mennonite group, Eyebrow Mennonite was known for its summer Vacation Bible School. Since it usually drew a large group of children from the community, she wondered if those same children would also like to come to Sunday school. “I figured it’s a lot the same,” she said. So the church sent invitations to the children and letters of explanation to the parents. And the children came. On average, between 20 and 25 locals arrive each Sunday morning for the Sunday school hour. “They sing together, have a sharing time and pray together,” said Schultz, who has been encouraged by the simple faith of the children. Some are from the other churches in town, and they return there for their own services, but there are other parents who drive in from outside Eyebrow to bring their children to the church. Now the need is for more adults to help with all the children, who, before the outreach, only numbered nine.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

New congregation to be birthed in Surrey

Plans are underway to develop a Mennonite Church B.C. plant in Surrey, a cooperative effort by Living Hope Christian Fellowship of Surrey and Mennonite Church B.C.’s Evangelical and Church Development Committee. Living Hope, a 15-year-old MC B.C. congregation, had been discerning God’s leading to reach out further to the surrounding community. Wally Nickel was affirmed as two-thirds-time associate pastor for this expansion ministry. Nickel will focus on church multiplication through e-mail cell network development, community assistance strategies and preaching. The goal is for a fall launch date in the Sullivan/Panorama area of Surrey.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

Pastors, congregants learn to ‘disagree well’

STRATFORD, ONT.— Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, held its first “Volunteer Equipping Day” at the end of February. The training and equipping event was designed to help church volunteers collaborate and work together better. The day was led by Betty Pries of Associates Resourcing the Church, which specializes in conflict resolution training and intervention. Pries noted that, while “churches often do well at trusting one another, . . . we don’t often do as well [at] allowing for honest, open and authentic dialogue over tough issues. Can we disagree well?” she wondered. Some 60 people from five local churches attended the event. “I learned to communicate my intentions along with my actions,” said Avon Mennonite pastor Herb Sawatzky. “Betty pointed out that often intent is not communicated, which leads to confusion and miscommunication.” Others noted that in times of conflict it is important to move from an attitude of judgment to one of curiosity, in order to better listen to and understand another person’s point of view. The day was funded in large part by a grant from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s Go & Grow Fund.

—Avon Mennonite Church Release

☞ Staff change

AMBS names new Canadian admissions counsellor

ELKHART, IND.— Sherri Martin-Carman, currently development associate for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), has also been named



Martin-Carman

AMBS admissions counsellor for Canada. Martin-Carman focuses her work primarily in Manitoba and Ontario, but is available as a resource to all of Mennonite Church Canada. Working from her home office in Elmira, Ont., Martin-Carman will establish and maintain contacts with prospective students as well as with pastors and leaders in MC Canada who can do shoulder-tapping of future church leaders. Martin-Carman can be contacted at 519 669-1005, or by e-mail at smcarman@ambs.edu.

—AMBS Release

Slain soldiers not Canada's only heroes

Menonite leaders support petition calling on the University of Regina not to provide free tuition to children of this country's fallen military men and women

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

A University of Regina professor caused a commotion last month when he spoke out against the practice of paying the full tuition of children of slain Canadian soldiers. Jeffery Weber, a political science professor, has gathered support from 15 other university staff in a petition against the practice known as Project Hero, which was started by an Edmonton businessman two years ago.

"We write to you as concerned faculty members of the University of Regina, to urge you to withdraw our university immediately from participation in the 'Project Hero' scholarship program," they wrote. "This program, which waives tuition and course fees, and provides \$1,000 per year to 'dependents of Canadian Forces personnel deceased while serving with an active mission,' is a glorification of Canadian imperialism in Afghanistan and elsewhere. We do not want our university associated with the political impulse to unquestioning glorification of military action."

Named online as one of CBC's top news stories for March 26, the broadcast caused a backlash from the school's president and opposition from the general public. Response from Menonite leaders in Saskatchewan, however, has been mostly one of agreement.

"We should be giving scholarships to other 'heroes,'" stated Florence Driedger, co-pastor of Peace Menonite in Regina, suggesting single moms be given the same considerations. "I've seen too many people struggle too hard to get an education," she said, speaking about new immigrants and the sacrifices they make to put their children through school.

Gordon Allaby, pastor of Osler Menonite, wondered why other government employees with high-risk jobs don't

get the same treatment.

Eileen Klassen Hamm, peace and justice director for Menonite Central Committee Saskatchewan, applauded the efforts of the professors. "I really welcome the debate," she said. "As Canada becomes more and more militaristic, it takes courage to ask these questions."

Jake Buhler, a local peace activist, has also noticed the trend of increasing militarism in Canadian society. He sees support for the military showing up in many areas of daily life. "Elementary schools are all hooked up with Legions," he pointed out. "Every major sports event has a time when they will honour the military."

Buhler sees a definite political agenda

when major public institutions of higher learning are co-opted by ideas like Project Hero, which he believes helps to sway public opinion against anyone who questions the trend in this thinking. "It's dangerous to speak out against militarism," he said, suggesting that "churches have been cowed into doing nothing."

Rose Graber, co-pastor of Grace Menonite in Regina, expressed a somewhat contrary opinion. "I'm not for the military," she said, "[but] I favour erring on the side of generosity." She said her ministry to veterans has caused her to ponder some of her core convictions: "I had to start thinking as a pastor, instead of an activist." ❧

NIAGARA UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



Peter Janzen and Bill Devolin from Niagara United Menonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., are pictured with Alastair Davis, Habitat Niagara CEO, and John Sherk, construction teacher with the District School Board of Niagara, at the site of a Habitat for Humanity building project in St. Catharines the church financially supported through its missions committee. The house was completed in February.

Not as organic as we think

Edna Staebler research fellow examines 'myth' of Mennonite farming practices in Waterloo County

STORY AND PHOTO

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Contrary to popular belief, Old Order Mennonite farming practices are not as organically friendly as those of more modern Mennonites.

This was the finding of Chris Yordy, the 2009 recipient of the Edna Staebler Research Fellowship. The \$1,000 fellowship enabled the Waterloo North Mennonite Church member to study the question of sustainable agriculture among the Old Order Mennonites, David Martin Mennonites and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Mennonites.

His research—which he presented to the public at the Joseph Schneider Haus Museum on Feb. 19—set out to prove his thesis, that “a Mennonite farmer’s belief system determines his or her level of technology adoption, and by focussing on the calling of each congregation with regard to environmental stewardship, Mennonites are at once agents of change within a capitalist culture and within a communitarian culture.”

In Yordy’s research, interviews with Old Order farmers suggested a low fertilizer usage, although a study done in 1989 by researchers from the University of Guelph found them using more than the average farmer.

While showing photos of Old Order Mennonites spreading manure on snow and of livestock penned over a watercourse—practices not recommended by agriculture officials—he noted later that “Mennonite farmers have not converted en masse to organic farming, and that was the main take-home point of the presentation. . . I wanted to prove a point that Old Order Mennonites are not just an ideal community in which environmental stewardship is always upheld as the most important ideal. Mennonites are also farmers who struggle

to maintain an income, particularly those who are not engaged in supply management,” a practice that involves participation in government quota systems, particularly for milk and poultry.

At the same time, he noted that small Old Order Mennonite farms, with mixed crops and livestock, “makes [them] in some ways more environmentally sustainable.”

Of great interest to the gathered group was the pairing of capitalism with communitarianism, as each farmer grows and produces for markets, and at the same time is part of a community that includes barn-raisings and other community efforts. A modern example of this would be the Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative, formed by Old Order Mennonites to sell their produce to local markets.

Yordy holds an M.Sc. degree in agricultural economics from the University of Guelph, Ont., and a bachelor’s degree in development studies, with an emphasis on business and economic development. He has recently moved to Ottawa, where he works for the International



Jim Reusser, left, a retired Mennonite Church Canada pastor, discusses Mennonite farming practices in the region with Chris Yordy, the 2009 Edna Staebler research fellow, right.

Development Research Centre investigating how people in North Africa, particularly Egypt and Morocco, are coping with rising food prices. He now attends Village International Mennonite Church being planted by Stefan Cherry (formerly of Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont.).

Joseph Schneider was one of three Mennonite Schneider brothers who made the trek from Pennsylvania to the German Settlement, now Waterloo County, in 1807. His family home still stands near downtown Kitchener. Since 1994, the Friends of Joseph Schneider Haus Museum have offered an annual research fellowship to “increase knowledge and understanding of the folk cultures and founding peoples of the region.” ❧

❧ Briefly noted

MWC funds projects for member churches in global south

Fresh, clean water from a new well in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is a source of joy and hope. The well is at the heart of the “Women & Water for Life” project of the Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania (Tanzania Mennonite Church) in the Eastern Diocese of the national church. A \$10,000 gift from the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Global Church Sharing Fund early in 2010 is helping to make it happen. Other \$10,000 sharing fund gifts have recently been approved or are in process: to train pastors and church leaders in Honduras; to construct a church building for the Bible Missionary Church in Myanmar; and expand the Good Tidings Mennonite Church in Jamaica. In the past 18 months MWC has sent gifts of up to \$10,000 to churches in Africa, Asia, South American and the Caribbean totalling \$94,600.

—Mennonite World Conference Release

HELP FOR HAITI

From Canada to Haiti . . . with love and prayers

STORY AND PHOTO BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release
PLUM COULEE, MAN.

A shipping container of relief kits, comforters and other supplies to assist earthquake victims in Haiti left Mennonite Central Committee Canada's warehouse in this small southern Manitoba town in early March.

The tightly-packed load contained 1,092 relief kits, 104 bales of comforters, three bales of flat sheets, close to 2,000 water bottles, a generator, 20 walkers and 208 pairs of crutches.

Helping load the container were John Martens, owner of John Martens Construction and Concrete, based in the nearby town of Grunthal, and his crew of three employees. They had been pouring a concrete floor in Plum Coulee, but made the time to help load the shipping container.

"I can't imagine what it would be like if your house was totally destroyed—it would be very hard," said Martens, who had loaded containers before and is familiar with the work of MCC through his involvement as chair of MCC's meat canning committee in Manitoba.



John Martens, right, the owner of John Martens Construction and Concrete of Grunthal, Man., brought his crew of Jason Neufeld, Jordan Unrau and Tony Graft to help load the first shipping container of material resources to leave the Mennonite Central Committee warehouse in Plum Coulee, Man., for Haiti.

"This time I brought my crew as well," he said, explaining that he wanted to give his employees the opportunity to help people in Haiti through the work of MCC. "When the Lord presents an opportunity for us to help other people, we should step up to the plate and do our part," he said. "The small things that we do here can have a big impact in the lives of others."

The container loaded in Plum Coulee is part of MCC's emergency assistance

of 25,000 heavy comforters and blankets, 10,000 flat sheets and 20,000 relief kits—plastic pails filled with towels, soap, shampoo and other hygienic supplies.

A number of MCC containers have already been shipped from warehouses in Pennsylvania and Ontario. Donated material resources from across the country typically flow to central MCC warehouses, where containers are packed and sent overseas. The facility in Plum Coulee is MCC's central warehouse in Canada.

MCC's material resources are being distributed by MCC partner organizations in nine internally displaced communities that are already receiving food aid and other emergency assistance, and to the most vulnerable people in other communities.

Shipments of material resources will be ongoing as MCC plans the next steps in its multi-year response. ❧

MCC PHOTO BY BEN DEPP



A five-person Mennonite Central Committee Canada medical team served earthquake survivors in the town of Djeg, outside of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, for two weeks in mid-March. Pictured, Dr. Dolores Logan listens to Meghaelle Beauburn's breathing. The team worked through the Hospital of Hope.

Helping ex-offenders stay out of prison

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

For Norman, having a circle of support and accountability has meant that he has been able to stay out of prison for nine years now.

Circles of Support and Accountability, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba-supported program that works with people who are at high risk to re-offend, held a fundraising event in Winnipeg in February. Jennifer Smith, one of the volunteers who attended, is part of a circle with four other volunteers who meet once a week with their “core member.”

“We talk about our week, play cards, share a potluck lunch or do other fun things,” said Smith, who expressed satisfaction that their core member has been without any offences for the past five years. “It makes a difference to the core member to know that they have someone to back them up,” she added.

Joan Carolyn, program director for more than 10 years, told those gathered, “Our biggest challenge is finding volunteers. We

are reluctant to do PR in the [prisons] because we already have a long waiting list and don’t want to raise false hopes in these potential participants.”

Circles recruits, trains and supports its volunteers. “We wish there were enough volunteers that anyone—regardless of how high risk they are—could have a support circle,” said Carolyn.

Core members refer themselves. “They have to be assessed as high risk to re-offend and without much support in the community,” she noted.

“Being a part of this is life-giving,” said Carolyn, recalling the time a core member had needed housing and a volunteer opened his house. The volunteer was unable to care for his garden due to health reasons, but the core member took over those duties and continued to care for the garden long after moving out. “It is about facing the hard stuff, but walking together with joy,” Carolyn concluded. ☘

PHOTO BY JENNIFER SMITH



A recent fundraising event for Manitoba’s Circles of Support and Accountability raised enough money to take the core members of the program on a camping excursion this summer. Pictured from left to right: program director Joan Carolyn, new program associate Richard Carrier, and outgoing program associate Shosana Funk.

Heifer sale gives whole new twist to ‘AI’

STORY AND PHOTO

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

LISTOWEL, ONT.

The first items up for auction at this year’s Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario heifer auction fundraiser were units of bull semen for artificial insemination.

Previous *Canadian Mennonite* articles on appreciative inquiry, also with the acronym “AI,” have apparently led to gales of laughter among rural readers.

But AI was no laughing matter on Feb. 19, when one lot of six units sold for \$190 per unit.

Everything at the 29th annual Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Heifer Auction—from the use of Caron Auction Facilities near Listowel to the auctioneers’ time and the items sold—were donated, allowing all of the proceeds to go towards the work of MCC.

A heifer donated to the sale by Mennonite Savings and Credit Union sold for \$3,100; a cow carving by Harold Erb, his 15th donation, sold for \$1,000; and a carving of a team of horses with a wagon, made by 104-year-old Eli Marten when he was 99, sold for \$700.

In total, this year’s sale raised \$171,265. While down from last year’s record of \$203,000, it was still well above the 29-year average of \$135,000. ☘



Lot 13, Registered Holstein Heifer, Earlen Carisma Chess, donated by Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, was auctioned for \$3,100 at the 29th annual MCC Ontario heifer auction fundraiser in Listowel, Ont.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Not a Christian . . . just a 'follower of Jesus'

Lakota leader shares about the pain of colonialism and the joy of salvation

BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

Mennonite Central Committee B.C. Release

Mitakuye Oyasin ("All my relations"). With these words of greeting, Richard Twiss, a Lakota First Nations speaker, author and "follower of Jesus," began two evenings of teaching and inspiration in communities in B.C.'s Lower Mainland.

Twiss told stories, often peppered with humour, to explain how First Nations people understand their Creator and the gospel of Jesus with those gathered at the Skwah Band Hall in Chilliwack on March 2 and at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond the next night. He spoke of the rich heritage that First Nations people are reclaiming after centuries of being "robbed" of it, due to the impact of colonialism, and of how First Nations followers of Jesus are now expressing their faith through pow wows, with dancing and drumming, and in their own languages.

"First Nations culture has an understanding that the Creator put us here not as owners, but as stewards, as hosts," Twiss said. "Colonials didn't know how to come as guests; they came as colonizers, going into all the world, not just to bring Jesus, but to bring 'civilization.'"

Europeans came to the "new world" with a sense that it was empty and void "because it had no fences," Twiss said as he shared the history of his family in Catholic-run residential schools and of the pain this had brought to his people. Church was meaningless, Twiss said, noting that he became an angry, wild youth who abused drugs and lived like a beach bum in Hawaii. "I allowed hatred to seep into my soul against white people and Christianity," he said.

But after a dramatic conversion experience, he began trying to figure out how to

be a First Nations person in the context of the church. The message he kept hearing was that, while God loved him, God didn't like his culture very much: no drums, no button blankets, no totems, no dream catchers, no singing in his own language, because, he was told, "all of that is from the devil."

And while he believed in Jesus wholeheartedly, there was always something missing for him in worship. "I have grown in my faith in Jesus and in my disillusionment of the church," he said. It is for this reason that he refers to himself as a "follower of Jesus," rather than a "Christian," because the latter term carries too much negative baggage.

Twiss began a ministry called Wiconi International. *Wiconi* means life in the Lakota language and is based on Jesus' words: "I have come that you might have life and have it in abundance." Wiconi International holds inter-tribal pow wows so First Nations people from all tribes have an opportunity to hear the gospel in the context of their culture.

"At the pow wow, we present Christ through traditional song and dance, allowing people to express their love of God in their heart language," Twiss explained. "The Bible tells us that God will inhabit the praise of his people. This is so meaningful to the people who participate in these pow wows."

Viewing clips of Wiconi International pow wows and some of their overseas tours, the audiences were able to see firsthand how important music, dancing and artwork are to First Nations people and in expressing their love for the Creator.

"I am hopeful. I believe that God is good



Richard Twiss, a Lakota First Nation "follower of Jesus," speaks animatedly during an address at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., last month.

all the time," Twiss said. "Although we have a lot of history, the story is not over. We have learned that it is possible to love your enemies, to forgive those who have done terrible things to you, and that's because of Jesus." He encouraged the church to trust that the Spirit of God was as active in the aboriginal communities as it was in theirs.

The events were co-sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee B.C. and Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry. ☸

PHOTO BY GERRY SPORTAK

Former college cook continues to feed the souls of students

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Annie Janzen has always cared for the students of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) and one of its predecessor institutions, Canadian Mennonite Bible College. In her 27 years working at the college as head cook, she ensured that students were happy with the meals so that they could concentrate on their studies.

“They were home-cooked meals, served family style, where we put the food on the tables,” Janzen said at a birthday party in her honour on March 12.

The students and staff definitely enjoyed her cooking.

“I would estimate that each year the students and teachers gained about five pounds because of the food,” recalled Waldemar Janzen, a former Bible college professor. “It was so good, especially the *verenike* [a traditional Mennonite dumpling filled with cottage cheese],” he said, adding, “She took an interest in their whole lives.”

“Relating to students” was the most memorable part of her work at the college, Janzen said, even to the point of mending their clothes and inviting them to her on-campus apartment to have meals together there.

But that’s not all she did for them—and continues to do. Since 1984, when she retired from the Bible college, she has been giving annual bursaries to international students through the Annie Janzen Endowment Fund. She chose international students specifically in order to provide support that they otherwise may not have received in this country. The financial aid also helps because these students normally do not have the same earning opportunities in their homelands as Canadians do after graduation.

The first recipient was Vindy Wong of Hong Kong, a former biblical and theological studies major at the Bible college.

“[Annie] became my Canadian grandma.

We became good friends,” said Wong, who now lives in Calgary, Alta., and attended the March 12 party for her benefactor. For her part, Wong has helped out at many different churches since her graduation.

The most recent recipient of Janzen’s bursary is Shota Yoda from Handa, Japan. A third-year peace and conflict transformation studies major at CMU, he spoke at Janzen’s birthday party. “This bursary is very important,” Yoda said, because international student fees are expensive at Canadian universities. Not only that, but the bursary holds him accountable to pursue his goal of ministering in Asian countries. He hopes to combine ministry with

proclaiming peace in Japan and other Asian countries, saying, “I don’t think the two are separate.”

“It is very encouraging to receive this bursary; it will help me reach my goals,” Yoda concluded.

Over the years, students from South Korea, Japan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Paraguay and Mexico, among others, have been beneficiaries of Janzen’s bursaries. As costs for schooling have increased, so have the bursary amounts.

According to Abe Bergen, director of enrolment services at CMU, “We give out \$300,000 [in financial aid] a year, and half of it comes from donors like Annie.”

The Annie Janzen

Endowment Fund will continue to pay bursaries once a year to international students at CMU as long as people donate money to the Mennonite Foundation of Canada and as long as her personal funds in the foundation last.

But Janzen’s relationships with the beneficiaries don’t stop with monetary aid. She has continued to be someone to relate to, and someone to pray with, to many of the students who received bursaries.

Some of the recipients have invited her to visit them in their homelands or countries where they have gone on to serve. “I have been fortunate to visit some countries on every continent,” Janzen said. She has been to Thailand, Japan, Burkina Faso, the Netherlands and Indonesia, to name a few.

Janzen’s travels have further instilled in her a heart for students from abroad, as well as a taste for international food. “I have appreciated the local food of all the countries that I have visited,” Janzen said. ☼



Bursary recipient Shota Yoda thanks Annie Janzen, seated, for her support of his education. Yoda is an international student at Canadian Mennonite University; he is from Handa, Japan. He is the latest recipient of an Annie Janzen Endowment Fund bursary.

ARTBEAT

MPN struggling to publish in a digital age

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release
WINNIPEG

For Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), the ministry of publishing is growing ever more complex.

The mission for the publisher of Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. remains the same: providing materials to equip the church to experience and share the gospel of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. But coping with the impact of the Internet and readily available free digital media is changing the face of business. The economic downturn of 2009 has compounded that challenge.

At MC Canada's spring leadership assembly in early March, MPN executive director Ron Rempel told Christian Formation Council members that business has improved from six or seven years ago, but the publisher is still not where it needs

to be. "We were hoping for a break-even year, but we didn't quite make it," he said.

MPN experienced a shortfall of approximately \$149,000, about 5 percent of its budget. That shortfall will temporarily be covered by a line of credit until marketing initiatives and expense reductions in the current fiscal year generate enough revenue to compensate for last year's loss.

Rempel noted the importance of running a sustainable operation to prevent financial liability that would eventually fall into the lap of the partnering denominations. In addition, the recent Yutzy Report commissioned by MC U.S.A. recommended that MPN re-examine all of its activities required by, but not directly funded by, the denominations. The study by consultant LaVern Yutzy is a sweeping review of denomination-wide operations and agencies in MC U.S.A.

"We want to build a business that can support itself primarily through sales, with only a modest amount of fundraising for donations," Rempel said. Finding out how to do that is particularly challenging in a digital climate. "Which activities can continue to be funded by sales? What will we need to do to find other sources of revenue?" he mused.

He referred to several ways in which MPN is responding to the digital challenge. A growing list of



Rempel

Herald Press book titles are now available by print on demand. A number of books are being converted to files for Amazon's Kindle e-book reader. Also, MPN has a growing list of downloadable items, some for a fee and some free, on its own website (www.mpn.net/downloads).

Rempel praised the MC Canada Resource Centre for coordinating volunteer resource advocates who promote MPN materials in congregations across the country. At the same time, he recognized that resource centre loans of MPN titles may compromise MPN sales. The degree of impact, if any, is unknown.

At the area church level in both Canada and the U.S., staffing for Christian education is decreasing, thus changing the model of such partnerships with MPN. "Now MPN has to produce the material, promote it and educate those who use it," he said, adding, "I don't think we can go back to the good old days when MPN published the material and Christian educators in the church did the training. They'll never come back. We have to rethink how we do all of these things." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Gather 'Round goes back to the beginning

It's back to the beginning for Gather 'Round, the Bible-based curriculum for children and youth produced by Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN). The curriculum, which is co-published with Brethren Press, will return to the book of Genesis this fall after completing its first four-year cycle through the Bible. "It's impossible to cover all of the richness of the Bible in four years," says MPN executive director Ron Rempel. "There is so much more to share about how God has interacted with people in history." The goal of Gather 'Round is to "help children and youth know, love and follow God as they study the Bible," says Eleanor Snyder, who gives direction to the curriculum through her work as editorial director for Faith & Life Resources. "We believe it's important for them to know and engage the Bible's stories," she says, adding, "Our hope is that, as children and youth learn more about the Bible, they will discover how to follow the way of Jesus in a world that emphasizes power, individualism and consumerism."

—Mennonite Publishing Network Release



Hymnal, curricula more profitable than books

Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) materials such as hymnals, curricula and periodicals are collectively more profitable than books.

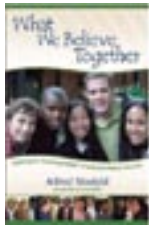
However, MPN executive director Ron Rempel notes that within Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. congregations, graded curriculum use is falling. The current MPN-produced curriculum, Gather 'Round, is used by about 50 percent of congregations, while the previous Jubilee curriculum was used by 70 percent of churches. Before that, the figure was about 90 percent.

According to Rempel, Gather 'Round is made profitable by the 10 percent to 15 percent of sales to non-Mennonite denominations with whom MPN has a variety of partnership agreements. ❧

Mennonite study book published in Vietnamese

Mennonite World Conference Release
HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

What We Believe Together



Together was published in Vietnamese by the Vietnam Mennonite Church in 2009, with distribution beginning at the end of last year. The book is the first legally published Mennonite work in Vietnam since 1975. Approval by the government's Committee on Religious Affairs assures that it can be used anywhere in Vietnam and will not be confiscated by the police.

The book, written simultaneously in Spanish, German and English by Paraguayan church leader Alfred Neufeld, was published by Mennonite World Conference (MWC) as a study guide for the "Shared Convictions" statement approved by the MWC general council in March 2006. The book was MWC's 2007 selection for the Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature.

When Pastor Sang, general secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, received an English copy of the book from a former Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) worker in Vietnam, he recognized its value for Vietnam.

Tran Thi Phuoc Ly, a professional translator with many years of experience interpreting, translating and teaching English, was invited to translate the book. Ly had become familiar with Mennonites at the Mennonite Student Center in Saigon when she was a university student in the early 1970s.

Early responses from Mennonite leaders suggest that the book will be a significant resource in helping them understand themselves as Mennonites among other denominations in Vietnam, and will help others to understand who Mennonites are and what they believe. ❧

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EUROPEAN HERITAGE II with JOHN SHARP (June 29 - July 12)
ITALY, AUSTRIA & GERMANY (July 7-17)
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FOCUS ON FAIR TRADE

COVER STORY

Celebrating women's stories at home and abroad

Ten Thousand Villages, MEDA impact lives of women and their families through fair trade

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Indian dancers from the Swastini Dance Group led by Swati and Nidhi Juthani swirled over the stage at Victoria Park Pavilion in Kitchener on March 27. Both traditional and “Bollywood” styles were showcased to welcome Roopa Mehta from India to “Women’s stories/Women’s hope: An international celebration” of fair trade hosted by Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) and Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

Mehta, with a master of business administration degree from Delhi University, began her business career as the chief executive officer of her family’s textile manufacturing and retailing company. Now she is the executive director of the Sasha Association for Craft Producers, part of the Sarba Shanti Ayog not-for-profit fair-trade organization.

Seventy percent of the people Sasha works with are women producers in India. Sasha’s key goals are to help their producers gain confidence and a sense of worth, mostly through helping them appreciate their own traditional handicrafts; to find markets for these products; and to shepherd the whole process from manufacture to sales.

While the men in families and villages need to be won over at first, Mehta said that eventually the new income and pride free the women to run their organizations themselves. Some of the women’s work has been shown in Italy and Edinburgh. Sasha’s products are available at Ten Thousand Villages in North America.

MEDA’s Ann Gordon also spoke,

highlighting the similar work MEDA does in Pakistan and Afghanistan. There, four “value streams” work to create hope, trust and respect for women as they produce and market glass bangles, market garden food items, milk and embellished fabrics, she explained.

Both Gordon and Mehta told stories of specific women helped by the programs they were running.

Amina, an Indian woman, was doing work for male wholesalers, but the low-quality products she and others in the village were making earned them little money and little respect, Mehta said. But with Sasha’s help, they learned to have pride in



University student Melinda Goertz poses with her baking and the fair trade products she used to create them.

their own embroidery and began to earn a decent living as well as the respect of the men in their lives.

The third component of the afternoon was food: olive oil and spices from TTV; falafel, squares and cookies made from TTV fair trade products; and fair trade coffee.

The event not only told stories of women being helped far away, but did the same at home: The sweets were made by Melinda Goertz, a third-year university student from Waterloo, Ont., who is trying to start her own business to support herself through school. ❧



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FOCUS ON FAIR TRADE

VIEWPOINT

Fair trade: No donations required

BY INGRID HEINRICHS PAULS

Fair trade: Just another simple answer to a very complicated problem?

We are bombarded with news of poverty and injustice on a daily basis. There seems to be no end to projects to support and crises to donate to. We give what we can, all the while knowing that many of these countries have been struggling for decades and even centuries.

So how can buying fair trade really make a difference?

There is no doubt that economic problems run deep and donations are not a long-term solution. But fair trade is not about dealing with acute crises; it is

about building sustainable local economies, supporting capacity-building,

and empowering people to improve their present and their future. Equal pay and an equal voice for women, education, empowerment, adult labour, work for the disabled, commitment, safe working conditions, dialogue, transparency, respect and, of course, fair wages: These are the words that describe fair trade.

Supporting fair trade used to mean buying simple gifts at tiny Self Help shops or coffee that was big on principles but not so much on taste. Those days are long gone.



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[F]air trade is not about dealing with acute crises; it is about building sustainable local economies, supporting capacity-building, and empowering people to improve their present and their future.

Fair trade chocolate and coffee, and even oranges, bananas, rice, sugar and ice cream, can be found in many mainstream stores. Fair trade clothes, shoes, flowers and even wine are available; all it takes is a little “googling.”


And at Ten Thousand Villages—Canada’s largest and oldest fair trade organization, and a project of Mennonite Central Committee—customers can find fair trade jewellery, personal accessories, home décor, furniture, toys, musical instruments, paper products, garden accessories, skin care products, and a host of gourmet and organic food products.

When the tsunami hit Sri Lanka in 2004, it was the Gospel House fair trade producer group that had the knowledge and resources to help establish brick and boat-building businesses in affected villages. When the earthquake hit Indonesia in 2009, it was the Pekerti fair trade producer group that provided immediate money and shelter to affected areas.

And when there was mass rioting in Kenya in 2008, Mike Muchilwa, director of the Kick fair trade producer group, said, “[M]any artisans would have joined the looting, destruction and death had it not been for fair trade.” So it can be said that fair trade empowers people to help themselves and each other.

Fair trade is part of the answer to a complicated problem. By incorporating fair trade into everyday purchases, consumers can make a difference every day—with no donations required. ☸

Ingrid Heinrichs Pauls is the education and media coordinator for Ten Thousand Villages Canada.



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Calendar

British Columbia

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.

Alberta

May 2: A celebration of Alvin Lepp's 30 years of ministry with the Siksika Nation. Open house at the Siksika community centre, 2 to 5 p.m. Celebration service at Rosemary Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. For more information, contact Dan Jack 403-235-3646.

May 2: Installation service for pastor Joseph Chun-jen Liou at Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church, 10 a.m.

May 8: Spring workday at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Jeff Schellenberg at 403-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

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

May 8: RJC Spring Golf Classic at Valley Regional Park, Rosthern.

May 9: RJC spring choral concert, at 2:30 p.m.

May 13-17: RJC chorale tour of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Manitoba

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.

Ontario

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.

April 28: Solar energy information night hosted by MCC Ontario and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, at Toronto United Mennonite Church, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit ontario.mcc.org/mise.

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.

May 1: DaCapo Choir presents "Love: Embracing its many faces" concert, including the premiere of works by Jeff Enns and Leonard Enns, and featuring violinist Victoria Melik, at St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m. To order tickets, visit DaCapoChamberChoir.ca and follow the "ticket info" link.

May 2: Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir presents its spring concert, "Make a Joyful Noise," at Breslau Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

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, barbeque 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 12: Solar energy information night hosted by MCC Ontario and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit ontario.mcc.org/mise.

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.

U.S.

June 13-14: "A table of sharing: MCC and the expanding networks of Mennonite identity" academic conference in conjunction with MCC's 90th anniversary; at MCC's Welcoming Place, Akron, Pa. Free and open to the public, but please register your intention to attend at mcc.org/ATableOfSharing.

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

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

FULL-TIME AND HALF-TIME PASTORS

River East Mennonite Brethren Church (Winnipeg, Man.) seeks a full-time pastor and a half-time pastor of youth and young adults. The application deadline is May 30, 2010.

See www.remb.ca for details.



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 STAHL: rss@mcc.org
FOR MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE, CONTACT MARSHA JONES:
mjg@mennonitecc.ca

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.

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

Trinity Mennonite Church is located in the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains between Calgary and Okotoks, Alta. We are a growing congregation with an active membership of about 100, with diverse ages, occupations and cultural backgrounds. We are actively involved with MC Canada and MC Alberta.

We seek a pastor who will provide strong leadership and focus on the vision, mission and values defined by our congregation, working together with our members and participants to foster a faith community that is open and welcoming to new participants, and is founded upon the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith. Proposed start date on or about July 1, 2010.

Please apply in confidence to: Rob.Doerksen@shaw.ca or Rob Doerksen, Trinity Mennonite Church, RR 1, Site 17, Box 21, DeWinton, AB, Canada T0L 0X0. <http://trinity.mennonitechurch.ab.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

ASSOCIATE MINISTER & YOUTH MINISTER POSITIONS

First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg, Man., is inviting applicants for the positions of ASSOCIATE MINISTER and YOUTH MINISTER. We are a large and diverse community of believers belonging to MC Canada, served by a five-member pastoral team that is committed to the MC Canada Confession of Faith. Our congregation has Russian/German roots, a strong musical tradition and a multi-generational membership of approximately 1,000, with a worship attendance of approximately 300.

We seek a full-time **Associate Minister** whose primary responsibilities include the coordination of pastoral care with deacons, lay ministers and small groups, as well as direct pastoral care and preaching responsibilities. The candidate will have pastoral experience and an M.Div. or equivalent training.

We also seek a half-time **Youth Minister** who is an enthusiastic and motivated self-starter holding an undergraduate degree with significant biblical/theological content, relates well to young people and their parents, and desires to inspire youth to Christian discipleship.

Positions begin in August 2010. To apply in confidence, or for more information, contact: Michael Woelcke, Chair, Ministerial Search Committee, First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg, 14 Fair Place, Winnipeg, MB R2G 2G9; phone: 204-667-1253; e-mail: michaelwoelcke@gmail.com.

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.

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.

For Rent: Sleepy Hollow Cottage. All-season, 3-bedroom home in a peaceful wooded valley in the heart of the Niagara region. Small retreat centre or family accommodations. Bruce Trail. Shaw Festival, Wine tours. Phone: 416-534-6047 or e-mail: shcottage@sympatico.ca for complete brochure.

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.

Celebration: To glorify God's faithfulness and multiple blessings, **Laird Mennonite Church** requests your presence at its **100th Anniversary Celebration**. The happy occasion is planned for Saturday, Aug. 28 with registration at 2 p.m., a catered supper at 5, followed by a variety program. On Sunday, Aug. 29, the worship service will start at 10 a.m. followed by a noon meal. Inquire about accommodations at jepsenmartensl@gmail.com or call 306-223-4395 or 306-223-

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We will not be silent

BY REBECCA BARTEL AND ALEXIS ERKERT DEPP

As the world rallies in response to the catastrophic earthquake that struck Haiti on Jan. 12, the global Christian family is invited to consider the place of God's shalom in the rebuilding of Haitian lives and infrastructure.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is doing just that, as it provides immediate emergency support while planning for medium- and long-term efforts.

MCC's commitment to working towards the holistic well-being of communities and churches around the world stems from God's vision of peace and dignity for humanity. The prophet Micah describes this as *"the word of the Lord from Jerusalem [that] they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid"* (Micah 4:4, NRSV).

This vision holds central basic human rights, such as access to food, healthcare, meaningful employment, security and education. It also underscores the necessity of justice for the vision to be fulfilled, and the importance of human empowerment.

Principles that guide MCC's response

God's vision of shalom for the people of Haiti calls the Christian family to consider the long-term investment that must be made for Haiti to rise out of the crisis it faced even before the earthquake of Jan. 12.

In response to this call, MCC has developed internal principles to guide its part in the work:

- An emphasis on local and sustainable development;
- Haitian-led decision-making about development and investment priorities;
- An immediate response while considering how foreign governments and institutions make policy decisions that victimize the world's marginalized people;
- A determination to witness to policymakers, faithfully sharing God's vision for justice, peace and dignity for all people, and encouraging policy decisions that bring life—not death—to our brothers and sisters around the world.

As relief efforts continue, more opportunities will arise to work for human dignity in Haiti. We cannot control the movements of the earth, but we can control how our voice is heard in government.

The Haitian people call us to share our prophetic voice, as does Isaiah 62:1: *"For Zion's sake, I will not be silent."* ॥

Rebecca Bartel is MCC policy analyst for Latin America and the Caribbean; Alexis Erkert Depp is MCC policy analyst for Haiti.

MCC PHOTO BY BEN DEPP



People view their collapsed homes in Nerette, a neighbourhood on the edge of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, devastated by a Jan. 12 earthquake that killed more than 200,000 people.