

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 31, 2010  
Volume 14 Number 11

## A wall of memories

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## EDITORIAL

# The dollars are here

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**W**ith Andrew Reesor-McDowell, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, we are concerned about declining giving to centrally planned ministries of MC Canada (see page 12).

Giving to such ministries, he documents, has decreased by 13 percent over the past seven years, a downward statistic that is also reflected in congregational giving to area church ministries. If this trend continues, he predicts some of these ministries are “likely unsustainable.” At the same time, giving is increasing to non-Mennonite organizations.

Why this paradox? Put side-by-side, these two observations would indicate there is not a dearth of dollars, but a change in attitude towards supporting institutional ministries, worthwhile as they certainly are. At a deeper level, there is a message here.

We don’t argue that the partnerships Reesor-McDowell lists as the infrastructure to carry out what is presumed to be our collective vision and mission—both in resourcing our congregations and in carrying out a global mission—contain anything but the highest quality of people and are efficiently managed.

In fact, this downward trend in giving to “central” ministries has little to do with the quality and worthiness of the mission. The “system” doesn’t need fixing, but the assumptions about what motivates us “faithful disciples” might need some major adjusting.

What is going on here is a seismic shift in the postmodern culture. We suspect a closer examination of the demographics of the present Mennonite donors is that most of the support comes from those over 50 years of age, whose self-identity is wrapped around a loyalty to the church’s mission at both the national and congregational levels. Leadership is now shifting to a younger generation, whose interests and professional involvements are broader and more integrated



into the dominant culture. Futurist Leonard Sweet has divided the generations into “immigrants” and “natives.” Immigrants, he says, are those born before 1962, and can be defined as hopelessly groping around in the “Gutenberg age,” tied to print media, having strong loyalty to institutions and appreciating order in their lives. Natives, on the other hand, are younger, get their information/entertainment and social direction from cyberspace, have few loyalties and even less regard for authority/institutions, and are comfortable with chaos.

“Immigrants are word-based. Natives are image-driven,” according to Sweet. “Say ‘image’ to any immigrant, and they think superficial, shallow and uncritical.”

Examine, for instance, Reesor-McDowell’s assumption that “MC Canada’s ethos does not welcome aggressive fundraising.” That may well be a dated notion. In the broader church arena, where many voices are clamouring for support of what they consider

worthwhile missions, the more emotional the appeal, the more and bigger the response.

Samaritan’s Purse and World Vision are only two examples of effective non-Mennonite ministries with sophisticated communications networks that tug at the senses first, then work their way into your pocketbook in not-too-subtle ways.

The dollars are here. Donors usually give to what they perceive is a value and in line with their convictions and interests. Just look at the overwhelming response to the Haiti disaster.

While it may be difficult to represent what Christian Formation does at the national level—offering multiple models of pastoral leadership and doing a congregational profile—in compelling images that make people reach for their pocketbooks, MC Canada will have to try harder to do just that.

## Meet your new board member

Jim Moyer of Lethbridge, Alta., a retired research scientist with Agriculture Canada, is filling the unexpired term of Doris Daly Haysom of Turner Valley, Alta., who



Moyer

resigned in early 2010 as a representative of MC Alberta on *Canadian Mennonite’s* 12-member board. Moyer, a member of Lethbridge Mennonite Church, where he has served as council chair and vice-chair over the years, is married to Beth Moyer; they are the parents of two adult daughters: Marie and Joanne.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Westgate Mennonite Collegiate students from Winnipeg stroll past the Israeli ‘security barrier’ that divides Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus. Read teacher/chaperone James Friesen’s ‘A wall of memories’ reflection on page 17.**

PHOTO: JAMES FRIESEN, WESTGATE MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

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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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# From tension to cooperation

*An exploration of the Mennonite Brethren Church in the greater Mennonite world since its inception a century-and-a-half ago*

BY JOHN J. FRIESEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

MENNONITE REPORTER FILE PHOTO BY RON REMPEL



*In 1986, then Mennonite Brethren moderator John Redekop, left, embraces Jake Fransen, moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (now Mennonite Church Canada), after the MBs delivered an apology for their past practice of excommunicating members who married members of the other conference.*

This year the Mennonite Brethren Church is celebrating its 150th anniversary with a week-long celebration in B.C. in July. What have the MBs contributed to the wider Mennonite community during the past century-and-a-half? What has been its relationship to Mennonite Church Canada, or to the General Conference Mennonite Church, which also began in 1860?

## ***Desire for renewal leads to split***

The MB Church began in the midst of significant change among Mennonites in Russia. Lutheran pietism had influenced Mennonite communities there for a number of decades, and had provided a haven for renewal.

It was in 1860 that some members in the Gnadenfeld Mennonite congregation in the Molotschna settlement petitioned their leaders to meet separately for communion. These members did not want to celebrate communion with those who had not experienced personal Pietist renewal and conversion. When the leadership refused to grant their wish, these members met separately, celebrated their own communion and founded the Mennonite Brethren Church.

In the Chortitza settlement a similar group formed under the influence of German Baptists. Soon these two groups in the Chortitza and Molotschna settlements merged as the Mennonite Brethren Church. Since the



*Winkler MB Church with the smaller Burwalde MB Church that was moved beside it.*

Baptists practised immersion baptism, the church adopted immersion as its distinctive practice.

The reason for forming the MB Church was the desire by those renewed through the influence of both Lutheran and Baptist pietism to form a church that would include only like-minded people. In contrast, the other Mennonite churches accepted the new pietist influences as well as the historic Mennonite practices and pieties. The MB's separatist stance and its active proselytizing among Mennonite churches created tensions with those churches.

After a while, some MBs became unhappy with the gulf that had developed between their church and the Mennonite church, and they spearheaded the formation of the Allianz Mennonite Church. This church tried to be a bridge between the two, permitting both pouring and immersion baptism, and allowing for more diverse religious pieties.

At first, the new MB Church also drew Russian and Ukrainian neighbours into membership. When the church

tried to incorporate as a legal entity, the Russian government informed it that if the church included Russians and Ukrainians, it would not come under the provisions of the Mennonite *Privilegium* of 1800, according to which Mennonites were exempt from military service and could have their own schools. In order to not lose those privileges, the MB Church divided, with the Russian/Ukrainian members forming the Russian Baptist Church. Thus, the start of the MB Church contributed directly to the formation of Russian Baptists.

The Mennonite Brethren made significant contributions to the Mennonite community in Russia. They were the first to accept four-part choral singing into their church services.

Although the MB Church did not pioneer Mennonite schools of higher learning, soon many of its members gravitated to higher education and served as leaders in those schools. This emphasis on education carried over into publishing and writing. An example of this activity was the publication in 1912 of Peter



*Heinrich Voth was an American MB "missioner" sent to Manitoba. He baptized the first people who formed the MB church at Burwalde, near Winkler.*

M. Friesen's *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia, 1789-1910*, still one of the best resources for understanding the Mennonite experience in Russia.

### **Inter-church tensions follow MBs to North America**

The Mennonite migration to North America in the 1870s had far-reaching significance for the future of the MB

Church and for its relationship to other Mennonite churches in North America. Since the MB Church was largely shaped by Pietism, and the General Conference Mennonite Church by American revivalism, one could have expected the two to make common cause. After all, many of their emphases on renewal, conversion, missions, education and newer forms of worship were similar. But the two groups didn't join, and that shaped both of their subsequent histories.

What happened, instead, was that many of the other Mennonite immigrants who came from various churches in Russia joined the General Conference. Thus, the tensions that had existed between the Mennonite Brethren and the other Mennonite churches in Russia

were now transferred to the relationship between the MB and the General Conference churches. This was a tension that need not have happened, but it did.

In the U.S., with evangelism as its primary focus, and because of easy access in the German language, the MB Church continued to target other Mennonite churches. This created tensions. When the MB conference, centred in Kansas, sent "missioners" to the Winkler area of southern Manitoba in the 1880s, who formed the first MB church in Canada, this set up further tensions with Mennonite churches in the area.

Shortly after the formation of the MB church in Burwalde, Man., American MBs moved north to Saskatchewan. In 1913, these immigrants formed the

Herbert Bible School, the first Mennonite Bible school in Canada.

In 1906, the MB conference founded the first Mennonite congregation in Winnipeg. Since at the time there were few Mennonites living in Manitoba's capital, the focus of the city mission was primarily German Lutherans.

### **'Second wave' of immigrants bring denominational loyalties to Canada**

The immigration of 20,000 Mennonites to Canada in the 1920s, about a third of which were Mennonite Brethren, initially promised to change the dynamic between the MB and other Mennonite churches. The immigration itself required cooperation between Mennonite groups in both Canada and Russia. In

## **Jacob D. Reimer's tombstone discovered in Ukraine**

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent

**O**n a tour in Ukraine in October 2006, Gert and Katherine Martens experienced an emotional moment when a farmer in Oktaybreskoe removed a few planks from his wall and uncovered the tombstone of Jacob D. and Wilhelmine Reimer. It didn't take them long to decipher the deep etching on the large granite stone and realize it was Gert's great-great-grandparents. The farmer had rescued the stone before the cemetery was levelled for a grain field and had kept it for more than three decades.

The Martens had visited the area on an earlier trip, but had been unable to locate Wiesenfeld, the village that Gert's father came from and that his ancestor, Jacob Reimer, had founded in 1880.

So in 2006 they tried again.

"Some men were working outside and we got our guide to go and talk to them," says Gert. "They said they have a neighbour here who has a tombstone. Our guide was talking to him and suddenly he went toward a wall and took some planks away and behind those planks was a tombstone. It turned out that Nikolai [the farmer] had been told by his grandfather to look after that tombstone because he was a good friend to Jacob David Reimer."

The tombstone holds special interest since Reimer was one of the founders of the Mennonite Brethren

Church in the 1860s. As a preacher and farmer in the Molotschna village of Gnadenfeld, Reimer was among those who started meeting for worship and study in the homes of church members who had a yearning to bring new life into their worship. They had a growing sense that faith had become more show than substance in the larger Mennonite church. A confrontation with the church leadership resulted in the group forming what became the MB Church.

When a travelling evangelist came through the area, the Froehliche Movement took hold among some MB members. "They worshiped in a very, very charismatic way," explains Katherine. "But Jacob Reimer was a very meditative person and this type of worship went against his nature. But he didn't want to break with everyone, so he would not condemn them, but he would not take part in it. Eventually, this group got quite powerful and excommunicated him." Later on, he was reinstated.

As the Mennonite population grew and a growing number became landless, Jacob Klassen, an MB, petitioned the government for more land. Eventually, a largely MB settlement in the Kuban was established. "But Jacob Reimer didn't like it there, perhaps because many of those who had excommunicated him lived there," Katherine surmises.

Russia, the emigration movement was led by B. B. Janz and C.F. Klassen, two MBs. In Canada, it was led by David Toews, chair of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, now part of MC Canada.

Upon immigration, members of the Mennonite and MB groups worshipped together in many locations. In Ontario, the MB churches formed a conference with similar emphases to those of the Allianz Mennonite Church in Russia. For a short while it looked like the trauma and difficulties of immigration would result in healing the divide within the Mennonite community.

Then, however, institutional and denominational loyalties rose to the

fore. Each of the joint worship centres separated, and in each community two denominational churches formed. As the price for membership in the North American MB conference, the Ontario MB conference was required to abandon its Allianz character and rebaptize members who had been accepted without immersion baptism.

Other attempts at working together also failed. For example, the MBs founded three schools in Manitoba: one in Winkler (1925), another in Steinbach (1930s), and a third—Mennonite Brethren Bible College—in Winnipeg (1944). In each case, overtures were made by other Mennonite groups to make these schools inter-Mennonite. In each case, the MB groups rejected the overtures.

### **Areas of cooperation include music, MCC, CO service**

There were, however, also areas of cooperation.

In music, for example, K. H. Neufeld immigrated to Winkler from the Soviet Union in the 1920s and quickly became a conductor of choirs and orchestras in both MB and Mennonite churches. Franz C. Thiessen made a similar contribution in Saskatchewan, and later in Winnipeg and B.C.

During World War II, the Mennonite Brethren, Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and the Swiss Mennonite conferences in Ontario together proposed to the federal government alternative service as their form of conscientious objector service.

The change of worship language from German to English in the 1950s and '60s created a new set of relationships between the MBs and other Mennonites. For one, this change allowed the focus of MB evangelism to expand to the whole society. Thus, inter-Mennonite cooperation no longer posed the same threat to the potential for MB growth as it did



*The tombstone with English translations of the etchings.*

Reimer, his extended family and some followers moved on to establish the village of Wiesenfeld in 1880.

Since 2006, other Reimer descendants have visited the site. Last year, they began the involved process of moving the tombstone to Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Man.

“We are deeply grateful to Olga Shmakina, who is a tour guide for Heritage Cruise, for her tireless work in getting permission and making all the arrangements for shipping the tombstone,” says Katherine.

There will be a formal unveiling of the tombstone on July 25 at Mennonite Heritage Village.

The turn of events leading to the unveiling has been very exciting for Gert. “In a sense, we got very lucky when we saw those guys and the guide stopped and talked to them,” he muses.



*An MB baptismal service at Coaldale, Alta.*

earlier, when the Mennonite community formed the primary base for MB outreach. Subsequently, MBs were involved in the founding of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada in the 1960s, and in the establishment of Columbia Bible College in B.C. in the early 1970s. This spirit of cooperation continued in the formation of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg in the 1990s.

The language change allowed MBs to accept many of the emphases of the Canadian evangelical movement. MB pietism was transformed into Evangelicalism. For some MBs, the influence of Evangelicalism meant stronger ties to evangelical groups, and a decrease in the emphasis on peace, service and other historic Mennonite emphases.

Other MBs were influenced by the renewal impulses of the “Anabaptist Vision,” associated with the name of Harold S. Bender. Many within this orientation became strong promoters of peace and justice issues, and supported inter-Mennonite organizations like MCC. MBs also played significant roles in founding and supporting various inter-Mennonite service organizations like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (see “Briefly noted” below) and the Canadian branch

### /// Briefly Noted

#### Bert Loewen named to Order of Manitoba

WINNIPEG, MAN.—Among the 2010 recipients of the Order of Manitoba, the province’s highest honour, is Bert Loewen, a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The announcement was made on May 12 by Lieutenant-Governor Philip Lee. Loewen played a vital role in the establishment of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and was its first executive director. The Foodgrains Bank has provided 944,000 tonnes of food to nearly 70 countries over the years. This investiture ceremony will take place on July 15 at the Manitoba Legislative Building.

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



*North End MB Church in Winnipeg, Man., circa 1940. It was the first urban MB church in Canada. It is now called Elmwood MB Church.*

of Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

#### **The present situation**

The relationship between the Mennonite Brethren churches and other Mennonite churches has changed significantly during the past 150 years. From the early years—when Mennonite churches saw the MBs as a threat and the MBs saw the others as not truly spiritual—the two sides have moved to a relationship where, even though they are somewhat different, they can accept and learn from each other.

Recently, an MB leader commented

that he felt the MBs’ contribution to the larger Mennonite community was an insistence on a strong, clear, personal commitment to Christ. What he thought the MB Church could learn from MC Canada was the importance of service and peace. This attitude of seeing each other’s strengths as complementary seems to be the prevailing mood today. ❧



*John J. Friesen is professor emeritus of Canadian Mennonite University.*

### /// For discussion

1. What is the relationship between the Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church Canada congregations in your community? Do you agree that the relationship between the MBs and other Mennonites has changed over the years from one of tension to cooperation?
2. The Mennonite Brethren split from the rest of the Mennonites because they wanted renewal. Can you think of other examples where a push for spiritual renewal led to tension and splits? Do you think such divisions are inevitable? Why is it so hard for Christians to live in unity?
3. John J. Friesen suggests that switching to the use of English changed the MB relationship to other Mennonites. What other reasons do you think there might be for better cooperation in later years? How important is the difference in the mode of baptism?
4. What could MC Canada congregations learn from the MBs? Many MBs have taken leadership in government. Is this an effective way to influence society?



## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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

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

## ✉ Article unfairly focuses on negative aspects of Islam

I THINK THE "Introducing Muslims to Jesus" article, April 5, page 18, unintentionally misrepresented Islam by focusing on problems that are no more a reflection of Islam than reports of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church or in the Manitoba Mennonite Colony in Bolivia are a reflection of Christianity.

The article reports that, as a child, Emmanuel Ali El-Shariff "was suspended for a week" when he was thought to be blaspheming by asking why Muslims need to face Mecca while praying. It's hard to imagine why any Muslim would consider his question blasphemous, considering that the answer is central to Islam: Muslims pray towards Mecca because that is where Abraham is said to have built Islam's holiest structure.

The article also refers to "Allah's laws of punishment," as if Allah is some sort of cruel tyrant. But it's not possible to find fault with Allah without also finding fault with the Christian God: they are, after all, one and the same. Muslims, Christians and Jews alike worship the God of Abraham, albeit under different names and in different ways.

There are passages in the Quran that are hard to take—almost as hard as "*Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak*" (I Corinthians 14:34-35), or, "*Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants*" (I Samuel 3:15).

But all in all, Islam, like Christianity, is a religion of peace, love and tolerance. Surah 29 of the Quran says this to Christians: "We believe in that which has been

revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to him do we submit." Or, as Surah 109 says more pithily, "To you be your way, and to me, mine."

I think it is important to differentiate between the essential messages of the Bible and the Quran, on the one hand, and the ways in which the messages of both sacred texts are sometimes perverted to justify behaviours that most Christians and Muslims alike would find abhorrent, on the other.

MARK MORTON, KITCHENER, ONT.

## ✉ Mennonites must avoid becoming 'thoughtfully irrelevant'

THANK YOU FOR your editorial, "Bombs bursting in air?" April 19, page 2.

Placing the current controversy at Goshen College in some historical context is helpful and enlightening.

Yoderian ethics have dominated our Mennonite educational imagination for decades. That theological uniformity may have inadvertently contributed to the current dearth of Anabaptist-trained executive leaders. It seems to harken back to a nostalgic vision of H.S. Bender, where Mennonites would be largely rural, living in compact and cohesive communities.

In hindsight, we now see that most North American Mennonites live in urban or suburban settings, and are nearly indistinguishable from their fellow citizens in housing, career choices and spending habits. While theologically sophisticated, the Yoderian program had a certain demographic naïveté.

Former Goshen president J. Lawrence Burkholder's

## /// Correction

Blue North Strategies is a Canadian company based in Guelph, Ont. Incorrect information appeared in the "One church's experience" article, May 3, page 19. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

## /// Clarification

In the news release about Henry Paetkau stepping down as president of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. (May 17, page 22), there is no indication of a "forced resignation," as the headline may have suggested to some. Board chair Bert Lobe notes that "these seven years have been very good years for the college. Henry has overseen a period of remarkable stability and growth. His gracious spirit, attention to detail, along with his constant readiness to put others first, have helped endear him to many." Paetkau's decision to step down after a second term was entirely his own, says Lobe.

fascinating pamphlet, “The Limits to Perfection,” set out a coherent vision for a discipleship that was relevant to the world’s needs, and not naïve in its realistic assessment of the recognition of accommodation and moral ambivalence in the face of overwhelming need and mortal limitations.

What Goshen’s current president, Jim Brenneman, has done in playing the national anthem is embraced Burkholder’s realism without taking into account the

shortcoming in his thinking. How can we preserve an identity as a theological community even as we succeed as executive and administrative leaders in our chosen vocations?

For the sake of our church, we needed Mennonite theologian Guy F. Hershberger and Burkholder to love each other and wrestle with the other’s thinking in days gone by. We still need that conversation lest our theology become irrelevant to our brothers and sisters

## FAMILY TIES

# Tending the boundaries

MELISSA MILLER

A number of years ago, my husband prepared to take a long trip, which meant we’d be apart for several months. I discussed this situation with a male colleague, who was also a friend. He quickly responded, “That will affect our working relationship as well.”

I was surprised, but understood his meaning better when he added, “Without your partner at home, you may be looking for emotional support from me, or I may feel some need to ‘take care’ of you.”

I subsequently recounted the conversation to my husband. He agreed that the situation called for some awareness and promptly

suggested that we invite my colleague and his wife over for a meal and conversation. By doing so, we were all able to tend the boundaries of the relationships. My husband and I could openly discuss a situation that had some risk attached to it, and plan how we would avoid potential problems. My friend and his wife could offer support to me when my husband was away. Indirectly all of us affirmed our commitments to our spouses, as we paid attention to a shifting dynamic between the two of us who worked together, and considered how we would maintain healthy boundaries.

All unfolded as planned. My husband

travelled. I received support from my friends, and relationships stayed within their bounds. What could have been a tricky matter became a time of openness and trust. I was thankful to my colleague and my husband for their responsiveness to address what had the potential to become problematic.

Sadly, I can think of any number of other situations where boundaries were not tended promptly or wisely. Then someone falls out of love with his or her spouse, or falls in love with someone

Without such care, it’s easy for spouses to find reasons to drift away from each other. The problem isn’t that a work colleague or neighbour may be attractive, interesting or pleasant to be with. We are social creatures. We are designed to enjoy other people. It is a natural human response to be attracted to people. Such attraction is a sign that we are alive and open to the liveliness in others. The seeds of attraction are just one of God’s good gifts.

Problems emerge when we forget to tend the boundaries of our commitments, or the commitments that others have made. Sometimes it’s not a matter of forgetting, but of consciously permitting our attention to be drawn elsewhere. When we do so, we are allowing our “rose



*Problems emerge when we forget to tend the boundaries of our commitments, or the commitments that others have made.*

else. Or the emotional or sexual attachments between husband and wife are permitted to languish, while more energy is directed to someone outside the marriage. As one woman described her marital separation, “We just grew apart.”

Perhaps tending the emotional and sexual boundaries of marriage is similar to tending rose plants. Care, attention and nurture need to be given. There are seasons of growth and fertility, and seasons of rest and dormancy. The right amounts of sun, water and nutrients enable the plant to thrive. There are thorns that can hurt! And there is much beauty to be enjoyed.

plants” to grow wild without the benefit of a nurturing gardener’s hand.

A good starting point is honesty: Honesty with ourselves about what we’re feeling and thinking, and where our risky areas are; honesty with our partner; honesty with a Christian brother or sister about where we’re tempted. Such honesty will help us tend the boundaries of our lives, bringing beauty instead of harm.

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

in the pews, and our working lives become enculturated and dominated by structures that care not one whit for our commitments to Christ, and demand unquestioned allegiance to the “spirits” of greed and excess.

We now need a vigorous theological conversation to reach a synthesis that embraces the contributions of both schools of thought, lest we become enculturated through thoughtlessness and end up thoughtfully irrelevant.

WALTER BERGEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

## ✉ **Headline unfairly labels those with gambling problems**

RE: “CHANCES ARE . . . you worship with a gambler” feature, April 19, page 4.

Whatever happened to hating the sin but not the sinner? When we remove the detested act of sin from the divinely loved person, then mistaken labels that define people by their activity, rather than their divine title, and lead to greater guilt and shame, are taken away.

It's too bad that the title of this article takes away

### GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Retirement: Eat, drink and be merry?

KEVIN DAVIDSON

What comes to mind when you think of retirement: Florida, golf, hobbies, volunteering, generosity, inheritance, higher education, death, or what will I do if I don't have enough money?

The financial services industry recommends that we replace up to 80 percent of our working income to retire comfortably. This can make us slaves to our own retirement. Today, if 30 percent of our income goes to taxes, 20 per cent to mortgage payments or rent, and 10 per cent to raising kids, then we're already living on 40 percent of our income!

Malcolm Hamilton of Mercer, a human resource consulting firm, suggests that Canadians realistically only need to replace 50 percent to 60 percent of their working incomes to maintain their current lifestyles into retirement. The \$64 question is, “Are we happy with our current lifestyle?”

Retirement is a psychological, social, financial and spiritual issue. What will you do? Do you and your spouse agree? Do you have enough money? Does God still care to use you for kingdom work? Most of us concern ourselves with the money

question.

Moses is a classic example of someone who, with some encouragement, believed God wasn't finished with him even though he was 80 years old (Exodus 7:6). For many of us, a 30-year retirement is a distinct possibility and should be planned for.

How do we make our money last for decades? Most experts agree you should not withdraw more than an amount equal to 4 percent (plus infla-



*[H]aving the best financial planner and earning the best rate of return is not a guarantee of success.*

tion) of your initial principal each year. A part-time job earning \$10,000 per year would be similar to a \$200,000 investment portfolio. Government sources like the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security can provide between \$12,000 and \$17,000 per year.

Retired seniors typically live on less because their expenses are less. However, having the best financial planner and earning the best rate of return is not a guarantee of success. Ultimately, we must trust someone greater than the

best human wisdom. Psalm 31:14,15 says, “*But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hands.*”

I recently spoke with three retirees and asked them to evaluate their retirement. Each spoke about a sense of gratitude—for health and strength, for strong relationships with family and friends, and for a sense of self-worth and belonging. Their retirements are testimonies to Ecclesiastes 5:19, 20: “*Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.*”

What is the alternative? It's the guy who says, “*Self, you've done well! You've got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!*” Just

*then God showed up and said, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods—who gets it?’ That's what happens when you fill your barn with self and not with God” (Luke 12: 19-21, The Message).*

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

from the good questions and insights written about in the body of the text, but it unquestionably does. When we start labelling people according to their faults and failures, then we add to their guilt and shame, rather than being distributors of grace. We may as well say that we are also worshipping with liars, smokers, molesters, homosexuals, alcoholics and the endless list of other sinful behaviours.

But we don't do this! Christ says that we are his body and that we are saints who have been saved by grace,

and who screw up more often than we would like. Chances are . . . we are worshipping with a group of saints! How does that change our perspective?

Please, let us stop seeing others with eyes of condemnation instead of with the eyes of Christ Jesus filled with grace and truth.

**RUSS KLASSEN, VANCOUVER, B.C.**

*Russ Klassen is youth pastor at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, B.C.*

#### FROM OUR LEADERS

# Financial trends and church health

ANDREW REESOR-MCDOWELL

**T**here are many signs of good spiritual health in the body and ministry system that comprises Mennonite Church Canada. But there are also some worrisome trends.

Over the past few years, revenues have steadily increased to congregations and their related ministries, but they have declined to centrally planned ministries of MC Canada and the area churches. Recent research on our behalf shows that the total annual revenue received by all ministries and levels of the church body is more than \$190 million; of this, approximately \$5.5 million—about 2.8 percent—is directed to the centrally planned work of the MC Canada office.

In addition, donor support for MC Canada's centrally planned ministry has long been on a downward trend, significantly weakening our capacity to sustain strong partnerships, provide basic denominational ministry and services that help maintain the health of the whole body. For example, Witness ministry budgets are shrinking; ecumenical cooperation in such circles as the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is weakened; and our capacity to grow leaders for the church is compromised.

Congregational giving to MC Canada has decreased by \$400,000—13 percent—over the last seven years. Research shows that 79 percent of revenues received by congregations is used for local ministry, including facilities and salaries. Indicators suggest that individuals and congregations are giving more to non-Mennonite organizations and causes than ever before, while emphasizing local ministry, and giving more to one-time and short-term projects.

Thankfully, many of our partner ministries are able to raise funds through various service fees, granting bodies and government agencies. MC Canada, as a national church, is more restricted in these areas.



*MC Canada's ethos does not welcome aggressive fundraising for centrally planned ministry.*

Moreover, MC Canada's ethos does not welcome aggressive fundraising for centrally planned ministry. Area church moderators indicate that they are experiencing similar trend-lines and their centrally planned ministries are likely unsustainable.

As a body, we are a network of

relationships, a "system" that is "called, equipped and sent" to engage the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this body, there are more than 25 Mennonite-related organizations where we do together what we cannot—or should not—do alone or in smaller groups. We minister through partnerships with schools, Mennonite Central Committee, camps, area churches, Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Men, Mennonite Women Canada, Mennonite Publishing Network, *Canadian Mennonite*, Christian Peacemaker Teams and others.

But it is the church from which these good ministries stem that invites people into membership, then disciples and nurtures them in their gospel vocation. The God-given gifts of time and resources contributed by members are needed to build the whole church and strengthen all of its ministries as it engages the world with its gospel vocation—including ministries that are centrally planned.

It is the view of the general board of MC Canada that together we need to strive for the health of the whole body

and all of its ministries. At the MC Canada delegate assembly in Calgary, leaders will frame key questions and seek counsel from delegates and ministry partners to discern appropriate paths.

*Andrew Reesor-McDowell is moderator of Mennonite Church Canada.*

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Bartel**—Jasper Dennis Roth (b. April 12, 2010), to Erinne Roth (Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.) and Ryan Bartel.

**Correa**—Lukas Andres (b. April 30, 2010), to Carlos and Angelika Correa, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Dyck**—Kynlee Gerry (b. May 16, 2010), to Jolee and Ryan Dyck, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

**Fandino**—Andres Jose (b. Jan. 27, 2010), to Zabarain and Neila Fandino, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

**Gerbrandt**—Cohen John (b. April 20, 2010), to Ryan and Charity Gerbrandt, Pembina Mennonite, Morden, Man.

**Lupton**—Tianna Janelle (b. April 14, 2010), to Leanne and Daryl Lupton, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Kelsie Friesen, Jordana Krahn, Eva Wiebe, Amanda Sawatzky, Amanda Legault, Kyle Legault, Cornie Heinrichs, Ryan Rempel, Jerrod Waldner, Frank Wiebe**—Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 16.

### Marriages

**Barkovsky/Kuramoto**—Paul Barkovsky and Leasa Kuramoto, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., March 5, 2010.

**Bauman/Petryschuk**—Alecia Bauman and Ryan Petryschuk, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., in St. Jacobs, Ont., April 23, 2010.

### Deaths

**Braun**—Bernie N., 83 (b. Nov. 3, 1926; d. April 28, 2010), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Cook**—Walter Jacob, 91 (b. March 19, 1918; d. Feb. 1, 2010), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Dyck**—Dorothy, 82 (b. Aug. 4, 1927; d. April 6, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Fast**—Maria, 97 (b. May 21, 1912; d. May 2, 2010), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

**Goertzen**—Jake J.F., 90 (b. April 28, 1919; d. April 11, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Good**—Carrie, 88 (b. July 28, 1921; d. March 30, 2010), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

**Klassen**—Jacob, 82 (b. May 7, 1927; d. April 29, 2010), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Maltby**—Clare, 74 (b. Aug. 19, 1935; d. March 31, 2010), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

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

## /// Obituary

### Irene Heinrichs

Irene Heinrichs (nee Wiens), passed away at her home in Kitchener, Ont., on Monday, April 19, 2010, at the age of 84. "Ira" was predeceased by her husband, Henry, in 1995, and is survived by her daughters Anneliese Langridge, Ingrid Heinrichs Pauls and Carla Heinrichs Bradshaw. She will be sorely missed by her daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren and many friends.



## Ponius' Puddle



## YOUNG PROPHETS

## An old, old story

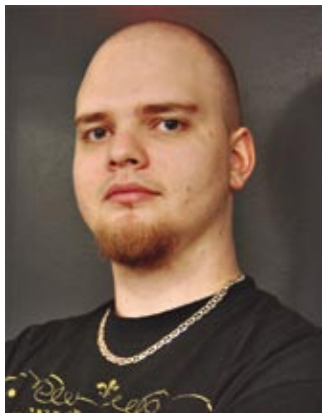
BY CHAD DOELL

My faith is embedded in the Anabaptist story. A story that, by and large, the young people of my generation do not know. Of the many blessings God has rained upon us, the Anabaptist-Mennonite story we partake in is one of the most precious.

So why do our young people, for the most part, not know the story of their heritage? Maybe the story was just too painful for our grandparents to tell. Maybe my generation does not take the same joy in storytelling as previous generations did. Like the Israelites, we have quickly forgotten what God has done for us and what God has promised us. Our memories are short, and in a world that provides so many distractions and promotes values so different from those of Christ, it is easy to ignore such blessings as our story.

Like most young adults, I have struggled with a world that promotes wealth as a virtue, lust as an idol and might as a healer. Our Canadian world is built in such a way that we may pursue our personal “happiness” while we depend on the government to minimize our pain.

When our personal fancy is our guide and pain is the enemy, our lives begin to look drastically different from the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus denied himself in the desert. Jesus invited pain in surrender to the will of God. The further we chase money, property and sex in search of happiness, the more we realize that there is no happiness apart from Christ. When we lean on our government for deliverance and safety, we are, in turn, asked to suffer for it.



“Jesus is happiness. God is safety.” This message has been told in thousands of different ways throughout Anabaptist history. We see the happiness that Christ brings in the beautiful hymns that have come from our communities over the generations. We relearn the safety in God as we recount how one government after

another turned against our people and persecuted them, and how God faithfully delivered us from these “Egypt.”

I have seen the family tree of the many faithful men and women who worked and bled so that I may be a part of the

Mennonite family of faith. When I read of the faithfulness of our forefathers and foremothers (earthly or spiritual) in collections such as *Martyrs Mirror*, I become part of a story insurmountably larger than my little world.

I become part of a faith story, the descendent of a confessing community that suffered, stumbled, wandered, succeeded, failed and prayed. I am part of a story of women and men who faithfully carried their crosses. They carried these crosses up to burning stakes, down into rivers as they drowned, into prisons where they wrote letters of praise and farewell, across Europe as they uncertainly looked to live and worship in peace, and out into

the fields as they worked tirelessly to sustain their families and neighbours.

Our young people need to hear these stories. Tell them from the pulpit. Grandparents, tell your grandchildren.

God’s story of faithfulness has never ended. God has blessed me with a Christian identity through these stories. I have become part of a narrative bigger than myself and have inherited a church that I love.

It is greatly troubling that such a large number of young Mennonite adults are leaving our church for other traditions, or no tradition. Although the Mennonite church is imperfect, it has something to offer that other traditions and a secular life cannot: Our story.

Now that I know the story that I come from, I realize that I did not choose the Mennonite church. I inherited it. It is not a matter of how the church serves me, but how I can serve this church.

Rather than flee from our shortcomings, I encourage our young people to recognize that this church has been bought for them with the blood of Christ and his saints. Take ownership of this church and give your gifts to it, so that

*Our memories are short, and in a world that provides so many distractions and promotes values so different from those of Christ, it is easy to ignore such blessings as our story.*

it can become something you feel a part of. Learn our stories and let them form you. Be formed by the gospels and the example of Christ. Be formed by the stories of God’s faithfulness to our people for hundreds of years.

For many of us, this is a story of our birth families, and for others these are the stories of our brothers and sisters by baptism. This story belongs to every one of us, and in it we find the path of Christ. ❧

*Chad Doell is a graduate student at Canadian Mennonite University studying Christian ministry; he is a member of Hague Mennonite Church, Sask.*

THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

# A sermon by any other name

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

What does your church call it: sermon, meditation, talk, teaching, reflection, sermonette, presentation, story-sermon, speech, message, interpretation, proclamation, word, Word, homily, address?

In bulletins, in conversations and in worship planning, we use a number of different words for the preached sermon.

Individual churches may use a particular word for the sermon for simple historical reasons: it simply has always worked for them. Some churches have always called it a message, while others have named it a sermon. In most cases, churches have one word they usually use for that “word-event” on Sunday morning.

Sometimes the usual word is replaced with another word to signify to something specific for a given Sunday morning. For instance, when the bulletin reads “meditation” or “homily,” the listener can rest assured that the preacher will hold forth for less time. Sermons are longer, meditations and homilies are shorter. In the same way, “story sermon” indicates the preacher will tell a full-length story, and teaching might suggest a didactic lesson, much like a lecture.

The naming of the sermon can have something to do with the confidence or mindset of the speaker. Some lay preachers, younger preachers and preachers from para-church organizations insist that they do not preach sermons, but they will do a talk or reflection. Here, the speaker—they often don’t want to be called preacher—does not perceive



himself or herself as doing the same thing as a regular preacher. For some, they feel they cannot live up to what is expected of a sermon, so calling it a talk is a move that will lower expectations. For others, though, calling it a talk will raise the expectations: talk just sounds more friendly and informal than a sermon, and the assumption

might be that more people will tune in.

Sometimes the word for the sermon is chosen because there is a conscious move away from what has gone before. For instance, the word “proclamation” has been virtually lost, even though this word is key in the New Testament when referring to the preaching of the good news. Proclamation these days sounds too top-down, as though the preacher is trying to force something upon the listeners. In the same way, both “sermon” and “preach” have negative connotations. “I do mediations,” said one preacher to me not long ago, “because ‘sermon’ sounds so old fashioned. I am trying to invite, not persuade.”

Why all the names for sermons? One of the reasons for why we search for new words is because we are wrestling with authority in preaching. From the 1960s through to the ’80s, North American society radically restated the issue of authority in preaching. The preacher was not to be coercive, proclaiming and all-knowing, but rather gentle, pastoral and communal. One of the ways to be gentle, pastoral and communal is to tell stories. The assumption is that the telling of stories from the Bible or preaching plot-like sermons is less authoritarian than the

old way of proclaiming. But is the telling of stories less top-down than the fist-pounding sermons of old?

Some would argue that stories are, in fact, more manipulative and coercive than other forms of address. The narrator—the preacher in this case—has an incredible amount of control over how the story will play out. The storytelling preacher wields incredible power, especially in the most humble of stories. The story may be received with more ease than with the rhetoric of old, but the power of the preacher in such moments should not be forgotten. Call it a talk or a meditation, or a story if you will, but if you are standing in a church on a Sunday morning and speaking for 22 minutes—or 10 minutes—you have incredible power to move and to persuade your listeners.

Our fondness for changing the name of the sermon points to a question that has to do with theology and authority: “How can this one person speak for God?” Nearly every Christian tradition and every generation of preachers and listeners must somehow tackle the paradoxical reality that sinful humans can—humbly, but with conviction—proclaim God’s good news. Anabaptist-Mennonites have moved back and forth from heavy-handed obedience-oriented preaching to informal talks that foster congregational sharing. Somewhere in the middle is a place where the preacher has been called and given authority to speak in ways that allow the gospel to be heard and to happen.

We will continue to rename that “word-event” that happens on Sunday morning. What we also need to do is ponder how it is that God is working in our midst, and how the Holy Spirit is working all week with the one whom we have called to preach a word of good news. ❧

*Allan Rudy-Froese is studying grace, ethics and proclamation at the Toronto School of Theology. He can be reached at [allanrf@rogers.com](mailto:allanrf@rogers.com).*

## STORIES OF FAITH IN LIFE

# Church organs: Blessed or cursed?

BY JACK DUECK

Ilacs burst into scent and colour, camouflaging robins at their nest-building. Winter classes have ended and summer terms are slated at Goshen College, Ind. The balmy evening echoes with children laughing at play, a ballet backlit by the setting sun.

David calls. "Want to join us for a dinner in South Bend and a Rod Steiger movie?" he asks.

We agree and schedule a babysitter. Living seems wrapped in the contentment of friendship. The sitter calls at the last minute; she has taken ill and cannot come. Disappointed, David and Viola will go out alone.

At 2 a.m. the telephone rings, hacking at our nighttime quiet.

"Jack, there's been an accident," the voice on the other end moans. "A head-on collision with a drunk driver. Viola was instantly killed. David was mangled and is in a coma at the hospital. Will you tell and take care of their four children?"

With no room—or time—for lament, funeral arrangements need to be made, relatives called in Canada, bewildered children embraced, and an eye kept on David, whose coma excludes him from all funeral rituals. The living of the days and nights tapers into the motion of assemblies and burial.

After the funeral, spiritually and physically depleted, I travel to Notre Dame University to confer with my dissertation advisor about how to handle this "interruption" as I try to craft a dissertation on "The comic vision in modern British novels." The advisor, a devout Catholic, gives quiet privacy and counsel: "The



issues of studies are secondary. We'll work it all out. Let me walk you across campus to the cathedral, where you can step into another world and sit in silence, surrounded by mystery and grace."

The towering cathedral doors enclose me so the world without is no more; the vast vaulted dome bathes

me in its cool reverence, while vibrant stained glass stories quilt the air. My advisor dips his fingers into water and crosses himself as he enters into the baptism and death of Christ, and then genuflects, facing the communion altar where the risen Christ is celebrated. He then leaves me solitary in the poignant silence. Imprisoned in smouldering rage

and consuming fatigue, I stumble into a pew.

High above and behind me from the organ loft, the cadences of Bach's "St. John's Passion" blend into the eternal silence. Like an ancient juggler, a priest at the organ has come to pray and give his offering to Jesus. The storied saints depicted in the windows are vivid in shifting, living colours, their blues and greens and reds pulsing to the moving music. I sense another kneeling beside me, his spirit to mine: "Behold if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow . . . but I will not leave your soul in hell . . ."

Suddenly, as if blown by a mighty wind, the arched dome swells while the stained glass figures quiver to the priest's playing.

Every cubic inch of the cathedral fills with the cadenced colour of the resurrection chorus. And with it, one protected spot for lament, my spirit's involuntary prayer: "Now from this death awaken me; that these my living eyes may see; O Jesus Christ! O hear thou me! My prayer attend. Thee will I praise eternally."

As I re-enter the cacophonous world of delivery trucks, lawn mowers, and planes filling the sky above me, memories of the organ and storied colours linger as my thesis advisor and Goshen College extend grace and generosity: "All this can be done in due time." And so my wife and I pack up our three youngsters and meander across country, camping enroute to Alberta and B.C. to visit roots and family, while Bach accompanies my sojourn.

One Sunday a young friend invites us to his church to hear its popular and dynamic preacher. The church is bathed in florescence with a special spotlight on the reverend. We are sung at, talked at and then given his word. In powerful and passionate voice, he is a throbbing conduit of words in flesh.

Concluding with evangelical bluster, he shouts, "We must do away with all the old ways. Jesus and tradition are at odds,

*Every cubic inch of the cathedral fills with the cadenced colour of the resurrection chorus.*

and we must not complicate the salvation message with history. We should discard all the hymnbooks and have the Lord give us new songs. And if it were up to me," he pronounces, "I would take all the church organs and throw them into the Fraser River."

From a great distance, I hear the closing prayer: "We ask and do this in Jesus name."

As the aisles pulse with masses exiting to cars and the nearest Sunday brunches, someone exudes, "Isn't it wonderful how clearly he preaches the gospel?" ❧

*Mennonite storyteller Jack Dueck can be reached by e-mail at [eajdueck@gmail.com](mailto:eajdueck@gmail.com).*



## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# A wall of memories

BY JAMES FRIESEN

I write these thoughts only a few days after returning to Winnipeg, Man., and life at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, but the Middle East already seems so far away.

Turkish baths and speaking to niqab-hidden women in the Umayyad Mosque.

- We recalled Lebanon—dancing the *dabke* with the friendly neighbours, playing basketball with students at the

*It was sobering to walk along the snake-like wall, reading the graffiti and seeing the many homes surrounded and separated from each other.*

Twenty-four students and four chaprones (of which I was one) spent our last night on the roof of the Ecce Homo Convent in the Old City of Jerusalem reflecting on our time together. Each of us shared our highlights:

- We remembered Damascus—singing songs in the acoustic chambers of the

Schneller Schule and driving through the dizzying traffic as we descended into Beirut.

- We thought of Petra and the Wadi Rum—glimpsing the magnificent monastery at the end of *al siq* (the main entrance to the ancient city of Petra), sleeping under the stars in the middle of

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES FRIESEN



James Friesen rides a camel across the Wadi Rum.

the desert and proudly waving on the top of the rock bridge.

We also reflected on our time in Israel/Palestine, trying to understand the reality of the Israeli occupation. We saw the occupation from three angles.

First, we listened to Angela from the Israeli Commission Against House Demolitions. As an Israeli citizen, she told us she could no longer accept the reasons her government was giving for the occupation, nor could she support the building of more Israeli settlements or the demolition of Palestinian homes.

Second, we listened to a representative from the Alternative Travel Group. As a Palestinian Christian, he explained how his hometown of Bethlehem has been changed by settlement building and the “security barrier.” It was sobering to walk along the snake-like wall, reading the graffiti and seeing the many homes surrounded and separated from each other.

Third, we listened to a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron. It was a unique experience, sitting together on a rooftop hearing about military and settler activity in the region, with Israeli soldiers staring at us from a rooftop next door while other soldiers patrolled the streets below.

Now we just have memories. Some of us are still waking up from dreams in which we are wandering in the *souqs* (commercial districts) of Jerusalem or Damascus. Many of us still smile when we think of camel rides or desert walks. And all of us have a new outlook on the Middle East: its religions, its politics, its people.

As we were in the midst of sharing on the last night, the evening call to prayer began to sound through the walls of the convent. We stopped talking and listened quietly to the harmonious sound, each of us wondering when we would be privileged to hear such a sound again. Some of us bought “mosque” alarm clocks . . . but I don’t think they will live up to the real thing. ❧

*James Friesen teaches Christian studies, language arts and mathematics at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg.*

## EASTERN CANADA ANNUAL DELEGATE SESSIONS

# Let's call it 'formation hour'

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

Calling for more involvement of children in worship by re-naming the traditional Sunday school hour "formation hour," Lisa Carr-Pries told Mennonite Church Eastern Canada delegates, in their opening session on April 23, that children in Canadian culture are more segregated and isolated from adults than ever before.

"Our churches need to continue to counter this growing trend," she said. "What if congregations actually welcomed family units, bringing them together as communities of formation?" the associate pastor in charge of children's ministry at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, posited as she confessed the reality of her own church as one where "families split up and go their separate ways" when entering the church

doors.

Her suggested shift from education to formation "turns our goals from something that happens solely in a classroom to something that is modelled by the entire community in the context of faith," she said, basing her remarks on Deuteronomy 6, when Moses tells the Israelite parents to "*recite God's commandments to your children, talking about them at home, when you are away, when you rise and when you lie down, binding them on your forehead, fixing them as emblems and signs, and writing them on the doorposts.*"

In today's culture, when adults—especially parents—are weary of the week's activities, she said churches have "enabled children's disengagement by bringing activities, food, books, and yes, electronics, so that they sit quietly



Carr-Pries

delegates to "pay attention to all of our senses and to all of our ways of learning as we engage in worship."

She suggested that churches stand to pray and turn in different directions, act out a Scripture passage rather than just read it, and insist that Scripture remains at the heart of what the church does together, to become "a meeting place where we encounter powerful stories of the Bible given to us for the transformation of life."

In noting a shift from understanding the Bible as a book full of "unquestionable morals and absolutes, to a living, breathing book from which there is always something to experience, understand, learn, play and think about," she promoted the present Mennonite curriculum series, Gather 'Round, saying the Bible-based study for nurturing children, youths and their families is "awesome and easy to use."

She cited two events in her own congregation that she considers formation for the children and youths: a weekly Thursday evening activity called Logos and the sta-

*'Why do we assume that listening to someone else speaking is the most important way to be in worship?'*  
(Lisa Carr-Pries)

[in church], rather than participate."

But children need to be viewed as contributors to worship, with adults capturing their spontaneity and lack of inhibitions, and coupling that with their inherent spiritual inclinations, to add rich texture to corporate worship, she suggested.

"Why do we assume that listening to someone else speaking is the most important way to be in worship?" was another of her critiques, while questioning the assumption that all adults learn this way. "While children might act out, adults can daydream without anyone realizing that they are no longer engaged, that they have "tuned out," she said.

She challenged the MC Eastern Canada

ging this past Advent season of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.

In one Logos event, participants are asked to slowly walk through a labyrinth with an unlit candle to the sound of meditative music. Once in the centre, each child receives a blessing and a lighting of the candle.

"A normally rambunctious group of children calmed themselves and embodied God's transformative power at work through this spiritual discipline," she said.

And after putting on the intergenerational Christmas pageant, Carr-Pries said a child told her, "This was the first time that I really felt like I belonged here, and what I did and said mattered." ❧

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## EASTERN CANADA ANNUAL DELEGATE SESSIONS

# Asking the wrong questions

*MC Eastern Canada thinks about leadership and ministry*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

Moderator Aldred Neufeld summed up Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's 23rd annual delegate sessions last month by saying, "Even the wrong decisions can get us to the right place through God's Spirit." And wrong decisions—or questions—came up a number of times over the day-and-a-half of meetings.

A major issue was a proposed policy on property divestment from the executive council, which seeks to clear up the process of a decade-long attempt to sell properties not deemed to be central to MC Eastern Canada's core purposes any more. This had come up in 2009 and was now brought back to significant delegate response.

Speakers were most concerned with the Toronto Warden Woods and Hamilton Welcome Inn community centres, both

of which are run by community boards and, due to church closures, are no longer attached to MC Eastern Canada congregations.

If MC Eastern Canada was to try to get market value for the properties, neither institution could stay where it is.

Ruth Martin spoke to the Welcome Inn issue, noting that it was the centre itself that raised the money to purchase and keep up the building, so, in effect, it would be buying back a property that it had already paid for.

Tim Reimer asked whether the policy was asking the wrong question and whether a property ownership policy—guiding purchase and property ownership based on MC Eastern Canada's core values—would not be better.

The policy was sent back to the executive council without being voted on.

Another area of discussion centred on a staff decision to "take a sabbath" from two popular youth programs: an itinerant Vacation Bible School troupe and the winter youth retreat. At a meeting focused on "forming leaders," speakers wondered why such formative programs were cut.

A motion was eventually passed asking that "priority be given to the youth- and

young-adult-focused ministry" by the Congregational Ministries Council.

One speaker wondered why children's ministry was not included in this, and the movers agreed that this should also be considered.

Much of the discussion focussed on the need to minister to youths before they left for jobs or school, to connect them with their faith roots.

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp and Conrad Grebel University College have picked up the retreat attended by over 150 youths.

Also presented by the executive council was the potential of joining Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario and other Mennonite and Brethren institutions, including MC Eastern Canada and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, in building an "Anabaptist centre" in downtown Kitchener.

MCC Ontario director Rick Cober Bauman said that such a shared space would lead to financial savings and foster inter-Mennonite connections.

The Administrative and Financial Services Council reported a small surplus at the end of 2009, but budgeted for more than a \$60,000 deficit for 2010.

Missions Council noted that, along with eight emerging congregations, are nine church plants and 10 leaders of potential plants interested in relating to MC Eastern Canada. In one of the many table discussions, Herb Sawatzky of Avon Mennonite in Stratford noted that the area church needs to keep purpose, vision and the budget together. ▮



*Ed Janzen, chaplain at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., moves that the Congregational Ministries Council prioritize youth and young adult ministry in its funding allocations.*

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## /// Enrichment Day

### Saskatchewan women's group struggling with changing times

LANGHAM, SASK.—Approximately 50 women gathered at Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, on April 10, for the annual Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day. Times of personal sharing lent greater depth to the day, as Val Wiebe and Doreen Epp each talked about their growth in responsibility and service through their individual life journeys. The afternoon worship session featured Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Jeanette Hanson, who has lived and worked in China with her husband Todd since 1991. Her three presentations focused on working in the midst of change. They were timely for Saskatchewan Women in Mission because changes are happening quickly for the group as well. Local church groups are at a bit of a loss because members are aging and young people have a different vision of being Christ in the world. Fellowship and service motifs are changing, as everything in the world is now readily available to the younger generation, whereas in earlier years women had very little social scope, but were conscious of human need and were willing to meet the practical needs with quilts and clothes. It was decided to change Enrichment Day from the first Saturday of April to the last.

—BY RUTH QUIRING HEPPNER

## /// Inspirational Day

### B.C. women learn to 'garb' themselves in God's grace

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Models showing the latest biblical fashions, some 4,000 years old, graced the stage when B.C. Mennonite Women gathered at Emmanuel Mennonite Church on May 1 for their annual Inspirational Day. The theme for the day was "Garbed in God's grace." Keynote speaker Jeanette Hanson, a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in China, talked of accepting God's grace in unexpected places. "Grace is given to us to step out and walk in difficult roads," she said. "We can hold on to our security, or trust God to be faithful in something new. Pick up your robe of grace, put it on and step out." Several local women related their own adventures of stepping out in faith while appropriately dressed models onstage illustrated their stories. Charlotte Siemens told of becoming a cross-cultural adoptive mother, as was Pharaoh's daughter; Masako Moriyama shared about caring for her mother-in-law, as did Ruth for Naomi; and Riad Klassen talked about looking forward in her faith journey, in contrast to Lot's wife, who tragically looked back. The offering totalled \$3,785.28, half of which will go to a project at Camp Squeah, a tradition with B.C. Mennonite women. The other half will be divided between pastoral leadership training in China and the Abbotsford Food Bank's dental clinic.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

## /// Enrichment Day

### Being 'salt of the earth' takes on deeper meaning

LETHBRIDGE, ALTA.—"You are the salt of the earth" was the theme of this year's Alberta Women in Mission Enrichment Days, held on April 30 and May 1 at Lethbridge Mennonite Church. "Why did Jesus use salt in this sermon?" keynote speaker Janet Plenert, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, challenged the audience. Plenert went on to show the importance of salt both in biblical and political history. In Leviticus, the people were commanded to season their sacrifices with salt. Salt was also used as a covenant. It was an important commodity in trade, and battles were fought over it. As salt is essential to all living things, Jesus' words about being "salt of the earth" took on a deeper meaning. Forty women attended this year's event. The offering of \$1,525 will be divided equally between Camp Valaqua and missionary support for MC Canada Witness workers Jeff and Tany Warkentin.

—BY IRENE KLASSEN

## /// Enrichment Day

### Eastern Canada women learn of the struggles of their Bolivian counterparts

LEAMINGTON, ONT.—The Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada gathered on April 17 for their spring Enrichment Day. The theme was "Bolivian Mennonite women: A vision for the future." Speaker Liz Koop of Vineland shared experiences she and her husband Alf had when they served in the Centro Menno Program in Bolivia from 2002-05. This Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) program among the Low-German Mennonites in Bolivia seeks to develop relationships and a broader sense of Mennonite community, as well as strengthen practices in health, economy, ecology, literacy and education. With compassion and humour, Koop shared stories of some of the Spanish-speaking Mennonite churches in Bolivia who serve their families, churches and communities in various ways, including starting a daycare, volunteering for MCC and producing crafts to earn money. Their resourcefulness, resiliency and hope for the future, often in the face of family struggles and community traditions, inspired listeners. To remember victims of recent widespread abuse in Bolivian colonies, a candle was lit and participants reflected in a moment of quiet prayer. During the event's business session, Shirley Redekop was thanked for her work as coordinator over the past six years, while new coordinator Patty Ollies of Milverton was introduced.

—BY EDNA VANDER MUREN

# Willard Metzger to be next MC Canada general secretary

BY DON FRIESEN

Mennonite Church Canada Release  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

**W**illard Metzger has been appointed to the post of general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. He will succeed outgoing general secretary Robert J. Suderman, who has served in the post since 2005 and who

will retire this summer. The leadership transition will begin this fall.

**Moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell** made the announcement to staff on behalf of the general board on May 20.

Metzger is the outgoing chair of MC Canada's Witness Council, the mission and outreach ministry of the national church. He served in that position for nine years. He has also been a pastor in Mennonite congregations for 18 years, and most recently was director of church relations for World Vision Canada.

Metzger received his bachelor of theology



Metzger

degree from Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, Ont.; a bachelor of arts degree in sociology at the University of Waterloo, Ont.; and a master of theological studies degree at Conrad Grebel University College, also in Waterloo. He also has a doctor of ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary, Ohio.

His enthusiasm for the church is contagious. "This is a great church, and we have much to celebrate!" exclaims Metzger. He speaks of strengthening MC Canada's "sense of anticipation and hope." One of the areas Metzger will pay particular attention to is the denomination's financial health. Another is ministry with young adults. He also wants to strengthen a "culture of call" in MC Canada's churches and schools.

Metzger acknowledges the work done by his predecessor. "Jack's leadership has strengthened our sense of trust, of being heard," he says, referring to Suderman's 2006 God's People Now! cross-Canada tour to all congregations. "We're working on a strong platform," he says. ☸

## UpComing

### Follow faith leaders global summit online

WINNIPEG, MAN.—About 80 high-profile religious leaders from around the world will gather in Winnipeg from June 21 to 23, to listen and report to one another—but most importantly to collaborate on sending a unified message to government leaders of the G8/G20 nations meeting around the same time in Ontario. The message will press governments to remain true to the eight Millennium Development Goals ratified by the 192 member states of the United Nations 10 years ago; the goals aim to halve global poverty by 2015. The G8 nations—including Canada—pledged assistance in achieving the goals. The 80-member guest list of delegates to the interfaith summit represents the spectrum of Christian faith traditions as well as comprehensive representation from Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Baha'i, Shinto and aboriginal faith communities. A website designed especially for this event can be found at [faithchallengeG8.com](http://faithchallengeG8.com). The project's web presence—which includes Facebook and Twitter—is also inviting concerned citizens to sign an online petition appealing to G8 government leaders to hold to the pledges they made in 2000. With only five years left in the 15-year commitment, analysts say approximately half of the pledges have yet to be met.

—2010 Interfaith Partnership Release

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## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Volunteer prison visitors honoured

*David Milgaard speaks at M2/W2 event*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

EDMONTON, ALTA.

On April 30, a man who spent 22 years behind bars took the stage at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, to share his story at a banquet honouring M2/W2 (Man 2 Man/Woman to Woman) volunteers. M2/W2 is a program of restorative justice ministries supported by Mennonite Central Committee that matches volunteer visitors with inmates, believing that one-to-one relationships are vital for personal growth and change for everyone.

In 1970, 17-year-old David Milgaard was wrongfully convicted and imprisoned for the murder of nursing student Gail Miller in Saskatoon, Sask. In 1997, forensic evidence confirmed his innocence, and another man, Larry Fisher, was convicted of the crime.

Milgaard's story is a painful compilation of betrayal, struggle and the dehumanizing effects of incarceration. Although free since 1992, Milgaard's past lingers powerfully, showing in the lines of strain on his face as he searched for words. He described prison as a horrible ordeal, where "I started asking myself if I could be guilty without knowing it. . . . As a prisoner, you feel like you're not human."

Currently, Milgaard is at peace with himself. Recently baptized and "bubbling with a sense of aliveness," as he put it, he acknowledged that internal scars still affect what he can do. "I try to cope with the feelings I have inside me. I'm usually okay until I try to help other wrongfully convicted people," he said.

Volunteers who visited Milgaard in prison had a positive impact on his life, helping him move towards emotional health. While incarcerated far away from his family, some special volunteers were a lifeline.

One couple, he said, "became like a second mom and dad to me. They were always regular. . . . As a prisoner, what you get is that you have somebody that is there because they want to be there. They just want to be there to be with you. We don't get that inside the penitentiary. We don't get much of anything in there other than keeping your eyes peeled for what's going to come next. So when you actually have someone who is willing to sit down across from you and offer you a smile and a warm sense of caring for you, you know, when you need that kind of stuff, it's really nice to have."

A volunteer encouraged Milgaard to start writing, which he described as a "godsend, because it made me actually feel good inside the penitentiary."

Of the work of prison volunteers, Milgaard said, "It makes all the difference



*David Milgaard, who spent more than two decades in prison for a murder he didn't commit, is pictured at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta., with copies of his book of poetry, prose and a love letter written while he was in prison. The book is available from Ronald N. Storozuk, 689 Beaverhill Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R2J 3P2.*

in the world to have someone who loves you." ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Breslau Mennonite Church supports peace tax

BRESLAU, ONT.—Tax season at Breslau Mennonite Church, near Kitchener, was punctuated by many members sitting down at computers set up in the church foyer during the Sunday school hour and requesting the Canadian Revenue Agency to divert \$1,000 of their taxes to peaceful means. Benno Barg, a retired Christian Peacemaker Teams reservist and a member of Conscience Canada, had been getting up during the congregation's sharing time to encourage members to request the diversion of their tax dollars, or go even further and actually withhold the 8.4 percent of their taxes that go to fund Canada's military. Feeling that his words were falling on deaf ears, Barg continued to talk in "house clusters," which were part of a congregational discernment process. There, Kristen and Bryan Berg caught his vision and instigated the online project; people were given help at church to fill out the form on April 18 and 25. According to Barg, nearly 30 members of the congregation filled out the online forms, which were electronically sent to the Canadian Revenue Agency, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, opposition leaders and the defence minister.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

# Liberal foreign affairs critic dialogues with Grebel students, faculty

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall was nearly full to hear Bob Rae, Liberal foreign affairs critic, offer his take on foreign affairs.

According to Lowell Ewert, director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies and Grebel's peace and conflict studies program, Rae was chosen "to begin with a dialogue one-on-one, which allows us to explore mutual interests, rather than a two-sided debate that almost always focuses more on reiterating stated positions for the benefit of various constituencies."

In spite of the sense of "mutual interests,"

Rae faced pointed questions after his 20-minute presentation, which focused on the "relatively new idea of universal rights, universal freedoms and universal equality," and the belief that Canadians "share a common humanity" with everyone else on Earth. Rae praised Mennonites as fore-runners of this kind of equality, coming from their place in the Catholic-Protestant conflicts of the 16th century.

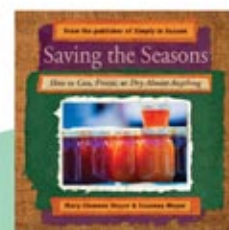
But students and faculty pushed Rae on issues such as the war in Afghanistan, where Canadians are playing a different role than on previous peacekeeping missions; Afghan detainees; Canada's new rules on refugee claimants; the environmental

record of Canadian mining companies in other countries; and Canada's move to a free trade agreement with Colombia in spite of continued war and alleged human rights abuses there.

Rae answered each question with care and comfort, noting that while he himself is not a pacifist, he does not believe that war will solve many of the world's problems. He also noted that religion, when it has fuelled ideologies, has done great damage in the world, but that, like in the NDP's social gospel roots, has the potential for great good in areas of justice and mediation. ❧



Liberal foreign affairs critic Bob Rae speaks at Conrad Grebel University College on foreign affairs issues facing Canadians on April 16.



## Through Fire and Water

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## GOD AT WORK IN US

## Not just a stepping stone

*Youth worker looks back on 25 years of ministry*

### STORY AND PHOTO

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SASKATOON, SASK.

**A**nna Rehan sits behind her desk at the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan offices. This past February, during the conference delegate sessions, the area church's youth pastor was recognized for 25 years of work with Saskatchewan youths and young adults.

Not native to the province, Rehan spent her formative years growing up at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, B.C. She credits those early church experiences with equipping her with the understanding and wisdom needed to work in Canada's youth culture.

Although her home congregation was heavily peopled with German immigrants at the time, the seniors at Sherbrooke would also attend the English service after gaining their spiritual nourishment in their native tongue. "They came to support us," recalls Rehan, referring to the congregation as "progressive."

After spending two years at Clearbrook Bible Institute in the early 1970s, she was uncertain which path to take until a friend invited her to be a youth sponsor at Sherbrooke. She felt affirmed in the role and became involved in the provincial youth organization. Rehan was serving as vice-chair of the B.C. youth group when the chair stepped down. Conference leadership was unsure whether Rehan, as a woman, should take on that role because of possible dissension from conference members over the role of women in ministry. She served as acting chair for a year, at which time conference leaders realized her abilities and blessed her to take leadership.

Still, when a half-time provincial youth worker position opened up in B.C., she

hesitated to apply. To her surprise, Erwin Cornelsen, her pastor, encouraged her to consider it. By 1982, she found herself working part-time at Sherbrooke and part-time for the B.C. conference.

Rehan was also part of a group that brought other provincial youth workers together. One of the group's jobs was to organize a national youth event called the Great Trek. It ran every three years throughout the 1980s and early '90s, and brought teens from across Canada together.

Through this network, she met Eldon Funk from Saskatchewan, who told her about the conference's desire to start a provincial youth ministry again.

"In the late '60s, early '70s, youth ministry [in Saskatchewan] was dissolved," Rehan notes. "There was nothing for a number of years."

"SMYO [Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization] was formed out of a provincial meeting of youth and young adults at Shekinah around 1983," said Funk in his February tribute to Rehan.

Rehan encouraged the group to continue with its efforts to resurrect the youth program. In 1985, she accepted the position to help make that happen. First living in Rosthern, she spent time meeting with students at Rosthern Junior College and helping to organize retreats for young people across the province.

"She helped to guide our faltering baby steps as an organization," said Funk. "She is the first person I met who actually lived by her belief that youth work is indeed a calling, not merely a stepping stone to 'more important' church ministry."

Rehan agrees, explaining that there is an assumption that youth pastors use youth ministry as an intermediary step to becoming a senior pastor. But she doesn't want to. "I really like young people," she says, finding it thrilling to watch them learn and grow.

She also knows the years of struggle teens face. "A lot of what they're looking at is that the church has integrity," she explains. "They're asking questions and looking for a people who are willing to respond."

But the church doesn't always welcome the questions that youths pose, says Rehan,

PHOTO BY PETER BEUG



*MC Saskatchewan youth minister Anna Rehan, right, is congratulated by area church moderator Renata Klassen following the tribute to Rehan's 25 years of youth ministry in Saskatchewan.*

admitting that there is an attitude that sets young people to the side until they are through their "troubled years." At that point, the church tries to invite them in, but it doesn't work, she says from experience.

"There's a mindset that the youth group is separate from the church," she suggests, explaining that it takes more work to get teenagers involved because it means teaching and guiding them as well. But "if you want to see the church continue to grow, you have to walk alongside," she maintains.

As MC Saskatchewan youth minister, Rehan offers some sage advice to parents of teens: "Help your child to find a mentor and then trust that person to make an impact on your child."

She also maintains that mothers and fathers need to parent—not buddy up with—their sons and daughters. "If we want to have integrity as parents, we need to be parents," she says, having raised her own two children to adulthood. Subconsciously, teenagers are looking for limits although they won't readily admit it, she believes. ❧



## ARTBEAT

# Canadian Mennonite wins four CCP awards

*Phil Wagler, Jack Dueck shortlisted in two Word Guild categories*

By ROSS W. MUIR

Managing Editor

TORONTO, ONT.

Coverage of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly in Paraguay and John H. Neufeld's three-part series, "Reading the Bible for all its Worth," earned first-place honours for *Canadian Mennonite* at this year's Canadian Church Press (CCP) convention and awards banquet, held in Toronto from May 13 to 15. The assembly coverage won for "In-depth Treatment of a News Event: Magazine," while Neufeld's work won for "Biblical Interpretation," a category open to both magazines and newspapers.

Said the judge of the MWC coverage, which featured work by editor/publisher Dick Benner, other Mennonite publishing colleagues and MWC staff, and which was spread out over three issues: "The many different pieces, told from a range of points of

view, have contributed to giving the reader the sense that he or she actually attended Paraguay 2009. The editorial content and the photos create a sense of excitement and energy without 'cheerleading.'"

"Neufeld's phenomenal ability to discuss sensitive theological matters in plain, down-to-earth English" was a deciding factor for the judge. "This informative series of articles seems like a helpful, easy-to-follow beginner's introduction to reading the Bible as well as a healthy corrective for the rest of us. The layout of the article, including subheads, pull quotes and highlighted discussion questions helps greatly in making this a very readable series of articles."

"Outside the Box" columnist Phil Wagler came second in the "Column: Magazine"

category. "Words flow almost artfully to a conclusion that is expressly designed to tie up the message and leave readers thinking about their own position on any given issue," the judge commented, adding, "The author's style is such that I'd seek his by-line out separately on my own."

In the "Theological Reflection (Devotional/ Inspirational): Open" category, *Canadian Mennonite* came third for its "Ministry to all members of the body of Christ" feature. "A perceptive, well-written, balanced and eye-catching package that is relevant and should prove most useful in helping people in congregations come to terms with the mentally handicapped people in their midst," the judge wrote, noting that the feature makes clear that "people with mental disorders are our brothers and sisters: real people, not labels or disturbances . . ."

Work by Wagler and "Stories of Faith in Life" columnist Jack Dueck has been shortlisted by The Word Guild's Canadian Christian Writing Awards. Wagler's book, *Kingdom Culture: Growing the Missional Church*, is shortlisted in the "Books: Apologetics" category. Dueck had his "Breaking bread in a barn" column shortlisted in the "Article: Inspirational/Devotional" category. The winners will be announced at the Canadian Christian Writing Awards gala, June 16, in Mississauga, Ont. ☘

TOURMAGINATION PHOTO BY LORNE SMITH



**Churches were filled** to overflowing as St. Jacobs Mennonite and Crosshill Mennonite churches in Ontario hosted the Bärethswil Church Choir, a Reformed Church choir from Switzerland, on a concert and relationship-building tour in late April.

The 52-voice choir toured in hopes of bridging the historical gap between Swiss churches. Tour organizer Wilmer Martin of TourMagination called the choral experience "deeply spiritual," while Peter Schmidt, who initiated the tour, called it "a dream come true. We know we are brothers and sisters in the Lord; it was a trip of building bridges. The choir was received very warmly in homes. We even had one evening of singing where Amish people sang to us and we sang to them." Pictured, Jamie Gerber, pastor of Crosshill Mennonite Church, front row left, talks with tour leader Peter Schmidt as the choir prepares to perform on April 28.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOURMAGINATION

FOCUS ON SENIORS

# Senior tour guides inspire senior travellers



*John Ruth a retired English professor and author, right, has led TourMagination tours since 1974.*

BY SUSAN FISH  
TourMagination Release

Turning 65 used to mean it was time to trade in the company car for a rocking chair, but today organizations recognize the value of wisdom and life experience gained by older people. TourMagination, a Mennonite tour company founded in 1970, has long recognized that many of its tour leaders are on their second—or even third—career.

John Ruth has led tours since 1974. With a Ph.D. from Harvard, Ruth was a professor of English and has published many books, articles and documentaries, offering insight into the lives of Mennonites, Hutterites and Amish. This wealth of knowledge makes him a gifted storyteller who brings Anabaptist history to life.

Former Mennonite Central Committee leader Edgar Stoesz is another key tour

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## FOCUS ON SENIORS

leader. His Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignments, as well as his service as the chief executive officer of Mennonite Indemnity, his experience with Habitat for Humanity and other boards, and the books he has written provide a deep well of experience to draw upon. Now 80, Stoesz recently led a tour to South America, answering questions from tour members about the Menno Colony in Paraguay, and vividly describing its suffering and reasons for hope.

Naomi and John Lederach are also senior tour leaders with TourMagination. Their experience in pastoral ministry and counselling makes them ideally suited as tour leaders, ready to listen and to share insights. After serving with MCC, the Lederachs continue to be committed to education and development, and are passionate about sharing their experiences with tour members.

“Tour leaders such as John, Naomi and John, and Edgar offer so much to our clients,” says TourMagination owner and president Wilmer Martin. “They bring so much life experience and knowledge to a tour. People say their spontaneous sharing is like a travelling seminar.”

These senior tour leaders also inspire older tour members to continue to learn, grow and explore the world. In 2009, a 91-year-old man travelled with TourMagination, while a couple in their mid-80s joined TourMagination’s Mystery Tour.

Proverbs 16:31 says, “*Grey hair is a crown of splendour; it is attained by a righteous life.*”

TourMagination values the wisdom gained in a righteous life and has found a way for senior tour leaders to pass that insight along to others. Faith is integrated into all aspects of TourMagination tours, says Martin. ❧

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**Tri-County Mennonite Homes** is a non-profit charitable service organization providing support and care to seniors and developmentally disabled adults. Our head office, located in New Hamburg, Ontario, operates Aldaview Services, Greenwood Court and Nithview Community.

**Aldaview Services** provides support to adults with developmental disabilities living in homes and apartments in New Hamburg. These individuals are involved in their community through jobs, volunteering, and social and recreational activities.

**Greenwood Court** is a seniors’ continuum of care complex situated in a town-like setting in a residential area in the north end of Stratford. Greenwood provides access to recreation and meeting facilities, a general store, banking, and social programs, without needing to leave the building.

**Nithview Community** is a seniors’ continuum of care complex overlooking the Nith River in New Hamburg. Nithview, a quaint village-type setting with gardens and pathways, provides recreation and meeting facilities, banking, dining and social programming for its residents.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.tcmhomes.com](http://www.tcmhomes.com) or contact us at 1-866-553-5583.



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**News Update**

Check out NEWS UPDATE, the newest feature on *Canadian Mennonite*’s website: [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org). It highlights important breaking calendar events of the week across the provinces, significant personnel changes and other happenings that are of significance to you, our readers.

## FOCUS ON SENIORS

# Having 'the talk' with your parents

*How to discuss end-of-life issues, including financial planning*

BY WES DUECK

Investors Group Release

Many of us are reluctant to discuss health and finances with our parents until a crisis occurs. But a sudden health issue can reduce estate planning options, as well as increase costs. That's why discussions are so crucial.

It is emotional and often difficult. However, knowing your parents' wishes can be extraordinarily helpful.

### Tips that can make this "talk" easier:

- Timing is everything. Have your conversation well before a crisis occurs. Consider that your parents may also be waiting for an opportunity to discuss this with you. Use "ice-breaking" strategies, such as offering to help with their estate planning or to hire some help.
- Keep in mind that your parents want and need to maintain their independence and dignity. Listen to them, and make sure the conversation focuses on their health and well-being, and your love and concern for them.

### What to discuss:

Once you feel comfortable in bringing up the topic, be specific about what you want to discuss and your intentions:

- **INCOME:** What are your parents' sources of income, and how would these amounts change if one of them dies?
- **INVESTMENTS:** Have your parents designated beneficiaries for their registered plans, and insurance policies? If so, who are they?
- **EXPENSES:** What are their monthly and annual expenses, and would they be able to afford personal care costs if they needed them?
- **INSURANCE:** What types have they got and how long are they in force?
- **WILLS:** Do your parents have "up-to-date" wills? Without a will, unnecessary taxes may be payable upon death, and they have an increased exposure to litigation. Also, there is the possibility that their wishes won't be accommodated.
- **EXECUTOR:** Have your parents

designated a personal representative in their wills? This person, or trust company, is responsible for winding up their affairs and distributing assets and bequests in accordance with their wills.

- **ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY:** Have your parents given someone the power to make financial decisions on their behalf if either or both of them become incapacitated?
- **LIVING WILL** (sometimes called a health directive, which is not valid in all provinces). Have your parents provided explicit directions about the personal and medical care they desire should they become incapacitated?

Finally, let love guide you. Large or small, we all need to make decisions about our money eventually. Let us thank God for blessing us! ❧

*Wesley Dueck is the division director for Investors Group Inc., based in Winnipeg, Man.*

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## UpComing

### CMU set to welcome world peacemakers

WINNIPEG, MAN.—Canadian Mennonite University will hold its second annual Canadian School of Peacebuilding at its south Winnipeg campus from June 14 to July 2. “We offer peacebuilders from around the world courses from local, national and international peacebuilders, which will benefit a wide range of non-governmental organizations, practitioners and learners of peace,” says co-director Jarem Sawatsky. This year’s courses include: “Poets, prophets and music of social justice” led by John Bell of the Iona Community, Scotland; “A Cree perspective on nonviolence” led by Ovide Mercredi, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations; and “International perspectives on restorative justice” led by Howard Zehr of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. All courses can be taken for training or for undergraduate credit. Bell’s course can be taken for graduate credit. For more information, or to register, visit [cmu.ca/csop](http://cmu.ca/csop).

—Canadian Mennonite University Release

## Calendar

### Alberta

**June 12:** Hike-a-thon at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Jeff Schellenberg at 403-637-2510.

**July 1:** Mennonite Women Canada’s annual meeting, lunch and workshop, “Bridging the gap and enlarging the tent,” at Ambrose University College, Calgary, from 12:30 to 2:45 p.m. Part of the MC Canada annual assembly events.

**July 24-25:** Salem Mennonite Church, Tofield, 100th anniversary celebration. Pre-registration by May 31 is imperative. For more information, or to pre-register, contact Joe and Elaine Kauffman by phone at 780-662-2344 or e-mail at [jolane72@gmail.com](mailto:jolane72@gmail.com).

### Saskatchewan

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

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

**June 24:** RJC musical performance for youths, at 7 p.m.

**June 25,26:** RJC spring musical, *Oliver*, at 7:30 p.m. each evening.

**July 2-3:** Zoar Mennonite Church, Waldheim, celebrates its 100th anniversary.

**July 16-18:** Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham, celebrates its 100th anniversary.

**July 24-25:** Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church, northeast of Laird, celebrates its 100th anniversary. Register by June 15 to Box 57, Laird, SK S0K 2H0, or e-mail [trmc@sasktel.net](mailto:trmc@sasktel.net).

**Aug. 23-27:** Natural building school at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

**Aug. 28-29:** Laird Mennonite Church celebrates its 100th anniversary.

### Manitoba

**June 15:** CMU ninth annual President’s Golf Classic, at Kingswood Golf and Country Club, LaSalle. Tee-off at 12:30 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/events](http://cmu.ca/events).

**Until June 19:** Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg is featuring “Sense of Place,” an exhibition by Altona area artists.

**June 19:** Camp Koinonia golf tournament fundraiser.

**June 24:** Eden Foundation hosts its annual fundraising Ironman Golf Tournament at Winkler Centennial Golf Course.

**July 15:** MCC Manitoba eighth annual golf tournament in support of literacy and education efforts in Afghanistan. To register online, visit [manitoba.mcc.org/golf](http://manitoba.mcc.org/golf).

Registration limited to first 144 golfers. Early bird deadline: June 30.

**July 17:** Eden Foundation hosts its third annual Tractor Trek through southern Manitoba, beginning in Reinland.

### Ontario

**June 5:** Crosshill Mennonite Church hosts a community rhubarb and rummage sale, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Features homemade baking, fresh rhubarb, tailgate and trunk sales, children’s activities and free community barbecue, among other activities. For more information, call 519-699-5840.

**June 6:** Fourth annual Shaped Note Singing event from the *Harmonia Sacra*, at 1855 Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

**June 6:** St. Catharines United Mennonite Church Choir presents its annual spring program, at the church, at 7 p.m.

**June 8:** Hidden Acres Mennonite annual chicken barbecue and pie auction fundraiser in support of the camp’s summer ministries. For advance tickets only, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca). Takeout available.

**June 12:** Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario annual meeting and bus tour at Emmanuel Bible College Chapel, Kitchener, at 10 a.m. Speaker: Sam Steiner. Topic: Early history of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ in Ontario. Visit [www.mhso.org](http://www.mhso.org) for more information. To register, call Barb Draper at 519-669-1884.

**June 15-17:** Summer Training Institute for Church Leaders presents “Governance and ministry: Building

effective partnerships among the leaders of the church” with Dan Hotchkiss of the Alban Institute; at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. For more information, visit [conciliationservices.ca](http://conciliationservices.ca).

**June 17-19:** The Word Guild invites Canadian writers and editors who are Christian to its annual Write! Canada writers conference, Guelph, Ont. Keynote speaker: Joel A. Freeman, author of *If Nobody Loves You, Create the Demand*. For more information, visit [writecanada.org](http://writecanada.org).

**June 25-27:** Direct descendents of Christian Reesor and Fanny Reiff are invited to attend a family reunion in Markham. For more information, visit [reesorfamily.on.ca](http://reesorfamily.on.ca).

**June 26:** Nithview Community strawberry social at Nithview Home, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m. and again from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Sponsored by the Nithview Auxiliary.

**June 27:** Milverton Mennonite Fellowship hosting “Truckers Sunday.” Events include a truck parade at 9:30 a.m. from the Milverton Co-op; church service at 10 a.m. with speakers Vernon Erb and Len Reimer, and special music by Rescue Junction; barbecue lunch; and children’s activities.

**July 1-4:** Family camping weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Tent, trailer or book a cabin. For more information, or to make a reservation, call 519-625-8602.

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

## Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
June 28	June 15
July 12	June 29
Aug. 2	July 20
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### Ride Sought

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### Announcements

**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. Please bring pictures and a few written memories of the Laird Church. Inquire about accommodations at jepsemartens@gmail.com or call 306-223-4395 or 306-223-4368. Pre-register by Aug. 1.

**REESOR REUNION 2010** - Direct descendents of CHRISTIAN REESOR and FANNY REIFF are invited to attend a family reunion June 25, 26 & 27, 2010 in Markham, Ontario. Please visit [www.reesorfamily.on.ca](http://www.reesorfamily.on.ca) for details.

### Employment Opportunities

#### FULL-TIME PASTOR

**Lethbridge Mennonite Church**, located in southwestern Alberta, invites applications for a full-time **Lead Pastor**, starting October 2010. As a servant-leader in the congregation, the pastor needs to be committed to the Christian faith, as exemplified in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, and have gifts as a preacher, a teacher, a counsellor and a spiritual leader for all age groups.

We are an urban congregation with a membership of about 80, with diverse ages and occupations. We are actively involved with MC Canada, MC Alberta, MCC and local community organizations.

To express your interest in this position, please contact Lethbridge Mennonite Church, c/o Pastoral Search Committee, 4303 - 3 Avenue South, Lethbridge, AB T1J 4B3, or e-mail [lmsearch@hotmail.com](mailto:lmsearch@hotmail.com).

### For Sale

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### For Rent

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](mailto:shcottage@sympatico.ca) for complete brochure.

**For rent:** Dunromin Cottage. 3-bdrm cottage at Red Bay on Bruce Peninsula. Nestled among maple trees. Short walk to sandy beach and small park. Rear deck. Available June 26-Aug 21. Phone 519-746-4920.

**Waterloo house for rent.** Owners going overseas on MC Canada assignment, looking for reliable family/individuals. Must commit to one-year lease beginning September 1, 2010. Inquiries at [erv\\_marian@hotmail.com](mailto:erv_marian@hotmail.com).



#### TEACHING POSITIONS

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Qualified applicants should forward resumes to: Principal, Rosthern Junior College, 410-6th Ave., Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0; Phone: 306-232-4222; Fax: 306-232-5250; E-mail: [administration@rjc.sk.ca](mailto:administration@rjc.sk.ca).

#### CAMP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS STILL AVAILABLE!

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#### TWO-THIRDS-TIME PASTOR

**Erie View United Mennonite Church**, Port Rowan, Ont., is in search of a two-thirds-time pastor to commence in the late summer or early fall of 2010. We are a rural congregation located on the north shore of Lake Erie in southwestern Ontario. Average Sunday attendance is 40 people. General duties would include worship planning, preaching, pastoral care, and working with the youth and young adults.

For further information or to submit an application, please contact W. Michael Wiebe, Chairperson of the Pastoral Search Committee, at [wmwiebe@brimage.com](mailto:wmwiebe@brimage.com) or by telephone at 519-426-5840; or Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, at [mbechtel@mcec.ca](mailto:mbechtel@mcec.ca) or by telephone at 519-650-3806.

#### PASTOR FOR WORSHIP & FAMILY MINISTRIES

The **Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church** is seeking applicants for the position of PASTOR FOR WORSHIP & FAMILY MINISTRIES. The town of Altona is located in southern Manitoba (approximately 1 hour south of Winnipeg) and we are a congregation of 400 members. We are currently served by a pastoral team consisting of 3.5 persons that is committed to the *MC Canada Confession of Faith*.

The primary responsibility of the work would involve providing leadership for a dynamic and blended worship service. This position includes a pastoral responsibility to our younger families within the congregation through spiritual care and nurture, small groups, and the coordination of lay leadership within this age group. Leading worship, musical ability, and a gift for drama would be considered assets. The successful candidate should have pastoral experience and biblical training within a Mennonite/Anabaptist setting and be willing to work together within a team.

Candidates must be committed to Jesus Christ in their faith and discipleship, and have a commitment to the church. They should be good communicators and listeners, as well as have good organizational skills.

Please direct resumes by June 8, 2010, to: Search Committee Chair, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0, or e-mail: [rgvoth@hotmail.com](mailto:rgvoth@hotmail.com).

# Mennonite choirs combine to 'tell the world'

By MELANIE CAMERON

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate Release  
KITCHENER, ONT.

More than 550 youthful Mennonite singers from 14 American high schools and two from Ontario—Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, and United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington—converged on Kitchener for the 48th annual Mennonite Schools Council Music Festival in mid-April. The event, hosted by Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, culminated in a mass choir performance at Kitchener's Circle in the Square on the evening of April 18.

After performing earlier in the day at various local church services, the 16 choirs performed one song each in the evening before coming together under guest conductor Lee Willingham, associate professor of music at Wilfrid Laurier University. The mass choir was accompanied by Rockway alumna Tina Kim.

The mass choir delighted the audience with challenging works by Handel and Mozart; a piece by Waterloo Region composer Carol Ann Weaver; and the students' favourite, "Baba Ye Tu," a Swahili adaptation of "The Lord's Prayer," by Chinese composer Chris Kiagiri for the "Civilizations Live" video game.

Rockway's host committee selected this year's festival theme, "I can tell the world," also the title of the concert's concluding song by Moses Hogan.

"We wanted to instill [in the youth participants] the knowledge that they are capable of making changes in a world filled with war, oppression and injustices," said Ann Schultz, Rockway's music department head. "Being active messengers of this hopeful message, these young people can be advocates for positive change. This strong biblical theme is something we can be a part of. . . . It is action-oriented, practical, hands-on and relevant. It is our hope that the message of this festival will inspire all of us to build lives grounded in social justice and peace." ❧

ROCKWAY MENNONITE COLLEGIATE PHOTO



*More than 550 Mennonite singers from 16 high schools in the U.S. and Ontario came together in Kitchener, Ont., in April for the 48th annual Mennonite Schools Council Music Festival in mid-April.*