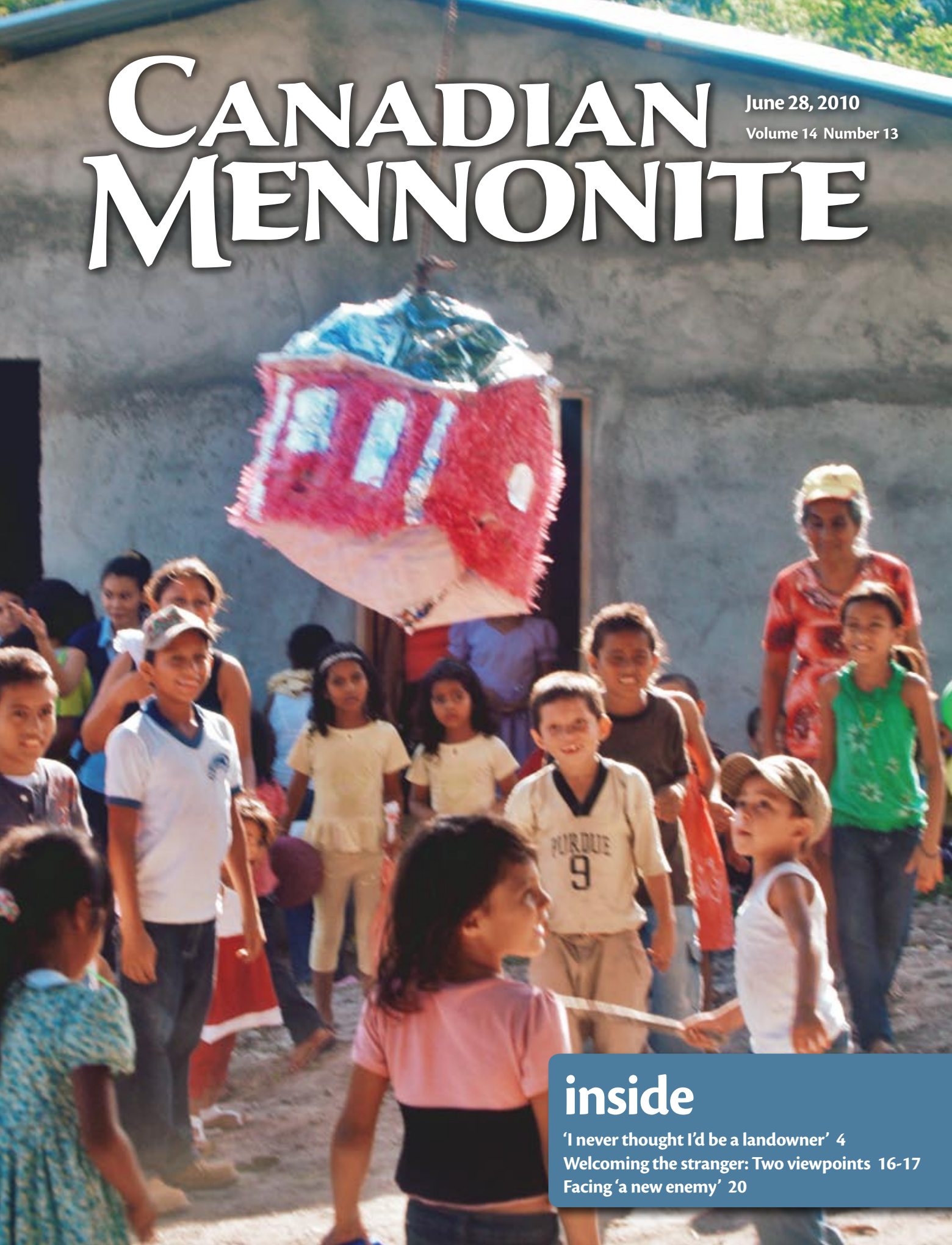


CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 28, 2010

Volume 14 Number 13



inside

'I never thought I'd be a landowner' 4

Welcoming the stranger: Two viewpoints 16-17

Facing 'a new enemy' 20

EDITORIAL

Lessons from the Third World

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

In our presumed sophistication as First World residents, we often consider ourselves a gift to the rest of the planet. By comparison, aren't we far more educated, resourceful, wealthy and technologically advanced?

In my recent visit to a small rural village in northern Honduras (see page 4), I was humbled to learn that, with all of our well-intentioned generosity, we have a lot to receive from these kind-hearted, affectionate people who, though with far fewer possessions and little education, have a wealth of spirit, love and, yes, an ingenious savvy to make a place for themselves.

It was a hot, humid Saturday afternoon when our group of six stepped out of our late-model rental van. We were carrying the sign to be placed at the entrance of the village that read *Bienvenidos Colonia Amor Y Esperanza* ("Welcome to the colony of love and hope"). The posts were already in place.

Before we opened our doors, the villagers, sporting huge smiles, reached out to shake hands and to hug us. I was a complete stranger, but was soon engulfed in hugs. A middle-aged peasant farmer and pastor Mark McCune, who had met during a former visit, walked around the village with arms around each other for 30 minutes. You would have thought the farmer had just been reunited with his best friend!

Contrast that to Arthur Paul Boers' description (page 16) of body language by Canadian church members in not welcoming a newcomer. Boers interprets an usher's unhelpful silence as: "What are you doing here, anyway? What, really, is your problem?"—when simply inquiring about the order of service and the use of hymnals.



Back in the village, where the next day—the "happiest moment of their lives"—11 families were about to take possession of their first real houses—celebration was already in the air. A lean-to pavilion for the ceremonies was covered with palm branches and colourful balloons. Rice, garden vegetables and barbecued chicken were being prepared in one of the "new" kitchens. Children literally squealed for joy at the thought of hitting open the papier mâché piñata following the big event.

Under the ceiba tree Sunday morning, the day after the ceremonies, our North American sponsor was surprised to learn that the farmers knew all about drip irrigation and had already enlisted the free training of the local USAID office in its implementation and use. They didn't need a "water supervisor" to get maximum production. After all, they had worked together for a whole year in building their own houses, with no apparent conflict or "turf wars." Their

communal/survival living gave them far greater skills than earning a business degree at York University.

The North American contingent travelled back that rough road in stunned silence. Over breakfast in our air-conditioned restaurant we marvelled at the high level of love and spirituality we had just experienced, the ingenuity of the peasant workers, the content in their faces, the vision of the women who want only better schools and healthcare for their children, the spontaneity of the children who were surely loved unconditionally, and the wisdom of the elders who were listened to with focused attention—all without the social safety net we have come to expect in our highly-developed Canadian society.

Meet your board member

Tim Reimer, pastor of Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, Ont., was recently named to *Canadian Mennonite's*



12-member board to represent Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, succeeding Larry Cornies of London, Ont. With his wife, LaVerna, Reimer has served with Mennonite Central Committee for eight years, first in Winnipeg, then in Berlin during the "fall of the wall" in the early 1990s. They are the parents of three adult children. He has taught Old Testament (sessionally) at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and continues teaching in other Bible schools. He believes *Canadian Mennonite* can "help the church learn about itself, its diversity and possibilities, as well as its limits and frontiers." He can be reached at 416-265-4621 or via e-mail at Tim.Reimer@hotmail.com.

ABOUT THE COVER:

After the mortgage-signing for the 11 houses in their northern Honduran village, the ceremonial hitting of the piñata brings lots of glee to the children. Since the subject of the day was new houses, the papier mâché piñata was a colourfully painted house stuffed with candies, rather than the traditional stuffed animal.

PHOTO: DICK BENNER, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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

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

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contents

'I never thought I'd be a landowner' 4

Editor/publisher **DICK BENNER** travels to Honduras with Canadian Peacemakers International, which is providing housing and income-generation for 11 rural families, and computer-assisted learning opportunities for students.



An 'eloquent' visitor 18

Governor-General **MICHAËLLE JEAN** helps knot a comforter and pack a relief kit during her visit to Mennonite Central Committee Ontario's warehouse.

No longer 'sinful or strange' to each other 28

Canadian Mennonite University celebrates 150 years of Mennonite Brethren and General Conference (now Mennonite Church Canada) churches, and finds there is a generational divide in how the two denominations understand and relate with their brothers and sisters in Christ.



'Call to me and I will answer you' 33

As the result of hearing God speak, and through dreams, Ethiopian minister **FREW ZINNA** felt called to study at Meserete Kristos College.

The decline and fall of a legend 34

Reviewer **VIC THIESSEN** finds that the latest celluloid incarnation of Robin Hood and his merry men has left the 'merry' behind, in favour of a darker, more serious protagonist.

Regular features:

For discussion **8** Readers write **10** Milestones **13**

Pontius' Puddle **14** Yellow Pages **36**

Calendar **38** Classifieds **39**

Lessons from the Third World 2

DICK BENNER

Getting a perspective with numbers 11

MELISSA MILLER

Contentment not measured in goods 12

HAROLD PENNER

New blog postings

at canadianmennonite.org/blog/

Manitoba marathon: **PAUL LOEWEN**

An encounter with Times Square: **CHERYL WOELK**

Show homes, Pt. II: **PAUL LOEWEN**

The desire to collapse: **DAVID DRIEDGER**

‘I never thought I’d be a landowner’

Canadian Peacemakers International provides housing, income-generation and educational opportunities for rural Hondurans

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DICK BENNER

For Meetinghouse



Visitors to the new village are greeted with a welcome sign that says, in Spanish, that this is a place of love and hope.

Horacio Cardenes, 36, grins from ear to ear. His is one of 11 peasant families in a rural hillside village in northern Honduras that has just taken title to their first real house—a cement-block, two-bedroom abode that is, in his eyes, a mansion compared to what they now live in.

“I never thought I would be a landowner,” the father of four says, explaining through an interpreter that this is “the happiest day of my life.” Like his fellow villagers, some of whom can’t read or write, he has been living at a subsistence level, cutting sugar cane and doing other cultivation jobs for the more-wealthy farmers in the area.

Along with 21 members of the newly formed Amigos de Tapiquiales Cooperative, he has been spending every spare day during the last year constructing the 11 houses that, through a random draw, were just turned over to the fortunate families in a celebration of worship, title-signing and feasting. Cardenes can’t wait to move into his new home where, for the first time in his life, he will have indoor plumbing, running water and protection from the weather, which, in the rainy season, brings thunderstorms and drenching rains.

Based on Habitat for Humanity’s model of a “hand-up, not a hand-out,” these families each have an interest-



Members of the 11 families, gathered under a palm-laden, balloon-decorated pavilion, listen intently during the June 5 ceremonies giving them possession of their new homes.

free mortgage of \$6,000, to be paid back to the co-op over a 15-year period. Should they default on the loan, or decide to move out of the village, the property reverts back to the co-op, explains Dave Hubert, chair of the project sponsor organization, Canadian Peacemakers International (CPI), based in Edmonton, Alta.

It is a win-win project, says Hubert, because the mortgages will be paid from the sale of pineapples and rice grown on the one-hectare plot of land surrounding the village. The land was purchased and donated by one of CPI's sponsors, John and Sylvia Leonard of Mancelona, Mich., successful owners of a multinational tire-recycling business.

Cardenes, who has been living on 8,000 lempira (about \$400) annually, hopes to increase his income to 50,000 lempira (\$3,800) when the village's vegetable farming operation is in full swing next year. Added to that is the possibility of a tilapia fish pond operation, as well

as the raising of domestic rabbits for sale and for meat for their own tables, an operation that has proved successful in nearby Guatemala, according to Leonard.

Leonard, who has built a successful business from recycling tires and, more recently, from the development of a high-quality roofing shingle from recycled plastic products and crumb rubber, is devoting some of the profits from his business in Minto, N.B., to the land and business development of the village.

"The Lord has blessed us in our business," he tells the gathering on June 5 under the makeshift palm-covered and balloon-decorated pavilion, "and so we want to pass on this blessing to see you experience a better life, a place where you can raise and feed your families, and send your children to school."

Under the ceiba tree

On June 6, the Leonards, along with their pastor couple, Mark and Robyn McCune, and Leonard's manager of his New

Brunswick plant, Stephen Richardson, and his wife, Darla, along with Hubert and a North American CPI supporter, Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, co-pastor at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, gather under the spreading branches of a giant ceiba tree—the sacred tree of life of the ancient Mayans—to carefully consult with the villagers as they consider together the process of turning their hillside land into a productive farming operation.

The village leaders are on hand to give guidance. Manuel Tabora, general manager of the housing program (Colonia Amor Y Esperanza) and CPI's local representative, provide interpretation. Jose (Chepe) Vasquez, chair of CPI Honduras (Canadiensis por la Paz Honduras), puts it into language that the villagers can understand; a local Catholic catechist, he has earned the trust of the people and they take their cues from him. The North Americans, too, have earned the Hondurans' love and affection, evidenced by the many hugs and smiles during the



Clinging to the hillside of their newly created village are nine of the 11 new homes dedicated and moved into during the weekend of June 5-6, a project of Canadian Peacemakers International (CPI).

three-hour exchange of ideas.

The process moves slowly. As in Latino culture, time is not a commodity, but a gift to be enjoyed. Meetings rarely start on time. Mealtimes are determined by the position of the sun as it runs its daily course.

They begin by talking about pineapples. An orchard area has been cleared above the new houses. How will they get water to them and how will they fertilize them?

Will they grow them in the commercial customs of the huge Cargill operation monopolizing the agricultural scene in Honduras, or will they go organic, taking a longer time but getting a higher price for their produce in the marketplace? With the encouragement of the environmentally conscious North Americans, they tentatively decide to go organic.

The villagers, under the leadership of Chepe, have done their homework. They

may be uneducated, but they are not without savvy. They have already been in contact with USAID in San Pedro Sula, which has agreed to give them training in growing pineapples and rice. The villagers will have to buy the seed and fertilizer, but the USAID staff will offer several days of free training.

Water is discussed next. How will they pump the water from the well and lower spring up to the pineapple grove? They already know about drip irrigation—a surprise to Leonard, who had brought along pre-punched irrigation hose to show them. All they need is a pumping system to get the water up the hill. Leonard tells them he is exploring some “Third World” pumps already developed in China. Water not used by the 1,100-cubic-metre cistern tanks for the households can also be diverted into the water system.

What about building a tilapia pond below the ever-flowing hillside stream at the lower end of the property? And rabbit hutches for meat production? Leonard passes out a colour flyer showing a hutch he has observed in operation in Guatemala. It has to have special wire, he explains, to catch the droppings—which turn out to be the perfect fertilizer to be

/// Briefly noted

What is Canadian Peacemakers International?

With an office in Edmonton, Alta., Dave Hubert, who founded Canadian Peacemakers International (CPI) in 1997 following a 23-year career in post-secondary education (including eight years as college president) and 10 years with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), is working with several partners in addressing poverty issues in Third World countries, particularly in Central America. In addition to John and Sylvia Leonard, CPI also partners with Canadian International Development Agency—which matches every dollar donated to CPI with three dollars from its Canadian Partnership Branch—and Kindness in Action, a group of dentists who donate their time to help Hondurans with dental needs. Other major donors are the Frank and Agnes DeFehr Foundation, the Monsignor Irwin International Development Fund, Paul Precht Energy Economics Ltd. and MCC. For more information on CPI, visit cpi-cpf.ca.

—BY DICK BENNER



Hubert



In addition to directing the Computer Assisted Learning Centre in Santa Cruz, Bryan Butler, drawing on his Third World experience, is growing a Paraguayan stevia plant (a sugar substitute) in the school garden, as well as developing an experimental farm not too far from the village.

used for pineapple, rice and maize production. He says he wants them to build a hutch by the time of his next visit.

It's getting to be a bit too much to absorb. Backing up to the water issue, Leonard, an impatient executive with highly developed management expertise, asks them, "Who is your irrigation man?" His left brain supercharged, he is afraid that if one of the villagers isn't assigned oversight of the task, it won't get done.

The Latinos signal a slow-down in the process. There is no response to assigning one of them to water. Cardenes, with a mischievous smile, asks if all of this is "for real." Leonard is quick on the draw. "Are your houses for real?" he responds with a smile. Muffled chuckles spread through the group. There is no more discussion. They are ready to proceed—in their own way.

Hubert turns the discussion to hopes and aspirations. "I have a question for you ladies," he says. "What do you



The houses on the main street of Santa Cruz, a city of 50,000, where CAL is located. Its inhabitants are poor, with most of them never getting more than a Grade 6 education.

want for your children?" The wives and young mothers, a little bored with the techniques of drip irrigation and tilapia ponds, suddenly snap to attention. Not missing a beat, one of them, a middle-aged mother of four, replies, "Schools, education and better health care." Heads nod around the circle. She has spoken the wisdom of the village.

With some of the young women getting pregnant at 13, and no prenatal or postnatal care available, they know their needs, and want to develop better health care. Dental care is also badly needed, the volunteering two years ago of a "dental brigade" from Alberta notwithstanding.

Observing the dental needs around the

circle, Sylvia Leonard has come prepared. Out of her suitcases come kits for every family, each containing toothbrushes and toothpaste, combs, soap, hand sanitizer, adhesive bandages, a notebook, pencils, a soccer ball and volleyball, a knife/tool kit for the men and a T-shirt. Out of another case shoes and sandals for all sizes and ages sprawl out.

Addressing education needs

Since most of the children lack the transportation to get to school in the nearby towns, CPI has instituted a program of computer-assisted learning: an innovative educational project called CAL. About an hour's drive into Santa Cruz,

CPI, under the direction of Bryan Butler, has set up a learning centre, a small space with only 17 computers, nine of them donated by Habitat for Humanity.

Butler, who grew up in Three Hills, Alta., but has spent 10 years in Africa as an educator under Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and other non-governmental agencies, kick-started the Honduran project in 2009 with a \$60,000 fundraising campaign to bring systematic learning to this city of 50,000 and the surrounding villages, where very few people have progressed beyond Grade 6 due to a lack of education infrastructure and opportunities.

Hubert and Butler think that by bringing the computers—preloaded with an approved Spanish junior high school curriculum—to people in the community, they can give locals a way to improve their own lives. In a pilot project, two women in their 20s who work at the CPI office in Santa Cruz, have completed the Grade 8 curriculum after a whirlwind 18 weeks of study.

The next stage sees 30 people, including many adults, signed up for classes. Each must sign a “sweat equity” agreement, requiring them to teach two other Hondurans what they have learned. “At some point, if this goes well, we could see going to Grade 11,” says Butler.

Rural Honduran schools have no printed materials—no texts, reference books or novels—and so part of CAL’S goal is to acquire Spanish books in Canada, scan them and send them to Honduras so students will have access to good reading material.

On June 4, CAL graduated its first class of 18 students in the town’s community centre, with local educational and town officials in attendance, including the vice-mayor and local school superintendent. Butler has made a proposal to the Honduran education minister, to adopt CAL’s model of learning, showing that the state could educate more of its students at considerably less cost per student.

“They are taking the proposal seriously,” says Hubert, when asked how close the public officials are to adopting these measures. “We were told that the vice-

minister has read it thoroughly and is about to call for more discussion.”

It is all in keeping with CPI’s overall vision, says Hubert, who founded CPI in 1997 following a 23-year career in post-secondary education, including eight years as college president and 10 years with MCC. CPI’s vision, he says, “is to develop and demonstrate models of peacemaking and peacebuilding that can be emulated by others to address the structural causes of conflict in Central America. The ultimate goal is to reduce the likelihood of more war in the region.”

Having served at the official level with MCC and Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Hubert says CPI is using the best from their models and from Habitat for Humanity in developing housing, land ownership and education initiatives in Honduras. ❧

Meetinghouse is an association of North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ publications. Dick Benner is editor/publisher of Canadian Mennonite, a Meetinghouse member publication.



Here is one happy dad, able now to provide adequate housing and perhaps schooling for his young daughter.

❧ For discussion

1. Dick Benner writes that, “in Latino culture, time is not a commodity, but a gift to be enjoyed.” What experiences have you had with cultures that have a similar attitude towards time? Why do North Americans have trouble embracing this relaxed attitude about time? What is the relationship between the North American view of success and its view of time?
2. Dave Hubert says Canadian Peacemakers International (CPI) uses the best from models of other organizations such as MCC, MEDA and Habitat for Humanity. If you were helping a poverty-stricken village to improve housing, land ownership and education, what models would you use? What are some challenges of sending aid from North America? Why is it so important to have decision-making done by the villagers?
3. CPI is using computer-assisted learning in its education program. How are computers used by CPI? What is the “sweat equity” of CPI’s education program? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of curriculum? How else might computers be used for people who struggle with literacy?
4. Hubert says the ultimate goal of CPI is to “reduce the likelihood of more war in the region.” What is the relationship between poverty and conflict? How does improving lives help prevent war? What are the strengths and weaknesses in this model of peacemaking?

Honduran Snapshots



The smile says it all! This mother of three has just discovered, following a random draw, which of the 11 new houses is hers to inhabit.



Maria Alejandriscce is a Grade 8 student at CAL, coming in the afternoons only to study in her "virtual" textbook because she has to attend to household chores in the morning.



This lean-to of sticks and tin is typical of what most of the 11 families now call home. Their new homes, by comparison, are "mansions."



The villagers' new homes are two-bedroom, concrete-block structures, complete with indoor plumbing and running water, a kitchen and family room. The villagers made the blocks themselves, working from a mould they purchased.

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

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

✉ **Tone of article makes its message easy to dismiss**

RE: "REBUTTING 'A pernicious message,'" May 17, page 11.

Aiden Enns's tone sucks. This feels inappropriate to say, yet necessary.

I get—and sometimes agree with—what he is trying to say, but find that such judgmental finger-pointing and constant negativity in most of his articles distasteful.

For example, how easy it is, in one article, to discredit the meaningful effort of faithful and, yes, flawed, people who organize the annual assembly. Could God not speak to them as well as him?

I also know that it is wrong to dismiss "encouraging each other to do good" as a small, unimportant act compared with grand protest gestures. Every small, good gesture is as important as, and sometimes harder to be consistent with, as the grand ones.

Uncomfortable truths we need to hear, but a difficult message delivered with a lack of love is easily dismissed.

SERENA ERB, STRATFORD, ONT.

✉ **How a rude gesture led to a national pastoral curling tradition**

RE: "THEY HURRIED hard," May 17, page 32.

I add a point of clarification to the history of the Friars' Briar. It was stated that, "Legend has it that the Friars' Briar was begun by Canadian pastors from across the country after the late prime minister Pierre Trudeau made a rude gesture to reporters from a train in Salmon Arm, British Columbia.

It needs to be pointed out that, when Trudeau lifted "the finger" in Salmon Arm, East-West relationships across Canada hit an all-time low. A pastor in B.C. called a pastor friend in Ontario and said, "Surely we in the church can do better than that!"

After further conversation, they planned to have a week of curling alongside the Labatt's Brier (as Canada's national men's curling championship was called at that time). The tradition has continued ever since.

MAURICE MARTIN, NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

✉ **Mennonites must live up to their name**

OFTEN THE QUESTION is asked, "What is your nationality?" and many of our people say, "I'm a Mennonite." This may give us an identity, but it also raises questions such as whether Mennonites are an ethnic group or have a national origin.

As Mennonites lived in closed, isolated communities, a traditional culture and national identity took shape. They also wanted to uphold and guard their faith, values and lifestyle. This developed into strong nationalistic feelings.

If Menno Simons was living today, he likely would not approve of a people named after him. More than 400 years ago, Menno Simons, an educated priest, joined the Anabaptists. Simons, a dynamic preacher and teacher, had a good number of followers and others called them "Mennists," later pronounced "Mennonites."

Before the 1500s, the Catholic Church was dominant in the people's affairs, but it often operated from a position of power and took advantage of the poor and uneducated majority. Martin Luther, a Catholic priest, became dissatisfied with the church's legalism. He searched the Scripture and came to the conviction that people are saved by grace. He broke away from his Catholic roots and founded a new movement. This protest movement grew rapidly and followers became known as Protestants.

In Switzerland, a group of religious reformers felt Luther did not go far enough. They interpreted Scripture and came up with the following principles:

- Individuals must be free to choose to become Christians.
- Baptism is for adults, not children.
- People are saved by God's grace alone, but faith must find expression in life.
- Discipleship and service are important.
- Christians must practise peace and reject violence.
- Christians must love their enemies and do good to all humankind.

- Christians should not swear oaths; their word should be their bond.
- The church and state should be separate.

Menno Simons tried to live, teach and preach these guidelines. Do people known as Mennonites live up to these precepts?

JACOB J. UNGER, BOISSEVAIN, MAN.

✉ Who holds *Canadian Mennonite* environmentally accountable?

RE: "HOW GREEN is my MCC?" feature, May 17, page 4.

While Rachel Bergen's article pointed fingers at Mennonite churches and organizations, it failed to answer some important questions:

- What is the financial impact of going green?
- How do these organizations communicate that

FAMILY TIES

Getting a perspective with numbers

MELISSA MILLER

Sometimes we find it helpful to use numbers as a way to gain perspective. Like the time I discussed a grievance with a consultant. He replied with numbers: "In my business, I'm interested in moving forward. If I see 2 percent that's moving in the direction I want to go, I'll put my energies there. And I won't get too bogged down in the other 98 percent that isn't moving in the right direction."

That's a really helpful concept, I thought, especially given how easy—and often useless—it is to get stuck in negative dynamics. It reminded me of teachers or parents who look for the one or more things they can affirm in a child, rather than dwelling on the child's faults or problems.

Like the consultant, they know that positive increases positive. When we wrest our attention away from what's negative and think about what's positive, we gain perspective.

Another helpful number was presented in a little book we've been using in a Sunday school class at church. Written by Harvey Yoder, the book is called *Lasting Marriage: The Owners' Manual* (Herald Press, 2007). Yoder divides relationship health into four areas: problem-free,

personal problem, spouse's problem and mutual problem. Then he uses a number, advising that the couple remain "committed to spending 80 percent of their time together in the problem-free area."

Another great thought! How many of us spend 80 percent of our energy and attention on the problem-free parts of life, personally or in our families and churches? How would things be different if we did? Is our cup 80 percent full or 20 percent empty? Can we see how full it is, or are we fixated on what is not there?

If we're not spending 80 percent of our

least 50 percent of the responsibility for adding to and maintaining the [problem-free area]." He reminds us that we can do our part—at least 50 percent—in keeping things positive. We are the ones who determine the extent to which the words that come from our mouths and the gestures that come from our bodies are positive and constructive, rather than negative and destructive.

While he's writing about marriages, it seems like the principle of directing our best efforts and energies towards what is positive or "problem-free" can be applied in all kinds of relationships. Yoder reminds us that when we are successful at spending most of our time in the problem-free area, we reap many benefits, including building a strong bond and filling a reservoir to draw on during the hard times. When the bulk of our relationship is one of joy and pleasure, the



When we wrest our attention away from what's negative and think about what's positive, we gain perspective.

relationship time in positive ways, how can we increase the amount: Make more affirming comments? Offer affectionate touch? Perform random—and systematic—acts of kindness?

It's easy to want to shift the responsibility over to the other person in the relationship. "If they would just be more encouraging, or more helpful, or more caring," goes this line of reasoning, "then the relationship would be better."

Yoder uses another number when he counsels: "[E]ach partner must take at

problems we face become smaller and more manageable.

A final number: 70x7 (the wide-hearted response Jesus gave when asked to pin down the limits to forgiveness). The numbers Jesus offered to give us a perspective on compassion and grace: unfathomable.

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

impact with their constituents?

It also failed to point the finger back at itself:

- How green is *Canadian Mennonite* magazine?
- How would your office building in Ontario hold up in an environmental audit?
- How many of your staff use alternate transportation to get to work or to gather stories in the field?
- Is your magazine printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks? And if not, how would your constituents respond to the increased cost of that?

The latter is a crucial question that I would have liked to have seen as part of this investigative

article. For Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Mennonite Church Canada and our local churches, you can bet those questions are asked and must be answered as they make changes.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't make changes. Of course we should all do whatever we can to live as responsible stewards of what God has given us.

The article indicated that there are costs to the Earth if we ignore climate change, but it failed to include what it costs to make a commitment to going green. It's not a matter of belt-tightening, as the article's subtitle asks; it's a matter of accountability.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Contentment not measured in goods

HAROLD PENNER

Contentment. What thought comes to your mind when you reflect on the word?

Paul, the first-century evangelist and church planter, wrote about contentment on a number of occasions, connecting the concept with the ability to effectively do the ministry of extending the kingdom of God. In thanking the Philippians for their gifts he mentioned he had learned to be content whether he had little or much. The quantity of his possessions did not impact his mission.

Contemporary evangelists and church planters Hugh Halter and Matt Smay also mention contentment in their book *The Tangible Kingdom*, where they refer to the three fundamental needs of humans that Tom Clegg and Warren Bird write of in their book *Lost in America*:

- **TRANSCENDENCE:** a connection with the creator;
- **SIGNIFICANCE:** having a life with purpose and an opportunity to do something meaningful; and
- **COMMUNITY:** connections with others in deeply satisfying relationships.

How these three needs are met may vary from one person to the next. However, when people have a sense that these three needs in their life are met, they feel complete and others are drawn to them because they see something different in their lives.

The marketing industry has a model of moving people from contentment to discontentment, creating a sense of perceived need even where no true



Consumerism is the belief I can't help others until I help myself first

need exists, in order to sell products that promise to satisfy the newly created need.

Two of the three barriers Halter and Smay describe, which prevent the development of incarnational faith communities that impact others to seek the kingdom of God, are the result of an effective marketing industry:

- Consumerism is the belief I can't help others until I help myself first; my needs and wants need to be satisfied before I can meet the needs of others. It is strongly connected with entitlement.

- Materialism is about wanting stuff in and of itself. The drive for stuff causes people to spend beyond their means, leading to financial stress that destroys contentment.

As people who claim to follow Christ, our challenge is to do an honest evaluation of the scorecard we are using to find contentment. Are we succumbing to the marketing messages around us and worshipping the false gods of consumerism and materialism in our search for wholeness, or are we truly seeking transcendence, significance and community?

If we get it wrong, we not only lose out on contentment, we are tempted to use marketing strategies to try creating a sense of spiritual need in otherwise content people, to get them to enter our churches and perhaps seek God there.

If we get it right, though, we will experience true contentment and others will be drawn to us and to the kingdom of God through us at the same time.

Harold Penner is a stewardship consultant at the Winnipeg, Man., 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.

I would like to see *Canadian Mennonite* be as accountable to our constituency as MCC has been.
ANGELIKA DAWSON, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

✉ Donations are 'all washed clean' in God's service

RE: "WHAT DO Mennonites do with gambling donations?" April 19, page 6.

Mother Teresa accepted donations from unsavoury sources. She is quoted in *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Relin: "I don't care where the money comes from. It's all washed clean in the service of God."

HENRY NEUFELD, DELTA, B.C.

/// Corrections

- Kevin Friesen took the front page and page 17 photos accompanying the story of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's trip to the Holy Land this spring, "A wall of memories," in the May 31 issue. The photographer was incorrectly identified in both instances.
- Trevor Bauman is not a board member of Mennonite Savings and Credit Union. Incorrect information appeared in the "Credit union opens its doors to non-Mennonites" article, May 17, page 21. The comment attributed to Bauman was, in fact, made by board member Bob Janzen.
- Bert Loewen is a member of Home Street Mennonite Church, a Mennonite Church Canada congregation. Incorrect information appeared in the "Bert Loewen named to Order of Canada" article, May 31, page 8.
Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

- Christie**—Peyton Robert James (b. May 10, 2010), to Jenny Lee and Ian Christie, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.
- Derksen**—Charles Jacob (b. May 25, 2010), to Kevin and Pamela Derksen, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.
- Driedger**—Karis Suzanne (b. May 20, 2010), to Daryl and Karen Driedger, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.
- Friesen**—Drew Alex (b. April 14, 2010), to Amy and Brent Friesen, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., in Saskatoon, Sask.
- Gunn**—Molly Adrianna (b. May 21, 2010), to Will and Anne Gunn, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.
- Hawkins**—Stella Jane (b. April 26, 2010), to Michael and Julie Hawkins, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.
- Janzen**—Alyssa Katherine (b. May 27, 2010), to Jamie and Melinda Janzen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Marcovecchio—Olivia Jane (b. April 2, 2010), to Jason and Melissa Marcovecchio, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Martin—Isaac Andrew (b. May 20, 2010), to Andrew and Lynda Martin, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

McFarlane—Charlotte Ann (b. May 14, 2010), to Andrea and Kyle McFarlane, West Hills Mennonite and Cassel Mennonite, Ont.

Nikel—Soraya Mayah (b. May 20, 2010), to Gerd and Lilli Nikel, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Petkau-Kulik—Maelle Zuri (b. June 11, 2010), to Tamara Petkau (Carman Mennonite, Man.) and Joel Kulik

Renwick—Shawn Christopher (b. June 1, 2010), to Chris and Rachel Renwick, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Shartner—Mark Gerson (b. June 7, 2010), to Randy and Heidi Schartner, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Steckly—Ryerson Clare Ronald (b. June 8, 2010), to Ryan and Jodi Steckly, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Walsh—Henry John Reyburn (b. May 19, 2010), to John Walsh and Karen Reyburn, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Wiens-Chetelat—Zachary James (b. May 27, 2010), to Philippa Wiens and Pierre Chetelat, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Joshua Good, Waldemar Ens—Breslau Mennonite, Ont., May 30, 2010.

Jenna Dyck, Emily Wiebe, Thomas Wieler—Carman Mennonite, Man., May 30, 2010.

Matt Ferguson—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., June 6, 2010.

Heidi Epp, Monica Siemens, Judith Schulz—Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask., May 23, 2010.

Sean Baergen, Kathleen Bergen—First Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta., May 23, 2010.

Jessica Klassen, Hannah Rempel-Burkholder—Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., June 6, 2010.

Ashley Andres, Rachael Pellitteri, Scott Donia, Jennifer Friesen—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 16, 2010.

Kevin Schmidt, Kurt Tiessen, Michael Ferguson—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 23, 2010.

Julianne Enns, Kevin Glass, Jim Hale—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 30, 2010.

Natthiya Bannakom, Phaiwan Kamyam, Buaphun Khuthinakhun, Brenda Friesen, Christina Klassen,

Justin Neufeld, Thiphawan Pi-In, Ya Li Wang, Tsai—North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

LeeAnn Corey, Lydiann Kuepfer, Miranda Kuepfer, Rachel Martin, Katie Steckly, Kayla Streicher—Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Mackenzie Jane Friesen—Seeds of Life, Altona, Man., May 23, 2010.

Linnea Derksen, Sandra Turick, Christina Toews—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 16, 2010.

Marriages

Albrecht/Kuepfer—Elizabeth Albrecht and Jerry Kuepfer, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., June 12, 2010.

Bartel/Penner—Lillian Bartel and Richard Penner, at Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., May 25, 2010.

Bartel/Stinson—Tanya Bartel and Eric Stinson, at North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., June 5, 2010.

Bryce/Wiebe—Janna Bryce and Terrell Wiebe, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., in Strathclair, Man., May 2, 2010.

Dyck/McInnes—Kaylin Dyck (Carman Mennonite, Man.) and Dale McInnes, in Carman, Man., June 12, 2010.

Harms/Neustaedter—Jake Harms and Rachel Neustaedter (Carman Mennonite, Man.), in Steinbach, Man., May 22, 2010.

Kendall/Thiessen—Nathan Kendall and Victoria Thiessen, at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 22, 2010.

Klassen/Reimer—Jonathan Klassen and Angela Reimer, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 27, 2009.

Leckie/Reddish—Greer Leckie (Ottawa Mennonite) and Philip Reddish, in Windsor, Ont., May 8, 2010.

Deaths

Bartel—Elfriede, 84 (d. May 19, 2010), Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C.

Bender—Nelson, 83 (d. May 15, 2010), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Dotzert—Wayne, 66 (b. April 28, 1944; d. May 16, 2010), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Dyck—Margaret (nee Toews), 78 (b. May 26, 1931; d. March 29, 2010), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Froese—Martha (nee Janzen), 79 (b. Nov. 26, 1930; d. May

30, 2010), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Kehler—Ben, 98 (b. Nov. 21, 1911; d. May 6, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Melita (nee Braun), 91 (b. Dec. 23, 1918; d. April 6, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Kroeger—Adina (nee Klassen), 83 (b. June 27, 1926; d. March 2, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Loepp—Betty (nee Poetker), 84 (b. Dec. 8, 1925; d. April 23, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg

Martens—Peter, 85 (b. Aug. 8, 1924; d. June 10, 2010), First Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta.

Matthies—Rudolf, 83 (b. March 27, 1926; d. Feb. 16, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Musselman—Thomas George, 53 (b. Aug. 19, 1956; d. Jan. 24, 2010), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Penner—Jacob, 87 (b. Oct. 7, 1922; d. May 25, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Penner—Nettie (nee Wiebe), 78 (b. Aug. 11, 1931; d. April 2, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Roth—Tina (nee Martens), 86 (b. Aug. 2, 1923; d. May 15, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Schwarzenau—Lydia (nee Lehn), 91 (b. Oct. 4, 1918; d. April 6, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Trickett—Dorothy May (nee Klassen), 69 (b. May 5, 1940; d. May 3, 2010), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Warkentin—Mary (nee Janzen), 81 (b. April 17, 1929; d. Jan. 25, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Wiebe—Jacob, 83 (b. May 13, 1927; d. June 5, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

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



THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

A preacher may be all the 'visuals' we need

ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

What do you think of using visuals in preaching? I get this question a lot.

"Visuals" generally means movie clips or still pictures which are projected on a big screen behind or beside the preacher. The main assumption here is that we are visual learners these days and might get the message

better if the sound of the preacher is accompanied with pictures, moving or still.

For instance, a sermon that focuses on Jesus at the table with his fellow travellers in Luke 24 could be enhanced by projecting the stunning images of Velasquez or Caravaggio. For a modern take on Jesus' reconciling table ministry one could watch a few minutes of the compelling dinner scenes from *Babette's Feast*, *Little Miss Sunshine* or *Sling Blade*.

While visuals can effectively accompany the spoken word, this recent technological and sensory innovation begs for reflection and discussion. Before the preacher runs off to get a big screen and an expensive projector for the church sanctuary, here are some issues and questions to consider:

• **THE PREACHER IS THE PRIMARY VISUAL.** We do not often think of the preacher as a visual in and of herself, but this is where our attention—eyes and ears—are directed during the sermon. As the primary visual, there are body/voice and sight/sound issues that need to be considered.

In regard to the body in the pulpit, we listen more attentively when what we see and what we hear are in sync. But this is



not always the case. I hear and see preachers holding forth on Jesus' gentle love while their tone is angry and their body posture is defensive. Other body/voice issues include lethargy, on the one hand, and bodies that are frenetically in motion, on the other. A speaker who has little energy and a speaker who has excess energy can wear out listeners in a short

period of time.

Some preachers could benefit from taking an acting or voice class, but not for the sake of being "dramatic" in the pulpit. Rather, such lessons can help the preacher with better congruence of body and voice.

• **ACKNOWLEDGE AND USE THE VISUALS ALREADY AT HAND.** Before adding new visuals in the form of projected images, take note of what is already visually present in the worship setting. At hand are often a communion table, a pulpit, some symbols (a cross, perhaps), and maybe banners and table displays that change from time to time.

How can our worship and preaching acknowledge and use—or reuse—these powerful visuals that are already present? How many visuals can we add to the worship scene before it gets cluttered to the point of distraction? What questions are raised when we take down the cross and replace it with a screen?

• **ANABAPTISTS AND IMAGES.** There is some irony in this move to images in worship, especially in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. We kicked out the rich visuals—images, symbols and architecture—of the Roman Catholic

Church some time ago.

Could it be that, in going to the big screen, we are going back to undo our Reformation "error"? If indeed we are welcoming the visual that we tossed out so long ago, is a two-dimensional return to the visual adequate, or shall we go all the way and embrace three-dimensional symbols?

• **WATCH THE TRANSITION FROM WORD TO IMAGE.** Even in a conventional sermon, transitions are not simple. Moving from a discussion of Jesus at the table with his friends to the world of today, or from a story set in Africa to a prophetic word to your congregation in rural Alberta, is not a straightforward process. Listeners can get lost in transitions.

In the same way, listeners/watchers can get lost in the transition from the preacher as the primary visual to the screen and then back to the preacher again. Beyond the words that the preacher uses to make this transition, the preacher and the tech person need to be in sync.

• **THE PROBLEMS OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE BEAUTY OF VOICE AND IMAGINATION.** When the technology is down in the crucial moment when the movie clip needs to be shown, the preacher needs to either abandon the sermon or have at hand a description of what was about to be witnessed.

Thus the prepared preacher will have at hand, say, a compelling description of the dinner scene in *Babette's Feast*, where the tired disputes of a small church community dissolve around a table of exquisite, flavourful and devastatingly expensive food and drink.

But if the preacher already has a moving and imaginative description of the visuals at the ready—if she can embody the story and if the story is already in her bones—does she need to project the movie clip on the screen at all?

In most cases, the preacher's simple, imaginative and incarnational telling of the story will give us all the visuals that we need. ☺

Allan Rudy-Froese studies homiletics—the art and theology of preaching—at the Toronto School of Theology, Ont. You can reach him at allanrf@rogers.com.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER: VIEWPOINT I

Welcoming the stranger . . . not

BY ARTHUR PAUL BOERS

Apparently many Toronto, Ont., churches are not interested in attracting newcomers. New to the area, my wife and I immediately began visiting congregations. It was, alas, a largely dispiriting exercise.

I opened our church explorations by looking on the web. In spite of careful Internet research, more than once we arrived at a church only to find that worship was at a different time than that posted on the web. When I noted to church leaders that their service was at a different time than publicized, they



up and did likewise.

Worship services adeptly remind newcomers that they are outsiders. Almost invariably there is a welcome, especially to “visitors,” but announcements are cryptic, often referring to first names only and not explaining who people are. Allusions to denominational agencies and institutions are an acronym alphabet soup.

The worst part is after the service. People warmly greet each other, but often ignore guests. I can recall only two or three times when someone approached and initiated a conversation.

It takes a lot of resolution to keep going back week after week to visit and to throw oneself on the—nonexistent—mercy or hospitality of strangers.

turned the responsibility back on me. “Did you phone to check?” they asked. Yet the purpose of a website is to give accurate, trustworthy information. Besides, phoning is not that reliable: phone messages also are not necessarily updated. They often give wrong information.

At church, there were other barriers. I wondered at one congregation I visited for the first time what I needed in terms of hymnals or order of service. But when I asked an usher, she looked at me without responding. I was left to interpret her silence: “What are you doing here, anyway?” “Who wants to know?” “What, really, is your problem?” I asked again and still got no response. So I stood aside, watched what other congregants picked

At one point, I actually decided to join a neighbourhood church. I walked there that day with that resolution. After the service, I wove my way through the busy, crowded, noisy foyer. I was surrounded by handshakes, hugs and laughter. People noted me out of the corner of their eye, but no one made a move. At the coat rack I slowly donned my jacket and once more ran the fellowship gauntlet. Again, no conversations were initiated. “I don’t need this,” I concluded as I walked home.

On one low day elsewhere I initiated a conversation with a pastor. I told him that I’d like to talk and gave him my business card and phone number. I never heard from him.

If we were not committed, highly

motivated Christians, my wife and I might have given up. We know how to look for churches, what we need in church, what a church is supposed to be, what to ask for. It takes a lot of resolution to keep going back week after week to visit and to throw oneself on the—nonexistent—mercy or hospitality of strangers. That is a high threshold to climb. I wonder how less-motivated newcomers cope or respond.

It is well established that moving is one of life’s most stressful transitions. It’s a simple act of Christian compassion, then, to help people through such a change, especially in Canada. Statistics suggest that more than half of Toronto’s population was not born in this country.

If my experience is normal, I expect that many people do not feel welcome to attend. What do we expect will happen to people whose Christian commitment is not secure? Or someone who came to church reluctantly? Or one who has never been part of a church? Or one who wants to explore the faith?

The kinds of non-welcome we regularly experienced may actually deter folks from trying again.

The next time I hear a church complain about declining numbers, I’ll have to bite my tongue. Otherwise I might say, “Serves us right.” ☞

Arthur Paul Boers is the author of The Way is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago (InterVarsity) and holds the R.J. Bernardo Family Chair of Leadership at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto.

News Update

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

WELCOMING THE STRANGER: VIEWPOINT II

Coffee time: Help or hindrance?

BY J. LAURENCE MARTIN

There we were, standing in line to get our coffee in a church where we knew no one. Everyone was chatting with friends and family; no one made eye contact with us.

I felt insulted that no one even gave me this most basic form of recognition. Clusters of people with coffee cups in their hands were engaged in animated conversations. Some groups seemed to be family units. Other clusters of people appeared to be long-time friends happy to see each other again.

We had just come from a meaningful worship service and everyone had been welcomed by the worship leader to coffee hour for a time of fellowship. This was it? My wife and I drifted to the outside of the circle with our coffee and watched

wonder if they may not be overrated as occasions to welcome visitors.

Several occasions stand out as times when we felt welcomed.

One was at a mega-church, where they expected visitors and they planned for a way to make them feel welcome. There was an identified area with comfortable chairs near the coffee server. Visitors were invited to meet members of the church and other visitors. Here, information about the church was shared and questions answered. In addition to this, as we mingled with congregants in the lobbies and sanctuary, they displayed enthusiasm about being at church. Their body language included nods of recognition, direct eye contact and handshakes, and their words of greeting or informa-

To be fair, not all experiences of Sunday morning coffee times have been negative for us, but it has happened frequently enough in our experience for us to wonder if they may not be overrated as occasions to welcome visitors.

fellowship happen, but we were definitely not a welcomed part of it.

Marilyn and I were on an extended time of travel and voluntary service, during which we visited many churches of various denominations and sizes. We were anticipating returning to a congregation of our denomination this particular Sunday. The worship greeters had warmly welcomed us before the service, but the anticipated fellowship of coffee hour felt exclusive to us as visitors.

To be fair, not all experiences of Sunday morning coffee times have been negative for us, but it has happened frequently enough in our experience for us to

wonder if they may not be overrated as occasions to welcome visitors.

Another occasion was in the ancient abbey on the Island of Iona, Scotland, where we were serving as volunteers. Many visitors came to the worship services. Following each Sunday service tea was offered at various places in the cloister area. Everyone was given a small oatcake as they left the sanctuary at the conclusion of the service, to be shared with another person over conversation and tea. This act also encouraged visitors to take the initiative in greeting people.

In one of the mid-sized congregations we attended, the pastor came from

behind the pulpit, and in an informal manner asked visitors to stand and introduce themselves and say where they were from. He chatted briefly with them. The pastor's welcome was genuine and the people around gave evidence of a welcoming attitude through eye contact. I am aware that this approach can also intimidate some people and needs to be used with sensitivity that allows people the freedom not to be introduced.

After we were greeted in the foyer of another large urban congregation, a member welcomed us and offered to take us to the sanctuary, which was located a distance from the front entrance. On the way he gave us some information about the service and the morning activities that followed worship. It was evident to us that the church had trained volunteers to welcome visitors; in smaller churches this could be the ministry of those who usher.

As I reflect on our experience of being visitors in churches, I suggest that:

- We don't count on only one approach to welcome visitors on Sunday morning. Each congregation could benefit from imagining creative ways of welcoming visitors in their midst.
- What seems to be the most obvious—the coffee time—may not be the best setting to make visitors feel welcome. On subsequent visits, though, coffee time may become a valuable way of integrating people into congregational life and fellowship.
- Nothing can replace genuine enthusiasm that members of a congregation show about being in church. Much communication with others happens through our informal body language, especially direct eye contact.
- Trained volunteers, whose mission it is to greet visitors and help them to have both a meaningful worship and social experience, will help make congregations friendly places for visitors and those who are seeking out a church home. ❧

J. Laurence Martin is a retired educator and pastor.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

An 'eloquent' visitor

Governor-General helps knot a comforter, pack a relief kit at MCC Ontario warehouse

STORY AND PHOTO
BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant
KITCHENER, ONT.

Work at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario office and warehouse in Kitchener came to a halt on June 14, when Michaëlle Jean, the Governor-General of Canada, dropped in for a visit. As well as meeting some Mennonites over lunch, she visited the warehouse, where she tied a few knots in a comforter, helped pack a relief kit for Haiti, and accepted the gift of a comforter from Margaret Nally, chair of the MCC Ontario board.

"Thank you for what you are doing," Jean said, referring to the material aid that is being sent to Haiti, where she was born. "It makes a world of difference."

As she sat at the comforter she commented on the value of blankets for people who have lost everything. While placing items into the relief bucket she remarked that for those who have nothing, soap and other toiletry items are very important to maintain their dignity.

Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario, was impressed by the appreciation the Governor-General expressed for the work Mennonites have been doing for those impacted by disasters and for refugees. "She was eloquent," said Bauman of her comments as she compared her own experience of fleeing the violence of Haiti and the work that MCC does in organizing refugee sponsorships. He felt she truly understood what MCC is trying to do.

In order to show the diversity of the Mennonite spectrum, and how the private sponsorship program has impacted the



Governor-General Michaëlle Jean spoke with the media during a visit to the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario warehouse in Kitchener, Ont., where she helped knot a comforter and pack a relief kit.

Mennonite church, a few representatives from local congregations had the opportunity to tell part of their story at lunch. Arlene Kehl from First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, explained how Hmong refugees used First's church facilities when they first organized as a congregation. Bouavash Her from First Hmong Mennonite Church spoke about their appreciation for the refugee sponsorship program and how they have opened their church on Sunday afternoons for the Burmese Chin Church, a more recent group of immigrants to Canada. Noe Gonzalia, Hispanic pastor

at First Mennonite, also spoke about the experience of refugees from Central and South America.

Among the other MCC Ontario board members who shared lunch with the Governor-General were representatives from the Old Colony and Old Order Mennonites, as well as Leah Reesor, who was able to pray the table grace in Kreyòl, the language of Haiti.

Josh Steckley, a recent MCC worker in Haiti, had a few minutes to describe the work there. "I began with a Kreyòl proverb, and she got it right away!" Steckley said. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Pastor appreciates his entrepreneurial congregants

ST. JACOBS, ONT.—Fred Redekop, pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., who recently graced the pages of *Marketplace* magazine, spoke to the annual Waterloo Region Mennonite Economic Development Associates' "Bring your pastor to breakfast" event recently. "Do not do what you're not called to do," Redekop told the gathered businesspeople and pastors. This was a lesson he had learned from his father. His father was not a salesman. While he disliked working with people and trying to sell them things, Redekop's father sold milk door-to-door for many years nonetheless, augmenting that by peddling Amway products to support his family of eight children. Redekop noted that he is not an entrepreneur either. Having pastored the same congregation for nearly two decades, he said he does not start new things easily and began his pastoral work with the goal "to not get kicked out of a church." But he values the entrepreneurs in his congregation, who tend not to linger over what does not work well, but who learn lessons and move on. This has helped Redekop see his own ministry differently. Noting that, "I fail every time I preach," he said he has learned to leave that behind and invest himself in his next sermon or pastoral task.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

67 Mennonite homes, businesses damaged by June 6 tornado

STORY AND PHOTO BY RUTH BOEHM AND BARRY BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

LEAMINGTON, ONT.

Residents of Leamington were not at all surprised when Environment Canada confirmed that an F2 tornado had touched down in the southern part of their town in the early morning hours of June 6, given the considerable damage many of their properties sustained.

Walking through areas of this southwestern Ontario town that experienced the brute force of nature was surreal: trees broken like match sticks, hydro poles down or bent at crazy angles, cars smashed and houses with huge trees resting on their roofs. People walked down the middle of the roads around fallen branches and hydro lines with others who were as stunned as they were at the destruction.

Dennis and Vicki Dick of North Leamington United Mennonite Church could not believe what happened to their Pelee Hydroponics greenhouse farm that is leased to Rob and Monica Hanson, also of North Leamington Mennonite, to grow

organic tomatoes. At first Dennis was annoyed that there was a limb through the window. Then he saw his fence blown down, and a tree uprooted. He was later stunned when he saw the 2.5 hectares of mangled greenhouses.

Gary and Debbie Toupin of Faith Mennonite Church had a tree fall onto their home that broke through the roof into their attic. It stopped short of the bedroom where their young child would have been sleeping, but he was in bed with mom and dad for the night. They lost many trees, one of which crushed a vehicle.

Bill and Helen Peters, also of Faith Mennonite, had extensive tree loss to their property, and their neighbours were also affected. Three doors down a tree fell into the middle of a home, rendering it uninhabitable. The family there is so grateful that they were not home at the time, as the tree went right through the roof onto the bed where their disabled son would have

been sleeping.

Trees people remembered planting, trees that picnics were held under at Seaclyff Park, trees that shed maple keys and leaves that people grumbled about having to clean up, are gone—so many, in fact, that the landscape has been changed for generations to come.

While the loss of the trees is being mourned, at the same time deep gratitude for the trees has been expressed—that they took the brunt of the wind and lessened the damage to property.

Despite the storm, Faith Mennonite Church held a baptismal service later that day. Many people were missing from the service, but it will be remembered as “the baptism on the day of the tornado.”

North Leamington United Mennonite had 38 households affected; Faith Mennonite, 19; and Leamington United Mennonite, 10. Before the day was out, people began helping out their families and neighbours.

Mennonite Disaster Service Ontario leadership came to assess the situation the next day. Many chainsaw crews coordinated by local MDS reps Jason Ecker and John Braun were already busy.

Local relief efforts were coordinated by Samaritans Purse Canada, with the permission of the Town of Leamington.

Salvation Army volunteers distributed food and water to those in the disaster area; many local churches helped prepare and deliver food through the Salvation Army to feed volunteers and those who were without power. At press time, the town was still assessing whether or not to apply for disaster relief funding; early donations were channelled through organizations involved in the response.

Letters and calls of support were received from Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Church Canada and MC Canada. These gestures of support were deeply appreciated by members of the the affected congregations. ❧



While one tree to the left of the photo was left standing, another came crashing down on the back of Gary and Debbie Toupin's home in the early morning hours of June 6 after a tornado roared through the southwestern Ontario town of Leamington.

Facing 'a new enemy'

*Plaquemines Parish fishers
out of work, hope to be
hired for clean-up by BP*

BY ANNA GROFF
For Meetinghouse

Maurice Phillips, a commercial fisher of Plaquemines Parish, La., took a group of disaster management leaders out on a small boat to “see the oil” on June 7. This is the best way to witness the destruction of the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill, members of Grand Bayou told Paul Unruh of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Unruh led the group as part of a listening tour.

After a 30-minute boat ride from homes built by MDS on Grand Bayou, the group came to where shiny brown oil covers the banks of the marsh and Bay Baptiste. The Gulf of Mexico surrounds Plaquemines Parish and the Mississippi River runs through it.

At places, the group detected the oil's odour, and they could make out a sheen on the water as well as orange residue on the top of the metre-deep water.

Booms set up along portions of the bank absorbed some of the oil. But according to Phillips, this action came too late to prevent the oil from devastating the seafood industry and the livelihood of individuals in the parish. Just five years ago these same families lost their homes because of Hurricane Katrina.

Since the spill on April 20, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gradually closed the waters for fishing and shrimping, and now almost all waters are closed to fishers.

“Usually this time of the year,” Phillips said, “there would be a hundred shrimping boats out.”



Oil in the marsh of Plaquemines Parish.

That morning, the boat for the listening tour was the only one.

The previous night, at Paul Sylve's home on Grand Bayou, Phillips described a pelican he found covered in oil—as thick as syrup—in the water. He took the bird aboard his boat and delivered it to the pelican rescue facility at Fort Jackson, La.

Sylve, a fisher and assistant pastor, said a friend of his went outside federal waters—that are unsprayed by dispersants—put his arm in the water and into a half-metre of oil that felt like jelly.

Phillips said the dispersants used by BP only “[sink] the oil,” and it still damages the marsh and wildlife.

As of June 7, the homes on Grand Bayou remained unaffected by the oil.

“When you have wind and high tides, banks will be covered,” Phillips said. “I think they should have more people picking up the oil.”

According to Phillips and other fishers, BP has no shortage of people who know the waters and are willing to do the work.

James Trabeau, a fisher, finished eight hours of training with BP and is ready at any time, but he has yet to receive a call. “I'm just sitting and waiting until my turn,” he said. “I really need to work bad.”

Trabeau did receive a \$5,000 cheque for

his losses for the month from BP. But that amount falls dramatically short of what he usually makes during a month of shrimping season—five or six times that amount.

Thuong Nguyen, who has fished the waters for 20 years, was also waiting for a call from BP on June 7. While the money may not be as good as shrimping, he said BP pays \$2,000 a day to a large boat captain like himself. Smaller boats were able to shrimp closer to the shore, where the oil has yet to reach. His larger boat must go out farther, and those waters are restricted. On June 8, Nguyen received a call from BP. He was to

PHOTOS BY ANNA GROFF



Maurice Phillips takes the group to see the oil.



The listening tour group prays with fishers out of work due to the spill.

start his first day of clean-up on June 14.

The listening tour group also met with 11 pastors from the area who described their concerns with the spill as well as expressed their faith in God.

Reverend Ted Turner from a church in Boothville, La., said many young people in Grand Bayou and Venice, La., learned to fish from their parents, who learned from their parents and on back. "This is all we've ever done and we don't want to do anything else," he said. The last thing these families want—post-Katrina—is to have to leave the parish, find a new job and a new



Rosina Philippe gives clusters of marsh grasses to each member of the group to remember the Grand Bayou by.

way of life that does not let them eat much of what they catch.

Sylve's wife, Carolyn, said she buys few groceries because they eat so much of what they fish. "We live off the land," she said the night before the tour in her home built by MDS. Referring to the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, she said, "In Alaska, people committed suicide, families broke up. . . . Where does that leave the children?"

The Sylves' 11-year-old daughter, Jeanne, said she will cry if she goes out to see the oil in the marsh. "This bayou is a great place, and God created it for us," she said with tears. "Hopefully, they'll find a way to stop this oil."

Another member of the Grand Bayou community, Rosina Philippe, described the spill as a "product of greed." "This is something we haven't faced before," she said. "It's a new enemy."

The group also visited the Plaquemines Parish government office. Benny Puckett, grant administrator for the parish and chair of the Committee of Plaquemines Recovery, told the group that what is sadder than the waters closed to fishing is the threatened reputation of seafood from Louisiana. "Overcoming that will probably be a more difficult task," he said.

He also described what he calls "human



By his fishing boat in Venice, La., Thuong Nguyen, left, talks with Jerry Klassen of MDS.

collateral damage." For example, the deck hands paid under the table who cannot prove to BP that they have a legitimate claim since they lack the required documentation. "They're not able to show they're impacted," he said.

This may offer the place for faith-based organizations to step in, Puckett said, as opposed to volunteering on site: "We appreciate [volunteers'] passion and desire, but we have people that are unemployed that we want to keep employed as long as possible. . . . Let's find something else."

Later on June 7, Unruh and Jerry Klassen of MDS provided a collaborative statement regarding a possible MDS response to the spill: "Because of the ongoing, unfinished disaster that's unfolding and the need for support in the community, our best channel may be to return to our building program, let our hammers ring hope while we continue to listen to other opportunities to respond."

Klassen said the fact that the oil continues to leak into the gulf also affects the timing of a response. "This is the longest ongoing disaster I've ever worked on," he said. ❧

Meetinghouse is an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ publications. Anna Grof is assistant editor of The Mennonite, a Meetinghouse publication. ❧

Anabaptist centre a dream for Kitchener

Mennonite institutions outgrow shared space

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Rick Cober Bauman says he isn't a "builder," but the energy with which he describes the dream of a larger space in Kitchener to house even more Anabaptist institutional offices and projects belies his comments.

On May 18, about 80 potential stakeholders in a new Anabaptist centre complex met at First Mennonite Church, basically across the street from one of the potential sites. Invited were representatives of the two Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift shops in

Kitchener-Waterloo, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ churches, Mennonite World Conference (MWC), Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC), Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, and other interested parties.

According to Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario, the proposed cost of \$11 million did not seem to be a problem to those in attendance. MCC Ontario would need to raise about \$2 million in capital, while the thrift stores would fundraise separately. Renting space to other parties would help to pay for the building in the long run.

At MC Eastern Canada's annual delegate sessions in April, the staff and board supported the project in principle and the area church's inclusion in it.

MCC Ontario has been in its present building on Kent Street for nearly 50 years. It shares the present space with MFC, the Kitchener credit union branch, MWC, the Mennonite and Brethren Resource Centre, and several other organizations.

But MCC Ontario has run out of space. It could ask tenants to leave, move out itself

or proceed with a project that includes all the potential users. Both thrift stores are at their maximum usage in their present locations and cannot grow, and would welcome being in the same building as the other institutions to promote more knowledge of the Anabaptist "thrift" ethos.

Part of the dream of the new centre includes a large foyer that could even be used by a church plant on Sundays for worship. In addition to the many other reasons for building is the desire to practise the very creation care that MCC preaches to its constituents.

After the meeting, it was uncertain whether the planned centre would work at the proposed King Street East site. Since then, MCC Ontario has discovered that there is land available adjoining its current location. MCC Ontario staff now need to go back to their board to seek support to redesign and perhaps move the project to a different site.

The project's timeline is "in years, not months," Cober Bauman acknowledged. ☘



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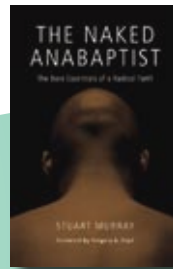
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☘ Briefly noted

Vancouver applies for official 'fair trade' status

VANCOUVER, B.C.—The city that has branded itself a nuclear-weapons-free zone is now applying to become a fair trade town, writes Matthew Burrows in Vancouver's online newspaper, *StraightTalk*. In a May 6 meeting, Vancouver council voted unanimously to endorse an application for fair trade certification, after hearing from the Fair Trade Vancouver non-profit group. According to Olga Nichel, Fair Trade Vancouver was only one of four organizations pushing for the certification, including Mennonite Central Committee's Ten Thousand Villages, managed by Nichel. According to Jeff Geipel, Fair Trade Vancouver's executive director, the City of Vancouver already meets most of the criteria for this status, due to the interest in fair trade in the city, writes Burrows.

—BY DICK BENNER



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HELP FOR HAITI

Micro-loan partnership gets Haiti grant

By WALLY KROEKER

Mennonite Economic Development Associates Release

A \$4.5 million grant from the MasterCard Foundation is funding a joint effort of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and its longtime ally, Fonkoze, to spur economic recovery in Haiti.

Fonkoze is Haiti's largest microfinance organization, with 42 branches throughout the country. It provides small business loans and savings accounts, as well as complementary educational and health services, to 225,000 clients, mostly impoverished rural women. MEDA merged its pioneering microfinance work with Fonkoze in 2004.

Fonkoze lost five employees in the January earthquake and a third of its employees were left homeless. Nearly 8,000 clients lost their homes or businesses, or both.

The MasterCard grant will enable Fonkoze to rebuild its destroyed headquarters, restore services to 70,000 clients, and expand programs in two of the hardest-hit areas.

Fonkoze will also provide enterprise training, a livelihood asset (such as a goat or a chicken), and a small short-term stipend to 1,000 extremely poor women. Another 4,000 women will qualify for micro-loans and counselling to create or rebuild small commercial and agricultural endeavours that form the backbone of Haiti's supply chain, delivering food and goods between rural areas and cities. Restoring the businesses of women traders is critical to the country's long-term recovery, say Fonkoze officials.

To supplement this work, Fonkoze is testing a "catastrophic micro-insurance" product, which will provide clients indemnity for basic needs, loan repayment and new, interest-bearing loans to restart their businesses. Officials see this as a way to educate clients and prepare them to protect themselves against future disasters and economic shocks.

MEDA, which continues as a Fonkoze investor and as part of its governance, will manage the funding from the MasterCard Foundation, and provide advisory and reporting services. ☛

MCC Canada receives over \$8 million for Haiti relief

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Canada has received more than \$8.4 million in financial contributions in support of MCC's response to the Haiti earthquake in January.

"This is remarkable. It is humbling to be part of such an outpouring of generosity,"

says Don Peters, executive director of MCC Canada.

MCC has received nearly 27,000 gifts, almost half of which were from people who had not previously made donations to the organization. Donations were highest in Manitoba, followed by Ontario. Gifts came from individual donors, organizations, congregations, schools, thrift shops, foundations, estates and other sources.

"It is difficult to adequately express our gratitude," says Peters. "Thanks to all who responded so compassionately."

Donations will be pooled with MCC contributions in the U.S. and potential contributions from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. MCC is also in the process of applying for funds from the Haiti matching grant program set up by the Canadian government.

In addition to financial gifts, supporters in Canada and the U.S. made it possible for MCC to send thousands of blankets, cans of meat, tarps, first aid kits, sheets and relief kits (plastic pails filled with towels, soap, shampoo and other hygienic supplies).

MCC's multi-year response will include economic development, food programs, housing projects, education and health services, and trauma healing, explains Willie Reimer, director of MCC's food, disaster and material resources.

MCC PHOTO BY BEN DEPP



Rosette Aime, in her temporary shelter in Fragneau-Ville camp in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, holds up a comforter she received from MCC. MCC is also laying the groundwork for longer-term plans to work alongside Haitian partners in a multi-year response.

HELP FOR HAITI

According to Reimer, experience has shown that responding effectively to disasters means listening carefully to those who were affected as they explain what is needed. “We don’t go into communities and tell people what they need,” he says. “They live here. This is their home. Haitian-led decision-making is essential.”

Partnership also underscores the work of MCC in Canada as it collaborates with Canadian Churches in Action, a coalition of nine church-based development and relief agencies in Canada, to access Canadian government matching funds for Haiti. The coalition is working with the federal

government to determine how best to access the matching funds, says Reimer.

The coalition was formed following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and was successful in accessing matching funds for projects undertaken following that incident, the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, and the 2008 cyclone in Myanmar and earthquake in China.

“Working in partnership with churches of various backgrounds and denominations [as a partner in the coalition] allows us to combine our gifts, talents, experiences, contacts and resources,” notes Reimer. ☞

Haitians must control their own rebuilding: FIDA

Foundation for International Development Assistance Release
WATERLOO, ONT.

Waterloo region native Betsy Wall was on one of her usual visits at the Port-au-Prince guest house that her parents had established in Haiti’s capital 30 years ago, when the earthquake of Jan. 12 hit the city. Several buildings within the

guest-house compound fell in moments; the one in which Wall and her daughter Alexis were resting remained standing. In nearby buildings, though, others would not be so fortunate, including Elmira, Ont., nurse Yvonne Martin and several guest

house staff.

Evacuated from Haiti a few days after the devastating quake, Wall has been in daily contact with both the Haitian staff who run Wall’s Guest House and the local teams working rurally for the Foundation for International Development Assistance (FIDA) affiliate Productive Cooperatives Haiti (pcH), but it was only recently that she made her first pilgrimage back to Haiti.

As executive director of FIDA-pcH, Wall has been involved for many decades in building, supporting and facilitating Haitian-owned agricultural cooperatives. “The challenge right now in Haiti is for First World nations to avoid the trap of trying to rush in and give Haiti what they think Haiti needs, rather than what the people of the country are asking for,” she warns, adding, “Building something without an informed and culturally sensitive plan behind it makes your efforts into nothing more than fruitless activity.”

Pierre Richard Pierre of pcH explains the dilemma that he sees so often in his country with the phrase, “They have an oven, but no heat.” The well-intentioned inclination to provide newer, better systems for a reconstructed Haiti does not take into account the Haitian way of life and way of doing things, he says, nor is consideration given for the need for capacity-building.

Wall stresses that those who are rebuilding Haiti must, first and foremost, have a plan that must be informed by Haitian ideals.

“You can give a vacuum cleaner to a Haitian, but if they have always used a broom they will see no use for your vacuum,” she says, recommending, instead, “Give them the resources and tools that they can and want to use. That is the simple beauty of the agricultural cooperatives. We only have to be the wind; the Haitian people are enthusiastic partners in unfurling their own sails and doing the work needed.”

“There is so much joy and determination in Haiti, despite all of the hardships,” Wall says with a smile. She wants everyone to know how capable the Haitian people are, how resilient and dignified. “Harnessing that determination with a good plan is the way forward for Haiti,” she concludes. ☞

FIDA PHOTO



Betsy Wall, standing right, holds a meeting with a group from one of Productive Cooperatives Haiti’s agricultural co-ops.

MDS responds quickly to southern Manitoba flooding

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
EMERSON, MAN.

On May 29, 10 centimetres of rain fell in an hour on the small border town of Emerson. By the end of the day, more than 15 cm had come down. With the ground already saturated, the rain had nowhere to go, flooding most of the basements in town.

"It varied from home to home, but some had as much as [1 to 1.2 metres] in their basements," said Jeanette Sabourin, town administrator.

A power failure affected part of the town as well, disabling any sump pumps. The mayor declared a state of emergency for the town.

"On Monday [May 31], within an hour-and-a-half of being called, Mennonite Disaster Service [MDS] was in town," said Sabourin.

By June 1, 38 volunteers from Steinbach, New Bothwell and Altona were already cleaning out basements.

Dan Klassen, chair of the Manitoba MDS unit, said the quick response "was just part of our protocol." On May 30, when he heard of the record-setting rainfall and extent of the damage, he began phoning board members. He brought his truck into town, hung out the MDS shingle and turned his truck into a temporary office.

Emerson, with a population of 689, had about 80 percent of its 300 households flooded.

"Most have minimal insurance and some don't have any," said Sabourin.

Klassen put out calls to the supporting churches for volunteers, and by the end of the first week he had assisted 80 volunteers in cleaning out 35 homes. "There are about 45 homes on the list, and if all goes well we should have the clean-up finished after this week, and then we can wash and spray for mould next week."

Klassen, a member of Altona Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, drives a water truck for a spraying company. "I have

excellent employers who support me in this," he said of his work with MDS. "Some of them even volunteered to take my shift so I could be here."

A week after the deluge, the boulevards of this quiet community were piled high with the wreckage from one basement after another.

Homeowner Leanne Nichols looked overwhelmed and devastated as she surveyed the damage in her basement. Her 15-year-old son's bedroom was destroyed by the water. But Klassen gave instructions to the Altona Sommerfeld Mennonite youth group, who quickly emptied out her basement.

As motorists drove by, their occupants honked and waved to Klassen, having seen him working every day for a week.



Simon Reimer, left, Kyle Sawatsky and Peter Reimer from the Altona Sommerfeld Mennonite youth group assist Mennonite Disaster Service by cleaning out flooded basements in Emerson, Man., earlier this month.

"It's unbelievable," said Klassen. "Everyone greets you happily."

For Sabourin, that is not so unbelievable. What's unbelievable, she said, was how quickly MDS was there to help. "I have heard a lot people say, 'After this, we're going to give [MDS] a donation,'" she said.

Near Brandon a twister touched down and three homes in Winnipeg were also referred to MDS for investigation, Klassen noted. The work in Emerson was completed by June 9, with about 100 volunteers in total having responded to the call. ❧

/// Briefly noted

EFC recognizes victory for charities in Christian Horizons appeal decision

OTTAWA, Ont.—A decision last month by the Superior Court of Ontario, Divisional Court, in the landmark religious freedom case, *Heintz v. Christian Horizons*, reversed much of a previous decision by the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. Christian Horizons, a faith-based ministry, employs more than 2,500 people to provide housing, care and support to more than 1,400 developmentally disabled individuals. This Christian ministry, which requires its employees to sign a statement of faith and a lifestyle and morality policy, was the subject of a human rights complaint when a staff member resigned after she felt she could no longer live according to the commitment she made when she signed the policy. The tribunal had ruled that Christian Horizons' efforts were not the ministry of a religious community, but rather social work, and that it could no longer require employees to share its religious beliefs and resulting service commitment. The Divisional Court ruling is a "significant victory for faith-based charities across Canada," says Don Hutchinson, vice-president and general legal counsel for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member. "This means that Christian charities may continue to serve . . . in society all while maintaining their internal religious ethos and integrity."

—EFC Release

MCC challenges federal government's blanket visa requirements for Mexicans

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

People from Mexico, including refugees, visitors, businesspeople, tourists and Mennonites, can expect to have many roadblocks in their way if they want to come to Canada.

From now on, any Mexicans who wish to enter Canada for any reason must procure a temporary visitor's visa before entering. And they are upset about this.

According to a recent *Toronto Star* article by Bruce Campion-Smith, Mexican President Felipe Calderon visited the House of Commons on May 27 to express his "regret" for the Canadian government's decision to do this, among other things. The story suggested that this decision will not only mean a drop in tourism for Canada, but will strain relations with Mexico, which could lead it to require Canadians to procure visas before entering Mexico, and provide fewer possibilities for people to come to Canada to file refugee claims.

With all of the potential detrimental consequences of this blanket visa, why is Canada continuing with it?

Ed Wiebe, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada's refugee network coordinator, thinks it is because it is easier to put in a blanket visa requirement to weed out those people who wish to file for refugee status—but are not valid claimants—before they get to Canada's borders, than to change the program here.

Also, Mexico is considered a "safe country," a country that Canada would not expect to have residents needing to claim refugee status.

"[MCC] challenges the blanket statement about a country," Wiebe says, because "you can't say there is no such thing as a refugee from Mexico." Four percent



Wiebe

of the Mexicans who come into Canada and file for refugee status get accepted, he notes; therefore, there are legitimate refugees in Mexico, even if the numbers are small.

Wiebe feels the Canadian government is being unjust in this way, but also when it allows Mexicans into Canada on temporary work permits. "[The

government] doesn't want [Mexican immigrants] here permanently," he says. "[They] want them to be ready and willing to work when [they] need them, but when their services aren't needed, [the government] sure doesn't want them here."

"[The government] doesn't want [temporary workers from Mexico] bringing their family in, or to be eligible for employment insurance," he adds. "It's all those extra costs that go along with being a permanent resident of Canada that [the government] doesn't want to deal with."

In response to the way Canada deals with visitors from other countries, especially refugee claimants, Wiebe says that MCC is speaking to individual parliamentarians about the problems the visa requirements are having for people, and debating the current Bill C-11 that could have further negative consequences for refugee claimants from Mexico and beyond. ❧

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

No longer 'sinful or strange' to each other

Celebrating 150 years of the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite churches

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

A century-and-a-half after the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church and General Conference (GC) Mennonite Church divided, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) held a "Celebrating 150 Years" event on June 5, in an effort to listen to the stories of each denomination and learn from them.

Sheila Klassen-Wiebe, associate professor of biblical and theological studies, believes that both faithfulness and sinfulness characterized the GCs (now Mennonite Church Canada) and the MBs at their division in 1860 and in the years following. The two conferences were faithful at their separation because they saw their differences and separation as "matters crucial to their faith," she said.

However, their actions—that were probably done out of faith—were "marred by sinful influences, like mistrust, desire for

power and harsh words," she said, which tainted this likely positive split.

As a result, even today the older generations of MBs and GCs struggle with their identity, feelings of abandonment, and the ramifications of the distance and disapproval on both sides. This is because, between 60 and 80 years ago, MBs and GCs were excommunicated for marrying into each other's conferences, and GC members also had to be rebaptized if they wanted to join an MB church.

A common theme among CMU professors who spoke at the conference was that they were taught that the opposite conference was sinful or strange.

Ten years after the amalgamation of Concord College, Mennonite Brethren Bible College and Canadian Mennonite Bible College to form CMU, there remains a strong GC dominance. In some people's

minds, the name "Canadian Mennonite University" gives the impression that it is mainly GC, although it was chosen to be inclusive of both conferences and to be descriptive of its geographical setting.

Irma Fast Dueck, an associate professor of practical theology, said "it felt like abandonment" when the colleges joined with an apparent GC emphasis.

Although intended to celebrate the two conferences and to facilitate learning about one another, "Celebrating 150 Years" also ended up being a time of revelation.

Dan Epp-Tiessen, an associate professor of the Bible and a faculty member that is involved in hiring new professors, said that, more often than not, instructors who apply are GCs. CMU would be very interested in hiring people from the MB tradition, he said; however, they tend not apply for positions. "I believe we would be stronger if we had more of an MB ethos. One culture still predominates here [at CMU]," he said.

While "Celebrating 150 Years" aimed at closing the MB-GC divide, it was made apparent that younger generations of MBs and GCs do not perceive such a great division among one another.

Four graduates spoke on a panel about their experiences with the two traditions: Michael Bueckert and Jessica Dyck from the GC tradition, and Andrea Dick and Tim Rempel from the MB tradition.

For Dick, before coming to CMU there was no divide among her GC and MB friends. "We were friends. We had relationships with Jesus Christ, and that was it," she said.

After coming to CMU, Dyck said her GC background "did not affect the people I became friends with," and any differences between the two conferences were made known in a joking manner.

Being at CMU taught Bueckert that any rivers of difference "are not too deep to cross," he said.

According to Rempel, the divides are going away and the younger generations are celebrating "otherness."

There may be some difference between MBs and the GCs, but there are also intersections. Where there are differences, "we can learn from one another," CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt said. ☼



From left to right, CMU graduates Michael Bueckert, Andrea Dick, Jessica Dyck and Tim Rempel reflect on their Mennonite Brethren and General Conference traditions, and how they related to their school experience at CMU.

Canadians encouraged to support Ethiopian students

By ROSS W. MUIR
Managing Editor

Fundraising efforts for student scholarships to Meserete Kristos College (MKC) in Ethiopia were conducted this spring across central and southern Ontario. The meetings were arranged by MKC Link Canada, an advocacy group.

Keynote speaker Solomon Telahun, a teacher, writer and church leader from Ethiopia, spoke in seniors homes, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and in five

churches, including the Toronto Ethiopian church which joined Mennonite Church Eastern Canada a year ago. Telahun has just graduated from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., with a master of arts degree in conflict transformation and restorative justice.

He spoke of God's grace in his conversion, and God's work in the Ethiopian Mennonite church's youth ministry, HIV/AIDS program, prison ministry, development and evangelism, as well as its almost 14,000 baptisms last year. The need for trained leaders is urgent, he said, especially given changing political and economic conditions.

Most MKC students come from churches whose members are minimally employed and who cannot financially assist their pastors to attend the college's four-

year program, which costs about \$2,000, including tuition, food and lodging.

Students have years of service in the church—some more than a decade—before they are selected by regional church committees to go to college. A large number leave their wives and children for the four-month semesters. This spring, 76 church workers graduated from the college.

John Peters, a retired Wilfrid Laurier University professor from Waterloo, Ont., is a member of MKC Link Canada. He has taught at the college three times over the past few years. "I am always deeply moved in hearing of the power and passion in the lives of the students, witnessing their desire to learn, and seeing/hearing the ministry of graduating students," he said, noting that MKC is opening a liberal arts college this fall. "The Holy Spirit is at work," he said, adding, "We are co-labourers with them, with God."

MKC scholarship gifts from Canadian donors made through MC Canada are eligible for tax receipts. ❧

From an MKC Link Canada Release.

❧ Briefly noted

German MBs seek reconciliation after 150 years

DETMOLD, GERMANY—Mennonite Brethren churches in Germany are seeking reconciliation with Mennonite churches. On May 24, during 150th anniversary celebrations, MB church officials read a statement asking for forgiveness for spiritual arrogance, pride and lack of love, for excluding brothers and sisters from their community, as well as for a contemptuous attitude towards other Mennonite churches. Their common desire is to be open to communication and opportunities for cooperation. "Our future cooperation and community has to be guided by fraternal love following the commandment of Christ, and by mutual appreciation," the statement concluded. "As an independent congregational movement we intend to be open to resolving communication and to opportunities for cooperation." Representatives of several Mennonite conferences gave short responses. One expressed joy about this "small step," emphasizing that Mennonite and MB churches seek the same goal, and have had a common desire for peace in the past. Another gave thanks for this newly opened door and encouraged further communication.

—MWC Release

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'To be in harmony with all people'

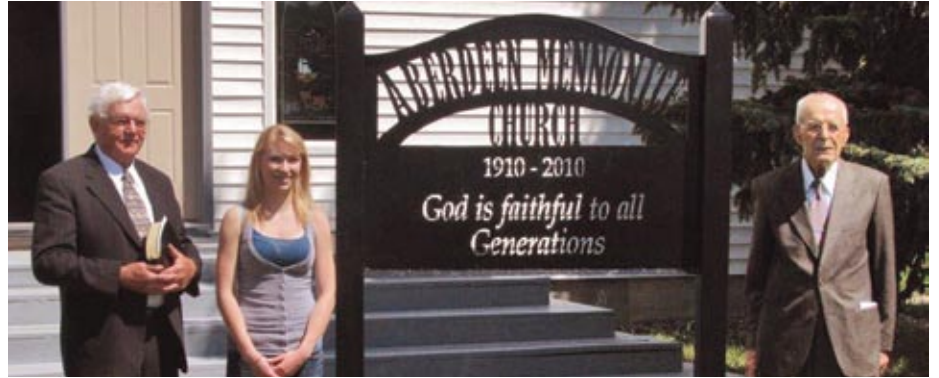
BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

In the town of Aberdeen, Sask., population 600, a small but committed group of Mennonites that call this place home gathered together in early June to celebrate 100 years of witness to the community.

Numbering about 45 on a Sunday morning, Aberdeen Mennonite Church—now led by Vern Ratzlaff—began anniversary celebrations on June 5 with local tours to cemeteries and former church building sites. The day ended with a volunteer choir rehearsal and tea. Celebrations continued with a morning service and noon meal the next day.

Erna Funk, who served the congregation with her husband Henry from 2004-06, came for the Sunday service. "It was wonderful, very meaningful," she enthused, explaining that the theme for the weekend focused on how God had formed the congregation and led it.

Neither has it always been easy for the group. "When we arrived to pastor, they had just gone through drought, [the mad cow disease disaster], . . . but they were still



As a way to mark the century milestone, Aberdeen Mennonite Church, Sask., erected a commemorative sign in front of the building. Former pastor Dave Neufeld, left, Ally Fehr and David Klassen unveil the sign during the June 5-6 celebrations.

faithful to come to church," said Funk.

David Neufeld served in a half-time capacity in the congregation from 1999 until 2004. "The church is a collection of people of a wide variety of backgrounds, religious and ethnic," he said, describing the Aberdeen congregation. "And they have achieved a sense of oneness, focusing on that which they have in common." One of the special memories he has of the congregation is the celebration of his own retirement from ministry while he served there.

The original mix of Mennonites that first settled in the area included businesspeople and farmers, said church historian Leonard Doell, who explained that there were businesses set up by Mennonites in the town of Aberdeen by the early 1900s. "At one point, a possible name being considered for the town was Dueck, after P.W. Dueck, who was a local businessman," he noted.

Although the church was organized as early as 1907, it did not have a building until three years later. The dedication service was held June 12, 1910, and became, for a while, a part of the Rosenort Mennonite group of Saskatchewan churches. The original building is still in use, and has been added to and redesigned down through the years.

Using unpaid or elected leaders for the first 65 years, most ministers were farmers, said Doell, but several local teachers also took on the role during that time. A total of 12 pastors were elected to serve.

In 1974, Ferdinand Ediger became the first paid leader of the congregation. In the last 10 or more years, the group has relied on part-time and semi-retired individuals to fill the roles of pastor and leader.

As a way of preparing for the centennial, the Aberdeen church historian was invited to give short historical updates in the weeks leading up to the anniversary weekend. During one of his reflections, he spoke of the first group's pure intentions.

"When the Mennonites came, they wanted to be in harmony with all people," said Doell. A century later, the desire of the original settlers can be seen to be played out in the church's present-day realities.

In an article written for the *Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Historian*, Kathy Klassen, a member of Aberdeen Mennonite, wrote: "Over the years, the Mennonite Brethren, Bergthal and United Churches closed and were moved away, leaving Aberdeen Mennonite the only church at Aberdeen. A few members of each of those churches are worshipping with us at the present time." ❧

/// Briefly noted

The world comes to Rosthern Mennonite

ROSTHERN, SASK.—"International Night" at Rosthern Mennonite Church involved people from different countries living in the community or from the church sharing about their homelands. The Rueb family from Germany showed pictures of how the Russian Mennonites who immigrated to Germany bought an old run-down theatre and renovated it into a church in six months; the church now has a membership of 96, with 200 people attending every Sunday morning. The Ayam and Romulo families from the Philippines told about their country of 92 million people who live on 7,100 different islands. Jeffrey Manurung came to Rosthern from Indonesia with the Mennonite Central Committee International Visitor Exchange Program; he noted that there are nearly 10 times as many Muslims in Indonesia as there are Christians. Ethnic foods from the different countries was enjoyed after the presentation.

—Rosthern Mennonite Church Release

Stories from Sudan

Canadian Mennonite correspondent addresses annual heritage retreat

STORY AND PHOTO BY CANADIAN MENNONITE STAFF

It was a one-day event and energetic seniors from Mennonite Church Alberta packed it full.

On June 9, Camp Valaqua hosted its annual heritage retreat, inviting seniors from across the province to come together to worship, visit and enjoy the camp setting. Attendance at the morning session was approximately 30, then climbed throughout the day to fill the dining hall with 78 people.

As the featured speaker, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, *Canadian Mennonite's* Alberta correspondent and co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, told stories from a September 2009 trip she took to see the work of Mennonite Central Committee in southern Sudan.

The morning session focused on the Old Testament Book of Lamentations, to give grief a voice and call for God. In the afternoon, she told stories of Sudanese Christians whose faith in the aftermath of years of civil war has made the church a beacon of hope for Sudanese society. In the evening, she spoke of how the Sudanese church needs Canadians to support its ministries, and how the church in Canada needs Sudanese stories of passion and courage to strengthen voices in this country for peace and the relevance of the church in a North American context.

A highlight of the day was an evening performance by the Corpus Christi male choir from Calgary. Several choir members joked that they were lured to perform by the certainty of a great chicken dinner!

After unanimous agreement that there should be a retreat in 2011, the one business item was to elect a replacement for Anne Mary Buhler, the outgoing heritage retreat committee chair. Jake Wiebe of Calgary First Mennonite Church was acclaimed as her successor, and joins Kurt Janz and Erna Goerzen on the committee. ☸



The Corpus Christi male choir performs at the 2010 Heritage Retreat at Camp Valaqua on June 9.



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WINDSOR MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP PHOTO



Paul Dueck, centre, was welcomed as the new guiding pastor of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship, Ont., on May 16 with a prayer litany led by Muriel Bechtel, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister. “He has wonderful gifts of the Spirit for music, preaching the Word and ministering to us,” says Greg Trepanier, chair of the church’s pastoral search committee. The Soli Deo Gloria Singers, a choral group under Dueck’s direction, sang during the welcoming celebration. Ruth Boehm of Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., a colleague and friend to Dueck and his wife Linda, preached a sermon entitled “I will not be shaken,” based on Psalm 62:5-8.

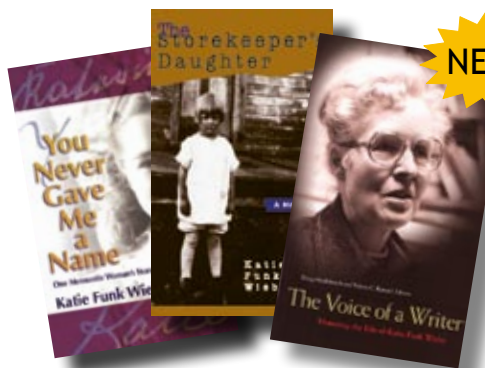
/// Briefly noted

Carrot River Mennonite Church celebrates 50 years

CARROT RIVER, SASK.—More than 150 past and present congregants of Carrot River Mennonite Church gathered on April 18 for a day-long celebration of their church’s 50th anniversary. The church began in the area in the late 1920s, when families settling south of the community built a country church. Ten years later, enough families had settled north of Carrot River so a second church was built there. By 1959, amalgamation of the two congregations was being discussed and a building was erected in the town of Carrot River, with the first service held on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1960. The new church building was dedicated the next day. Current pastor Ben Pauls led the 50th anniversary worship service, which focused on praise, adoration and thankfulness, and included a reflection of the church’s history. Phil Gunther, who served the church from 1991-99, brought the message, entitled “Thinking back, looking forward.” While it is good to reflect on what has been accomplished, he noted that there will always be the Lord’s work to do and all must keep working towards it. A play written by Margaret Doerksen and performed by various members of the current congregation highlighted areas of the church history from past to present.

—BY LEORA SAUDER

KATIE FUNK WIEBE



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GOD AT WORK IN US

'Call to me and I will answer you'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DIANNE LEGESSE

Mennonite Church Canada Release

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Leaving home to attend university exposed Frew Zinna to new attitudes and lifestyles that pulled him away from his family's legacy of faith, but the words of Jeremiah 33:3 called him back to Christ and into ministry.

Most Ethiopians are Orthodox Christians or Muslims, but Zinna grew up in a family that had been rooted in Evangelical Christian faith for three generations. His father taught in a Mennonite school started by missionaries.

"Having the privilege of being involved with the Mennonite missionary work contributed to the whole family's life," Zinna says, "because it gave access to good health care and education, as well as being taught spiritually."

Zinna graduated from high school at the Nazareth Bible Academy and received a scholarship to study at a government-run university. It gave him a chance to make his dream of becoming a medical doctor a reality. But living away from home exposed him to other temptations and, two years later, he was forced to leave school because of poor grades, low attendance and his use of *chat*, a locally grown leaf that is chewed for an amphetamine-like stimulus. He returned home disgraced and broken, bringing shame to his family.

At the age of 20, with his mother on her knees beside him, Zinna sought God's guidance. He says he heard God speak to him on three different occasions through the words of Jeremiah 33:3: "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

His faith re-emerged when he realized that God had a personal interest in him and in his future. He found a position as an English translator for a nurse at a Baptist mission clinic, and lived and worked in the clinic community of foreign and national Christians. Witnessing their personal faith and practising daily devotions with



Raised in an Evangelical Christian home in Ethiopia, Frew Zinna returned to the faith after a disastrous experience at a secular university. He is now studying at Meserete Kristos College, where MC Canada Witness volunteer Fanosie Legesse teaches.

them stirred the embers of his abandoned beliefs.

When the mission clinic closed, Zinna worked as a translator for a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Nazareth, less than 100 kilometres southeast of Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa. He attended church regularly and says he "became a church man," and also one of the youngest men elected as an elder in the Nazareth area at that time.

One day Zinna's pastor, Kedir Delchume, asked him, "What is your plan for your life?" After listing four specific priorities, Delchume suggested that, instead of setting his own priorities, he should seek God's will. When Zinna changed his approach, he says that God rearranged his priorities, moving marriage and ministering for God to the top of the list.

The pastor encouraged him to mature further before giving up his full-time NGO job for full-time ministry. During the next seven years, many people encouraged Zinna to study at Meserete Kristos College, including Demena Degu, a former graduate and now the director of the college's

extension classes in Nazareth. Degu told Zinna and his wife that education was necessary for his future ministry, but he didn't think it was the right time.

A dream changed his plans. In his dream, he saw an open envelope with a letter from the college extending an invitation to study and a scholarship. He woke up and wept tears of joy, knowing that his dream to study would finally come true.

Now a third-year degree student, Zinna says of his hopes for his future ministry, "I want to be fully engaged in the area of teaching. Change will come in the life of the church through teaching the body of Christ. My heart craves to teach God's Word." ❧

Adapted from the March 2010 issue of the Meserete Kristos College newsletter. Dianne and Fanosie Legesse have served as Mennonite Church Canada Witness volunteers in Ethiopia since 2007, where he teaches at the college, while she engages in a hospitality ministry. They are members at Bethel Mennonite Church, Elora, Ont.

ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

The decline and fall of a legend

Robin Hood.

Directed by Ridley Scott. Starring Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett. Universal Pictures, 2010.

Rated PG (scenes of violence and sexual content).

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

As a boy, I couldn't get enough of the Robin Hood legends. I read every book I could find on the subject and I loved the 1938 Errol Flynn film. While it's true that Robin dispatched the Sheriff of Nottingham's expendable soldiers without a second thought, these light-hearted tales about Robin and his merry men conveyed a sense of harmless innocent adventure mixed with justice for the poor.

Disney's animated *Robin Hood* (1973) certainly did nothing to dispel that light-hearted enactment of the legend. And while *Robin and Marian* (1976), starring Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn, gave us a more serious story, it also featured the kind of light-hearted romance and witty dialogue one expects from these two characters.

Then in 1991 came *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, with Kevin Costner as Robin and Morgan Freeman as his Muslim sidekick, Azeem. This badly acted, poorly written mess added some very dark touches to the legend—the sheriff dabbled in black magic—and the violence was suddenly much more graphic. But the sense of fun was still strong, with Alan Rickman playing the sheriff as a buffoon.

Mel Brooks's *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*, which followed in 1993, did not have to work hard to turn *Prince of Thieves* into an absurd comedy.

It has now been more than 70 years since Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone and Claude Rains starred in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and we could use a good 21st-century remake. Instead, we have Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood*. This movie is a prequel to the legend, describing how Robin returns from

the Crusades after King Richard's death, to find his country ruled by an incompetent prince and the traitorous Godfrey, who is working for the French. Robin reluctantly steps in to save the day.

In terms of acting and directing, *Robin Hood* is vastly superior to *Prince of Thieves*, and the cinematography is outstanding. Russell Crowe excels at playing reluctant heroes and Blanchett makes a feisty, if too serious, Maid Marian. Therein lies the problem. This *Robin Hood* is far too serious, having largely lost the sense of fun inherent in the legend.

And while there are some entertaining scenes, especially when both Crowe and Blanchett are on screen together, this supposedly original prequel is entirely predictable and ultimately boring. We've seen all this before. Why bother to use the Robin Hood story at all if you're just giving us another reluctant hero fighting for freedom?

Here is one way to understand *Robin Hood's* plot: Evil Godfrey conspires with the enemy and kills Robin's fellow soldiers; Robin shoots arrow at Godfrey, but misses; Robin is "adopted" by father-figure and falls in love with his daughter; Godfrey does more evil and eventually kills father-figure, then threatens daughter; Robin, now inspired by memories of his real father, fights Godfrey, is momentarily defeated, but then shoots a second arrow at Godfrey, which does not miss; daughter is saved; revenge is complete; audience cheers at evil villain's demise; Robin gets daughter. The end.

I spoke with a group of Canadian

Mennonite University students who had just seen *Robin Hood*. One of them said, "This film has nothing to do with the Robin Hood I grew up with. Where's his passion for the poor? I hated it." One scene in particular was deeply offensive to her. "There was this priest who was a real jerk and you could tell the filmmakers were setting him up to be killed off," she said, "and, sure enough, they delivered in the most gruesome, gratuitous way. I guess they think this is what people want to see?"

Is that why C.S. Lewis's light-hearted *Prince Caspian* and an otherwise impressive *Avatar* were turned into violent films? Are people so convinced that the only way to free the world from tyranny and oppression is to fight and to kill, that they long for and enjoy this endless parade of battle films? The box office receipts would suggest an affirmative answer.

If we who believe that violence is not



a credible way to resolve conflicts pay to see films like *Robin Hood*, without also expressing our anger and disappointment, we become part of the statistical figure which shows that people want to see redemptively violent fare. This is critical, because it seems that most filmmakers lack the imagination to envision a story except for how it feeds the box office. The church needs to engage the wider culture in this discussion, for, in a continent still dominated by Christian culture, it has apparently failed to understand Jesus' nonviolent way of transforming the powers. ❧

Vic Thiessen is executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Support Services and a regular film reviewer for Canadian Mennonite.

THEATRE REVIEW

A Jewish Jesus in occupied territory

Oberammergau Passion Play: Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

REVIEWED BY JOHN BENDER

In 1633, the people of Oberammergau in Bavaria (now part of Germany) pleaded with God to save them from extinction. Not only had the Black Death—or plague—taken its toll in the village and surrounding area, but the Thirty Years War across Europe between Protestants and Roman Catholics had ended in deprivation and exhaustion for all. The villagers vowed to portray the “Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ” every 10 years if no more people died of the plague. From that moment on, no one in the village succumbed to the Black Death.

For the first 200 years the play took place in the village church cemetery. Attendance increased dramatically in the 1800s. Today, a 4,720-seat auditorium accommodates the influx of people from around the world.

The 2010 version opened on May 15 and closes on Oct. 3 after 102 performances. At least half the town of 5,000 people are involved in the play, with as many as 700 being on stage at times. At 850 metres above sea level, Oberammergau stands at the same elevation as Jerusalem, where the play is set.

While revisions to the text and music were made in the previous two productions, the current one aims to show the Jewishness of Jesus. Revisions were made in consultation with the Oberammergau community, and the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jewish faith communities, with the final decisions made by the Bavarian government. Such a convoluted community-religious-civic-political discussion and decision-making process may be unique to Oberammergau.

The 2010 production is based on the Gospel of Mark. The play deals more directly than previous versions with the situation of the Jews living in an occupied land. The tensions of living under cruel and abusive

Roman rule are parried in sharp dialogue and with the physical presence of Roman soldiers on stage most of the time. Jesus’ Jewishness is portrayed, especially in the Sermon on the Mount; only later is he shown in his activist role in cleansing the temple.

In Act 1, I was struck by the expectancy and jubilation of the people as Jesus enters Jerusalem. At the same time, some question what’s going on. “What a swarming mass of people!” said Nathaniel, adding, “The entire city is flowing towards him.”

Jesus has supporters inside as well as outside the high council. Despite some insisting that this interloper from Galilee be throttled, Caiaphas declares, “Let him speak!”

Jesus speaks: “Come all of you who are weary and burdened! Come all of you who are staggering under the weight of misfortune and grief. It is a fearful time for Israel; but help for you is about to come.”

Judas, attuned to a political solution for the woes of the Jewish people, entreats Jesus: “Jesus, arise! Be our king, walk before us and don’t permit the execution of the just!”

The play follows a classical dramatic structure, including prologues for each act and a chorus of 60 singers, with soloists. There are 13 Old Testament vignettes, called Living Images, which parallel events in Jesus’ life and are intended to deepen the meaning of events in Jesus’ life.

In the Living Image of Moses before the burning bush, Moses pleads with God to “send another in my place.” Jesus on the Mount of Olives prays, “The hour of darkness approaches. If it is not possible that this hour pass me by, your will be done.”

My favourite part of the six-hour play was the depiction of the activity in the Upper Room: the foot washing and meal, Jesus words, and the brief, suspenseful assembly before the full meaning of life with

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN BENDER



Marty and John Bender, Elkhart, Ind., are pictured in front of the Oberammergau Passion Play Theatre in Germany at the end of May.

Jesus dawns.

The drama builds to a climax as Jesus is nailed to the cross, calls for a drink, forgives one of the thieves, appeals to God and then dies. The denouement is quick and brief: “Hallelujah! He is risen!” says Magdalena, followed by the chorus: “Hallelujah! Praise, honour, adoration, power and majesty be yours forever and ever!”

The scene of Jesus on the cross startled me. The actor graphically and realistically portrayed the suffering human Jesus even as the spiritual Jesus appeared to Mary in the words of the angel: “Mary, go to your brothers and tell them: he has not yet ascended to his Father. But he will ascend to his Father and your Father, to his God and your God. Believe in the light in order that you become children of the light!”

I left the theatre a bit stiff after all that sitting (with a meal served half-way through), having understood only a fraction of the German-language presentation. Still, the cumulative impact of the action on stage, the static Living Images, the music of chorus and orchestra, the animals, the company of participants, the natural elements of darkened sky, rain and chill, combined to give a feast for thought concerning the physical, mental and spiritual sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of all humanity. ❧

John Bender, Elkhart, Ind., worked in communication with church agencies and as a freelance writer-editor from 1969-2008. In retirement, he and his wife spend their time travelling.

SOCIAL COMMENTARY

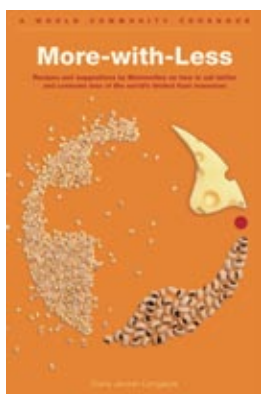
On reading Martha and Doris

BY PAM PETERS-PRIES
MC CANADA/MPN JOINT RELEASE

On a recent vacation I browsed through several copies of Martha Stewart's *Living* magazine from the library. Each issue was a feast of gorgeous photographs and spectacular ideas.

Stewart's magazines are seductive. As I flipped through them, I dreamed of my friends' accolades as I placed perfectly plated and garnished meals before them, the reputation I would earn for being "the hostess with the mostest."

But then there were the haunting, darker



thoughts: What if the layered spring omelette didn't stack up as prettily as in the picture? Would people notice if I used plain old table salt instead of the coarse sea salt listed in the recipe?

Reading Stewart's magazine, you start to think it's not simply welcoming friends into your home that matters. It's the effort and expense you incur to host them, and the impression you make with

very tricky recipes that really counts.

I found an antidote for my Stewart-

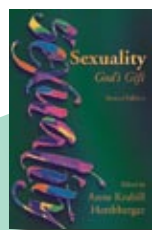
induced anxiety in Doris Janzen Longacre's gracious and lucid introduction to the *More-with-Less Cookbook*. Could Janzen Longacre have foreseen how Stewart would influence us when she wrote, "[T]he fact that in North America we tend to feast non-stop can dull our festive joy. . . . We require more and more trimming to turn any celebration into a meal distinguishable from our daily diet."

Or when she wrote, "Serving guests becomes an ego trip, rather than a relaxed meeting of friends around that most common everyday experience of sharing food. Gathering around the table in fellowship turns into entertaining."

Stewart's *Living Omnimedia* wouldn't be the vast empire it is today if everyone heeded Janzen Longacre's timeless advice of 35 years ago: "Hold in clear perspective the reason for celebrating. Don't expect food to be the total experience. More with less means affirming faith and relationships as the basis for celebrating, and letting food play a complementary role."

If the world had a little more Janzen Longacre and a little less Stewart, we might all be enjoying our gatherings with friends a lot more with a lot less. The next time you're fretting over those fussy garnishes and mismatched table settings, put that Martha Stewart magazine away and go back to your copy of *More-with-Less*.

It has some really, really good advice for you. ☼



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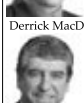
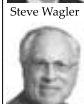
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Nov. 1 Oct. 19

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Nov. 15 Nov. 2

Focus on Music

Nov. 29 Nov. 16

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Dec. 20 Dec. 7

Calendar

Saskatchewan

July 12-16: VBS at Osler Mennonite Church (9 to 11:30 a.m. daily).

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

July 19-23: VBS at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon (9 to 11:30 a.m. daily).

July 19-23: VBS at Warman Mennonite Church (6:30 to 8:30 p.m. daily).

Aug. 3-6: VBS at Rosthern Mennonite Church (1 to 3:30 p.m. daily).

Aug. 9-13: VBS at Emmaus Mennonite Church, Wymark (6:30 to 8:30 p.m. daily).

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

Manitoba

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. 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.

July 25: Unveiling of the gravestone of Jakob David Reimer (1817-91), an early leader of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Ukraine, at Mennonite Heritage Museum, Steinbach, at 2:30 p.m. For more information, contact Barry Dyck by e-mail at BarryD@mhv.ca.

Until Sept. 18: "In the Spirit of Humanity" art exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg; featuring the art of Ray Dirks, gallery curator, Manju Lodha, Isam Aboud, and M.K. Sharma of Jaipur, India. For more information, e-mail rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca

Ontario

Sept. 10-12: Annual "Building Community" retreat for people with disabilities and their supporters at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Theme: "Looking on the bright side." Speaker: Susan Minns. For more information, or to register, e-mail professor_flatbread@yahoo.ca.

Until Nov. 10: "Willow, Ash and Rye:

Traditional Basketry Revisited" exhibit, at Joseph Schneider Haus museum, Kitchener, featuring the work of folk artist-in-residence Wendy Durfey. For more information, call Susan Burke at 519-742-7752.

U.S.

July 19-22: Native assembly, North Cheyenne Reservation, Ashland, Mont.

Theme: "I am the potter, you are the clay" (Isaiah 45:9 and Jeremiah 16:8).

Sponsored by MC Canada Native Ministry and Native Mennonite Missions USA. Registration forms available from MC Canada office.

July 31: Somali Mennonite reunion, James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa. All former Somali staff, students, friends, missionaries and associates welcome. For more information, e-mail somalireunion@gmail.com.

Aug. 6-7: If your last name is Shirk, Sherk, Sherick, etc., consider attending the biennial reunion of the Schürch Family Association of North America, Harrisonburg, Va. For more information, e-mail Verne Schirch at vrnschurh856@gmail.com or visit schurch.ca.

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

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Classifieds

Announcement

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 jepsemartensl@gmail.com or call 306-223-4395 or 306-223-4368. Pre-register by Aug. 1.

For Rent

For Rent: Bedroom and access to common living spaces in a newly remodelled 1,160-square-foot house, **2 kms from CMU**. E-mail hjfranz@mts.net for more information.

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.

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

Fairview Mennonite Homes & Parkwood Mennonite Home SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

Fairview Mennonite Homes and Parkwood Mennonite Home need to fill a Senior Accountant position in their business office in Cambridge, Ont.

The Senior Accountant reports to the Director of Finance and performs or supervises all accounting functions for the two organizations, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, financial reporting, and reporting to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, as well as various municipalities. Required educational qualifications include a minimum BBA or equivalent and a professional accounting designation (CMA, CGA, CA). The individual who fills this position will also be responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of Fairview's and Parkwood's computer systems.

Full details about this position are posted on these sites:
www.fairviewmennonitehomes.com/fairview
www.fairviewmennonitehomes.com/parkwood
www.workopolis.com

Please direct applications and inquiries to: tkennel@fairviewmennonitehomes.com. The deadline for applications is Monday, July 5, 2010. We thank all applicants for their interest. Only those who are selected for an interview will be contacted.

Employment Opportunities

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 or by telephone at 519-426-5840; or Muriel Bechtel, Conference Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, at mbechtel@mcec.ca or by telephone at 519-650-3806.

PASTOR

Tofield Mennonite Church is searching for a pastor who is fearless and passionate for God, and is gifted in the areas of community outreach, preaching and teaching. We are an Anabaptist congregation of about 70 members in a growing town of about 2,000 people, with many acreage and farm families living in the surrounding area. Edmonton is only about 45 km northwest of us. Blessed with a newer sanctuary and fellowship hall, we look forward to working together with a pastor who has an outgoing personality and is eager to help our church bring Jesus to our community. The opportunity is great. Is God calling you?

Please direct resumes to:
 B. Goerzen, Search Contact, Box 443, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mennonite Mutual Fire Insurance Company (MMFI) is seeking an experienced insurance professional as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) due to an upcoming retirement.

MMFI is a policyholder-owned company with a long history and tradition based on integrity and quality service standards. It partners with 110 brokerages that assist in meeting the insurance needs of any Saskatchewan resident requiring farm, residential, auto, commercial and church property coverage. The company has an extremely capable management team with 27 dedicated and experienced staff. The head office is in Waldheim, located approximately 30 minutes north of Saskatoon.

Candidates will have a proven record for being a passionate visionary, strategic thinker and disciplined decision-maker. They will possess exemplary leadership, communication and interpersonal skills.

Applicants should have an appropriate education in a business-related discipline, along with extensive managerial experience and preferably possess an F/CIP designation. It is expected candidates will have substantial insurance knowledge and experience. It would be an asset to have a background within the "Mutual" insurance industry and have worked for a Board of Directors.

A written response explaining the timing of the hiring process will be sent to all who apply. Those interested in this unique opportunity with a competitive salary and superior benefits package can in confidence forward a resume outlining their background and experience by July 16, 2010, to:

CEO Hiring Competition, c/o Harry T. Vlachos, Consultant
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 P.O. Box 20134, Belleville, ON, Canada K8N 5V1
 or by E-mail: hvlachos@cogeco.ca or fax: 613-966-0535

Snapshots

MCC PHOTO BY DAN DRIEDGER

from near and far

Kate and Sam Ratcliffe cross the finish line of the two-kilometre Run for Relief at the 44th annual New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale last month. The run raised more than \$8,300. In total, the Relief Sale brought in \$330,000 for the worldwide work of Mennonite Central Committee.



PHOTO BY ALANAH MORIN



Fifteen Canadians—including Conrad Grebel University College music and peace studies students—were in South Africa this spring on a music and culture study trip. While in Durban, a multicultural music event took place at the University of KwaZulu's famed Jazz Centre that featured the South African and Paraguayan music of Grebel prof Carol Ann Weaver. Pictured from left to right, the band included: Canadian vocalist Rebecca Campbell, Weaver, Grebel student Katie Honek, African musicians Thandeka Mazibuko and Mageshen Naidoo, and Grebel student Kyle Skillman.