

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Volume 15 Number 18

Fly like an eagle

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EDITORIAL

Ten years later

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The question isn't, "Has our world changed since that fateful day of Sept. 11, 2001?" It is rather, "How have we changed 10 years after?"

As I write this, the air and print are filled with reflections on this anniversary date. The emotional wounds of the families of the fallen victims working at the World Trade Center on that tragic day are still raw, their losses still keenly felt. The violent and abrupt end of their loved ones is still overwhelming.

"Sometimes I feel I am asked to attend my mother's funeral again and again, year after year," writes a grieving daughter in an op-ed piece in our local newspaper. "I wonder what my mom, a clinical psychologist, would think of these memorials. Would she tell me to look back less and look ahead more? Would she remind me that the final stage of grief is acceptance and renewal?"

As I look around, though, we are not yet at that final stage. We are still in shell-shock, both Canadians and Americans, evidenced in many ways and on many levels by our fear of the perceived enemy. Many of us are taking our cue from the surrounding culture and slipping into a "season of vengeance that has been hard to shake," as Theodore J. Wardlaw, professor at Austin (Tex.) Presbyterian Theological Seminary, puts it.

We have lost our sense of security and place, which may have been false in the

first place. "Everything we knew about living in this world," says Wardlaw, "our way of life, our place in the catbird seat, our sense of power, the truth of our causes—was running in panic, and still is. On that day it was our enemies, not us, who were singing and dancing for joy."

As citizens of Caesar's world, Mennonites are appalled at the fear-driven military expenditures in the name of "national security" in both North American countries, with Prime Minister Stephen Harper telling the CBC's Peter Mansbridge that the greatest threat to Canada is still "Islamicism" (his term, not ours).

Still stuck in the conventions of outdated warfare, he and his military generals don't seem to remember that the 9/11 bombers in New York City that day commandeered U.S. commercial airliners—that became weapons of mass destruction—and not a billion-dollar stealth bomber from enemy territory. The logic of fortressing our shores, 10 years after, with billions of dollars of taxpayer-funded military hardware is ludicrous, if not immoral and ineffective on all levels.

But far more important for us who believe in the reign of God, and who do not put our faith in nationalism, is the test of one of our most important beliefs: loving our enemies. Do we indeed still practise what Jesus asked us to do?

In his reflection on the effects of 9/11, John Paul Lederach, writing in a recent issue of *Christian Century*, says the question is inescapable: "How do we transform enmities?" "The faith I embrace," he writes, "and the nonviolent transformation I am professionally committed to seeking both arise from the life and teachings of Jesus, who measures love in terms of how we respond to those who wish to harm us."

Lederach, founder of the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University and professor of international peacebuilding at Notre Dame University, says that, "in settings of violent conflict, peacebuilding inhabits a liminal existence—it is the carving of a home for people whose lives are defined and held together by enmity.

"Peacebuilding chooses to build relationships and trust where pain and hatred run deep. The violent acts of Fall 2001 challenged the very core of this vocation: How do we pursue justice and love those who wish us harm?"

He then answers his own question: "The path of love starts with the simple yet unexpected act of engagement and befriending."

Will we take up his challenge and purge our vocabulary and conversation of labels for those from the Middle East as "terrorists" and "Islamists," as if they are not human or do not aspire to live in peace and tranquillity, free to rear their families and pursue satisfying work and professions, and to worship their God in their historic faith traditions?

Will we succumb to a continuing "season of vengeance" still so prevalent in our culture, or will we follow the example of Jesus, who ate with his enemies and went to their houses?



ABOUT THE COVER:

Amy Dueckman, B.C. correspondent for *Canadian Mennonite*, overcomes her fear and discovers newfound courage through the thrill of skydiving. 'Skydiving is the closest I will ever come to soaring like an eagle,' she says in her personal reflection, 'Fly like an eagle,' on page 29.

PHOTO: SKYDIVE VANCOUVER

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Strange and wonderful paths

Looking back on 50 years of ministry

BY RALPH LEBOLD

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Mennonites have tended to be so literalistic in their interpretations, whether of Scripture or of their statements of faith. When participating in communion or a baptism, one can be fixated on the physical elements of bread and juice, but miss the power and beauty of the powerful symbolism of these experiences.

After 50 years in ministry I have discovered that there is a significant interplay between the divine and human when it comes to physical and emotional healing. All healing is a work of God's grace, including medical, psychological and social interventions, whether the caregivers acknowledge it or not.

Looking through the "eyes of faith," all healing, at whatever level, is indeed divine. Having lived with cancer for 20 years, this discovery has existential meaning for me.

In reflecting on what I have learned, I have to give credit first of all to a Christian lineage of parents and grandparents, who, as farmers, gave me a foundation of honesty and fairness; to evangelists George R. Brunk and Howard Hammer, who not only nudged me to confess Christ but to follow him in a call to service; to a kind bishop in the Amish Conference (later to become the Western Ontario Conference), who instructed me, along with other young teenagers, in the Dortrecht Confession of Faith; and to Eastern Mennonite College, Goshen Biblical Seminary and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), that gave this "Amish boy" the educational tools and training for ministry.

My 50-year journey in ministry began in 1961. Since then, I have served as an urban pastor for 13 years, conference minister for six years, college president for 10 years, and director for conference-based and related

CANADIAN MENNONITE FILE PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



off-campus theological education for seven years. For the past 14 years, my retirement involvement has included a variety of volunteer congregational and community ministry projects.

Following learning

Looking more closely at my “call,” I am reminded of Jesus’ call to his first disciples as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. They were from “fishing” families, so Jesus engaged them in that context. Jesus got into the boat with Simon, asking him to move away from the shore so he could teach the gathered crowds. When he finished teaching, they launched out to do some fishing. The “experienced” Simon protested, suggesting that they had already tried that and it didn’t work. But out of respect for the rabbi, he did as Jesus requested. Then a miracle happened: there were so many fish that the nets began to break.

Simon Peter comes to a new awareness as he falls on his knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” Then comes the invitation to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.”

The record says that Simon Peter, James and John “*pulled up their boats to the shore and left everything and followed him.*”

I am convinced that people are called out of their work/home environments to do God’s work in the world. People doing ordinary jobs are called to an extraordinary mission, to engage—catch—people with the message of the gospel. The 12 disciples had a three-year training experience as they followed Jesus while he ministered to people. Perhaps this provides a paradigm for us:

- **REPENTANCE:** recognizing our sinfulness;
- **FOLLOWING:** leaving our former jobs;
- **LEARNING:** spending time in preparation for ministry.

Pastoral preparation for ministry

Arriving at Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, Ont., in June 1961, I felt somewhat prepared to assume the role of pastor of an emerging urban Mennonite congregation. Within a month of my arrival, I conducted the funeral of two young girls, members of

our Sunday school program, who were burned to death in an apartment fire. At that moment I realized that we had never discussed conducting funerals in our pastoral education courses. For that matter, we had not dealt with how one ministers in other significant rites like baptisms or weddings. I survived that first experience, but that was the first of a variety of times that the limitations of my education came to the fore.

Another experience three years later shook my confidence as a minister, causing me to look for an exit from pastoral ministry. Renting one of our bedrooms to a young man whose family we knew from my home community, and who came to work in the city as the manager of a small shoe store, I became aware that he was struggling with serious emotional issues. I tried to persuade him to seek psychiatric help, but he resisted, saying he was in conversation with a physician as well as a psychology professor.

He went home one weekend, entered the bathroom and drank a lethal dose of rat poison, ending his tortured emotional life. I attended the funeral and also

PHOTO COURTESY OF MPN/PANDORA PRESS

discussed the outcome with his employer, who happened to be a Christian. In the ensuing weeks I was in turmoil as I reviewed what I could have done differently to avoid the early death of this young man.

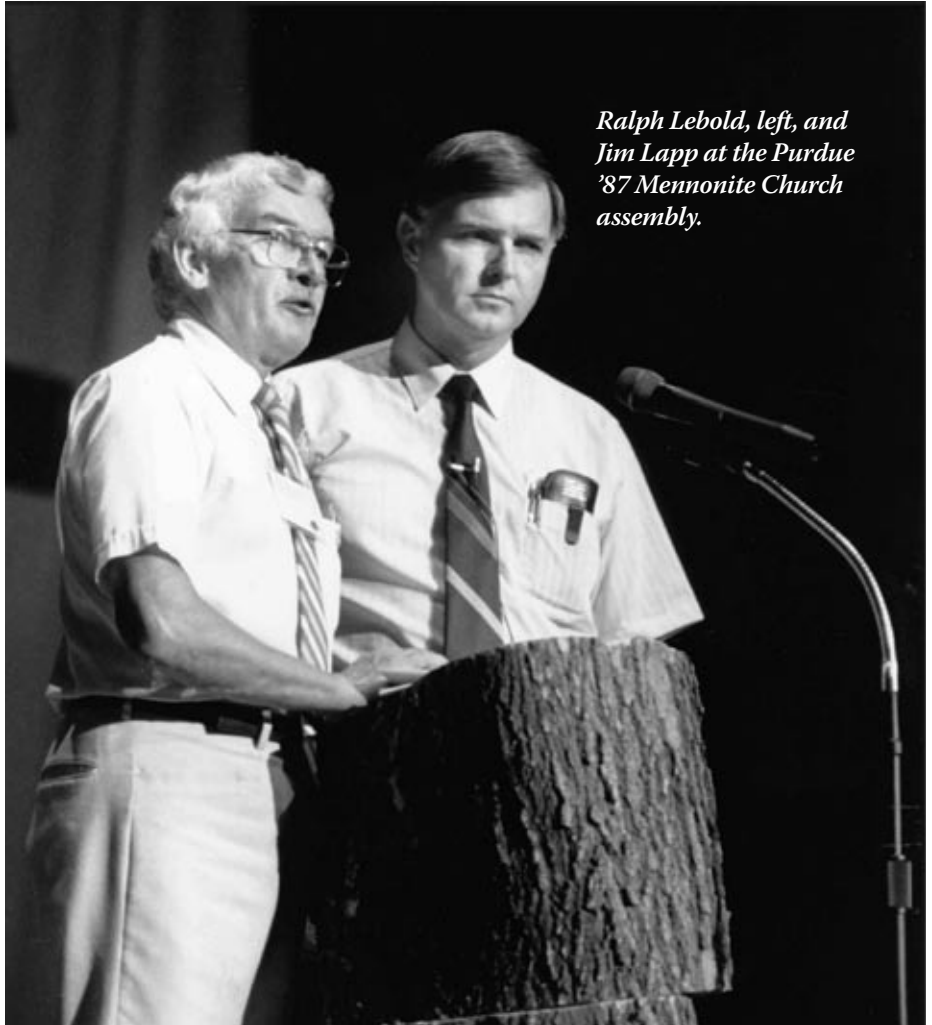
During that summer, a letter arrived in the church mailbox from the resident chaplain at the London Psychiatric Hospital, inviting city pastors to join a half-day conversation group to focus on the mental-health issues that pastors face in their congregations. This conversation with seven others from mainline churches proved to be a healing experience for me. It also became a time when I explored the possibility of further education.

I found a one-year clinical pastoral education program at Crozer Theological Seminary, Upland, Pa., leading to a master of theology degree. The program included two academic courses per term and half-time work as a hospital chaplain.

With the Valleyview congregation granting my request for a one-year leave-of-absence, this became a pivotal year for me, as it opened for the first time the need to also work from my right brain. It was necessary to face the “shadow side” of my person. My unresolved anxieties, fears and anger, among other emotions, needed to be faced directly.

During that time I became aware of a supervisor-in-training position, so I negotiated with the congregation for a second year off. In exchange, I agreed to fly home once a month to preach, do some pastoral care and administrative planning. I coordinated preaching and pastoral care ministries, which were carried out by members of the congregation. In the process of our discussions, an exciting new vision developed within me and the congregation for team ministry as a viable leadership model for Mennonite congregations.

Over the course of this second year I completed my research for my master's thesis, as well as fulfilling the requirements for the supervisory training program all while flying to London 10 times that year. I started fleshing out a new vision for pastoral education as I prepared for certification as a chaplain supervisor.



Ralph Lebold, left, and Jim Lapp at the Purdue '87 Mennonite Church assembly.

Rather than using a hospital or seminary classroom, a congregation would be the primary base for one half of a student's ministry training, with the other half spent in a mental hospital context or a social ministries setting. As well, students would take one class in a seminary of another denomination.

With this vision I approached the AMBS dean, Ross Bender, in the fall of 1968 about the possibility of following through on this vision. This alternate model for equipping pastors was implemented a year later and continued for the next 10 years.

Congregational faith formation

The Mennonite church has stated that the congregation is the central reality for gathered Christians. It is in this context that worship, education and fellowship occur. In this setting members also care

for one another. Ideally, the congregation is a welcoming place for those searching for a meaningful focus. In fact, the current buzzword is that we should be a “missional” congregation.

To move in this direction means that our congregations must be much more intentional in their discernment and mutual accountability. The virus of individualism has seriously infected our congregations. It is, in fact, at the pandemic stage. Our congregations must become places where people engage meaningfully with each other. Too many of us still resist being open about questions of faith, the use of our financial resources, or even about our emotional and mental struggles.

It is this reality that Stuart Murray is addressing in his book *The Naked Anabaptist*, recapturing for us this dynamic for a revitalized community in the

21st century. Following his prescription will more readily make us a missional people. My hope is that congregations would find fresh ways to engage Scripture as a living, relevant resource for living as a countercultural people in their communities.

We are being bombarded daily with messages that run counter to what we believe. When we engage one another in Scripture-seeking to live faithfully, there is the potential for being a vibrant, welcoming people of God, attractive to those searching for more meaning and purpose in their lives.

Church pastoral teams need to access Bible study aids that provide background information as well as possible interpretation of the text. For me, it was helpful to explore how the Bible came together in its present form. In 2004, I revisited this subject when John Miller, a professor at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., published his book *How the Bible Came to Be*. This served as a refresher to what I had known, but it also brought into focus some of the more recent findings, such as the beginnings of the canon, expanding my understanding of the sacred text and giving me a greater appreciation for the biblical story.

There are many commentaries and Bible study helps available to us. The Believers Church Bible Commentary Series covers many of the books of the Bible. This material is quite accessible to

PHOTO COURTESY OF MPN/PANDORA PRESS



Ralph Lebold and Florence Driedger moderate the joint Mennonite Church/General Conference assembly at Normal '89.

serious students as a reliable source of information.

When our congregants diligently search Scripture, it may help us avoid rehashing our former interpretations and patterns of behaviour. It will hopefully create renewal and a revitalized congregation. This also means that congregations may need to work at creative ways of keeping their church programs relevant, or delete them, in order to provide the time to carry out the vision.

When we engage one another in Scripture-seeking to live faithfully, there is the potential for being a vibrant, welcoming people of God, attractive to those searching for more meaning and purpose in their lives.

Practising biblical stewardship

Congregations must encourage the practice of “first fruits” giving. A discipline to set aside a portion of one’s income at the front end should help us set a goal of giving 10 percent to God’s work in the world, the primary recipient being our congregation, then other charities.

If one has limited resources, it will be necessary to begin with a smaller percentage. Jesus noted that two small coins that were given by the widow were significant: *“Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury”* (Mark 12:43). We are called to be responsible for the resources we have, whether they are limited or abundant.

Making first fruits giving a regular practice also helps our overall stewardship by providing a way of sorting out our basic needs over what may be less necessary. Our society puts a lot of pressure on us to buy more, which only feeds into our selfish nature. It is in this area that the congregation can help us to be more countercultural. We should not worship the god of consumerism or the lottery god in an effort to hopefully win easy money.

The offering is a meaningful act of worship, ranking alongside the singing of hymns, praying, Scripture reading and preaching. In his book *A Christian View*

of Money, Mark Vincent sees the offering as a sacramental act. He encourages congregations to experiment with a variety of approaches in receiving the offering. On occasion, congregants could be invited to bring their offering to the front of the sanctuary, an act that can be a powerful symbol of commitment.

In 1994, the Mennonite Foundation of Canada published a helpful booklet, *Money Management and Financial Planning*, one of a variety of resources available to congregations.

Environmental stewardship is a front-burner issue for the church, which is concerned with how much we travel and our use of non-renewable resources. It is encouraging to see more “green” initiatives each year. The Greening of Sacred Spaces Project headed by Jane Snyder in Ontario’s Waterloo Region is another positive example of moving towards a more responsible pattern of living. The use of solar panels, water preservation initiatives and recycling are but a few of the ways we can be better caretakers of God’s world.

It is encouraging to read that young people are taking leadership in environmental stewardship. Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., and Conrad Grebel have taken the initiative to have solar panels placed on the roofs of their respective institutions.

A year ago, Grebel also became the first residential institution to join the Green Bin Organic Waste pilot project operated by the Region of Waterloo. In eight months, almost 10 tonnes of waste was diverted from the local landfill. Students also used a variety of methods to challenge each other to conserve energy and water. The university college has also become a member of the local Car Share program.

Words for new pastors

• **FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL CENTRE.** How do you encounter the divine in your experience? Does God come to you through silent reflection and meditation on the written Word of God? Perhaps the Spirit speaks in the midst of dialogue with other people? At times I also encounter God in the midst of activity, particularly when sitting back to reflect on the question: Where has God been at work in this experience? At times these observations become clearer in dialogue with others.

• **MAINTAIN A BALANCE.** You have only so much time and energy. Prioritize your duties. Budget your time for sermon preparation, visitation and other pastoral duties. There will be some tasks that can be carried out by your congregants, such as visiting new mothers at the hospital.

• **ALLOW TIME FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION TO BE ALONE WITH GOD.** Nurture your own soul on a regular basis; otherwise, you will be ministering on an “empty gas tank.” Pace yourself so you can give time for your family and other social relationships. Receive adequate rest as well as regular exercise.

• **FIND A TRUSTED, EXPERIENCED PASTOR TO WALK WITH YOU.** This is especially important in the first five years of ministry. Covenant to share openly with this person, giving you a sounding board for issues you will face in your ministry. Pray together. You should have a good support system both within the congregation as well as in your area church. These early years are significant in assuring that you will have a productive and enjoyable ministry experience.

Observations and growing edges

There is a growing appreciation for “mystery” in my Christian walk. Mennonites have tended to be so literalistic in their interpretations, whether of Scripture or of their statements of faith. When participating in communion or a baptism, one can be fixated on the physical elements of bread and juice, but miss the power and beauty of the powerful symbolism of these experiences. Given the limitations of my religious history, I have gradually gained an appreciation for the numinous

in my life, namely, having a sense of the presence of the holy.

The concepts of grace, repentance and perfection have increasing relevance for me. We do not always act in graceful ways, nor do we appropriate the concept in relation to our emphasis on discipleship. I echo Philip Yancey’s question in his book *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* When we emphasize service and right behaviour, the tendency is to become rigid as we identify ways in which to live faithfully. We often lose the expression of grace as we seem to forget that we, too, are redeemed sinners. It is in these times that perfectionism manifests itself.

Will Braun discussed our motivations when we serve others in the July 11 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. While our motives are never totally pure, we continue to serve. Yes, we must continue to examine our motives and be open to repent of our sinful motivations. Grace and forgiveness come to us as we repent and continue to minister in the name of Jesus.

Perhaps Jesus’ parable of the weeds and the wheat gives us a possible clue as we deal with this issue. This story is part of a series of parables in which Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a variety of everyday activities with which his hearers would have been familiar. In this one he compares the kingdom to good seed. At night, the enemy plants weeds

among the wheat seeds. The slaves discover the weeds when the plants begin to grow. They ask whether they should pull the weeds. The master says no, because, if they pull the weeds, they will also pull out the wheat. The text says, “*Let them grow together until the harvest.*” At that time the reapers will separate the weeds from the wheat.

However questionable it is to formulate church practice out of a parable, this does point to a truth: When dealing with motivational and behavioural issues, we should not be too quick to judge by pulling “out the weeds,” thus possibly destroying the individual in the process. As Yancey says, “Grace comes free of charge to people who do not deserve it.” ❧



Ralph Lebold's autobiography, Strange and Wonderful Paths: Memoirs Of Ralph Lebold, was published by Pandora Press in 2006.

To order a copy, e-mail info@pandorapress.com. The author is pictured at a book signing at Conrad Grebel University College in the summer of 2006.

/// For discussion

1. Ralph Lebold says that “the congregation is the central reality for gathered Christians.” Do you agree? What are some ways that people from your congregation engage meaningfully with each other? Why do we often resist being open about our questions, finances, mental and emotional struggles?
2. Should all Christians have a sense of “call,” or is that only for pastors and church workers? How have you, or others in your congregation, experienced a sense of call? How often does responding to Jesus’ call to follow him require leaving home or job?
3. Lebold declares that “the offering is a meaningful act of worship,” that is as important as singing, Scripture reading and praying. Do you agree? Is giving 10 percent of your income to the congregation too much to expect in today’s world?
4. Do you agree that Mennonites tend to be literalistic when it comes to Scripture and statements of faith? What do you think Lebold means by appreciating mystery in the Christian life? Are there disadvantages to letting the wheat and the weeds grow together in a congregation without being quick to judge?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an 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. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. 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. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ 'A true welding together of business and faith'

RE: "FAITH, BUSINESS welded together at Haul-All," July 11, page 21.

The author of this heart-warming story missed a key element that led to the current success of this Lethbridge, Alta., company. When Neufeldt Industries went into receivership in the 1980s, I am told it was a friend of the owners and a fellow church member who offered to buy them out of receivership. Once the business was again on a solid footing, this "angel investor" sold the company back to the Neufeldts as a going concern—and they have never looked back.

Too many times, friends and churches tend to look down on business "failures." In this case, a friend offered real help and risked the dollars to back it up. This is the essential element that was missed in this otherwise heartening story. Too bad. We should celebrate such unusual acts of kindness as a true welding together of business and faith.

DAVID KROEKER, MISSION, B.C.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Kevin Neufeldt, Haul-All's vice-president of operations, responds: "It was a little more complicated than that. At several points in 1985 we needed a miracle to keep the business, and several times a miracle happened at the 11th hour. The first miracle was that the receiver appointed by the bank had had good experiences with Mennonites in southern Manitoba and he was willing to work with us. Then, when we could not find financing through normal channels, a group of about 20 family and church members put money together for a deposit on the

Neufeldt Industries assets. Then the "angel investor" came to us offering to purchase the equipment from the receivers. Two years later, we were able to pay him back and he helped us purchase our building back from the bank.")

✉ Church provides resource for ministering to gays

RE: "NO EXCLUSION to love," Aug. 1, page 11.

Rachel Bergen's article highlights the grief and pain that some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) individuals have experienced in the church.

Several years ago, the area church ministers brought this to the attention of Mennonite Church Canada and together we created "A pastoral care resource for pastors ministering to LGBT individuals and their families" that can be accessed through the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre at mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1602.

I encourage pastors and youth pastors to review the document for their own pastoral care ministry and to use it as a resource in equipping deacons, youth sponsors, mentors and other spiritual caregivers in their congregations.

**KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY,
WINNIPEG, MAN.**

Karen Martens Zimmerly is MC Canada's denominational minister and director of leadership development.

✉ Church needs to speak up about sex and homosexuality

IN THE CHURCHES I have attended, we were taught that God made us in his own image. In the 1970s, the



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catch phrase was, “God don’t make no junk.” If we truly believe these things, then we should be accepting of everyone whatever their race, colour, creed or sexuality.

Sex is an uncomfortable subject because it has been a non-subject in the church and in most homes for so many decades. It is personal, and when I was growing up I got the feeling sex was dirty.

Homosexuality is “against the norm” according to society. This hits too close to home for many people who have thought about it, those who have questioned their own sexuality but who will never acknowledge that fact, and those who have not given it much thought because it is too uncomfortable or is a non-

issue for them.

Who can we trust to talk about these things? In years past, it was not spoken about, and many went with society’s norms to avoid being shunned by the very people they loved and cared about.

We are all the Creator’s people, conceived out of love—for the most part—in a mother’s womb. We have been put on this earth to do a task and to enrich each other’s lives. We all deserve to be loved and nurtured, not left to die on the side of the road because we are different.

We need to accept and love each other for where we are at, and to not be afraid. We need to teach our children that this is part of life and it is okay to be

FROM OUR LEADERS

What shapes us?

DAN GRABER

A popular Mennonite plaque that has hung in many homes states: “True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant; it clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters the destitute; it serves those who harm it; it binds up that which is wounded; it becomes all things to all men.”

But the gospel I grew up with is a little more multifaceted. My parents, Glen and June Graber, were with Mennonite Central Committee in China and then Taiwan after World War II. After a while they became part of the General Conference Mission Board, and then around 1965 they joined Christian Children’s Fund.

My parents helped plant and then pastored several Mennonite churches. They were involved in relief work after typhoons and earthquakes. They developed three orphanages and a school for the blind. They were involved in a variety of other tasks, including working with seminary students, helping lepers, getting corrective surgery for children with cleft palates, and developing a system to support widows and their children in their homes.

I share all this because my parents

never separated their evangelism from their social and justice work, or vice versa. They were salaried by different kinds of organizations, but regardless of where they received their support from, they saw their work as a whole.

I remember Mom sharing why she insisted it was important to hold, cuddle and talk to every orphaned baby every day; it was not just because it was important for the children’s development, but because they needed to experience Jesus’ love from the moment they were dropped off at the orphanage gate. I remember Dad constantly preparing sermons and devotionals for congregations and those working in the social



Evangelism gave opportunity to help people with their physical and social needs.

organizations. Our dining room was a place where many people came to talk about how to share Jesus’ love verbally and physically. Sometimes justice issues were discussed.

So it was a shock to enter into the Mennonite world in North America and find fierce debates over who were more

faithful: the evangelists or the social justice people. Is peace social justice or acceptance of salvation by Jesus Christ? My parents didn’t make a distinction between the two in their work. Relief and social work gave opportunity to present Jesus verbally. Evangelism gave opportunity to help people with their physical and social needs. It was all about encouraging people to find peace in the full sense of shalom.

It was years later that I discovered that the famous version of Menno Simons’ quote has left out over half of the lines. Two of them stand out: “[Evangelical faith] seeks that which is lost,” and, “It teaches, admonishes and reproves with the Word of the Lord.”

I think it’s important for congregations not to forget the rest of Menno’s quote as well as his own behaviour. Let’s not forget that the central feature of the Mennonite

church from 1900-60 was missions. I look forward to encouraging congregations to verbally share why we love Jesus, to help people with their various needs, and to explore what shapes us.

Dan Graber is the new area church minister for Mennonite Church Alberta.

different, that they will be loved regardless.

It makes my heart ache that we cannot get past this. Beyond the skin covering, we all look the same. This is my prayer for not only the church, but the world, as this affects everyone.

MIM HARDER, UXBRIDGE, ONT.

✉ Homosexuality issue pushing the church's buttons

I ENJOY READING the Viewpoints section of *Canadian Mennonite* because it reflects so many different opinions from across this country.

The topic of sexual orientation is a hot-button issue for the church because it asks us for permission to expand our definition of inclusion and our

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Don't fear the fight

PHIL WAGLER

Once endured the excruciatingly dreary annual meeting of a non-profit organization. The endless evening reaffirmed my conviction that there is a hell.

When the floor opened for questions, the gentlemen next to me stood and raised the insignificant matter of the meeting's location. "That's the least of this meeting's concerns," I thought. This pressing issue off his chest, the man sat down satisfied, leaned over and whispered, "I don't really care where they have the meeting, I just wanted to see if there was a pulse in the room."

Conflict is not necessarily bad and it is unavoidable. In fact, it is sometimes the best thing that can happen to a family, organization or church. It strengthens resolve, rattles the rust, galvanizes conviction and clears the air.

But most churches are very uncomfortable with conflict. Our desire for peace—or maybe it's really comfort—trumps all, including the waging of necessary battles. But when you're not waging necessary battles, it probably means you've stopped doing anything of ultimate importance.

In Mennonite fellowships, this is perhaps the result of an unbiblical reading of what it means to reject the use of the sword. Has pacifism led to our pacification? Has it led to an inability to differentiate between the sinful, fleshly use of the

sword that Jesus turns us from, and the proper place of healthy conflict for the sake of Christ-centred unity, faithfulness to God's truth and commitment to God's mission?

This reality leaps off the pages of the Book of Acts. The early church is in conflict with political and religious powers everywhere she is led by the Holy Spirit. This conflict is not against flesh and blood, and in this battle zone the church rightly practises Christ-centred non-resistance. Trusting God while living the resurrected life together, they endure suffering to proclaim God's good news and obey God rather than human authority. If our churches are not feeling



If our churches are not feeling spiritual conflict, perhaps we're missing the mark?

spiritual conflict, perhaps we're missing the mark?

Conflict in Acts, however, is also an internal reality. Ananias and Sapphira were fearfully confronted, and the result was not an "aw shucks" shoulder shrug, but a situation that still strikes wonder all these centuries later. The integrity of the church and her practice could not be air-brushed.

In Acts 6, there is conflict over the care of the socially vulnerable. The result is clarified purpose, mission and the raising

up of new Spirit-filled leadership.

Theological conflict needing head-on engagement emerges in Acts 15. The content of the gospel, and the nature of grace and salvation, were at stake. They navigated the cultural, scriptural and experiential maze to discern vital truth, knowing that drawing a line in the sand would mean future conflict.

Healthy conflict will result in right decisions not everyone likes. Good decisions made in the heat of conflict will not eliminate future variance, but simply open up a different front in the battle. The question is: Are we fighting the right battles?

And then there is that strange endnote to Acts 15, where Paul and Barnabas, seemingly joined at the hip, disagree and part ways. The issue is the inclusion of John Mark, who had failed miserably as a team member. The conflict leads not

to disunity, but disagreement—there is a huge difference—and the mission of God benefits in the long run.

Even intending good produces conflict, which is often what happens in our churches. We would do well to not fear the fight. It'll show we have a pulse that beats with heaven.

Phil Wagler is the author of Kingdom Culture and continues to learn the value of healthy conflict. Duke it out with him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

understanding of intimacy within a relationship of same-sex couples.

I won't pretend that I understand homosexuality, because I don't, but it has challenged me to make a stand on what is right for me. If you read the story of Lot and the night before the destruction of Sodom,

you will read that there are consequences for all sin, which included same-sex relations.

This causes me to ask myself what I would do if someone very close to me was to announce he/she was gay. This question has been tough because it hasn't happened yet, but I ask myself if I could still love that

NEW ORDER VOICE

Don't judge a church by its sanctuary

AIDEN ENNS

Someone I know goes to church on Sunday mornings in a movie theatre. The group worships in a "cheap seats" cinema on the outskirts of our city, nestled in a suburban cluster of big-box stores and strip malls.

"Look, there's church!" exclaims his four-year-old daughter on mid-week trips in the area. She fails to recognize the building as anything other than the Lord's house, even though it says Cinema City on the outside.

Of course, I'm all aghast. I immediately have judgmental thoughts and, by reflex, assume a position of superiority. After all, I'm a good Mennonite who enjoys the notion of belonging to a faith group that is somehow separate from—and therefore more righteous than—the evildoers of the world and their dens of iniquity.

We turn to Scripture and exploit Apostle Paul's words to the church in Rome, "*Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world,*" to support our half-hearted and mealy-mouthed claim to be in the world but not of it.

There's something refreshing about the cinema church. At least it's not pretending to be anything other than a theatre-style sanctuary. Most of the Mennonite churches I know have separate buildings where they gather as audiences to watch weekly shows up front on stage, often augmented with movie-style

audio-visual presentations.

In my mind, that's just as aghast-able as the Cinema City church, maybe even more so. At least the church that meets in the theatre isn't pretending it is not engulfed by popular culture and aspirations of the North American lifestyle.

But I doubt that Christians can redeem a commercial facility simply by holding their services there. I've seen churches meeting in strip malls, derelict gas stations and a reclaimed basketball stadium. Are these places suddenly houses of God because people sing hymns and offer prayers there? I don't really know.

I watch for other signs of the presence of the divine:

- Where is the stranger and the outcast welcomed?
- Where are the people who were formerly in need and now receiving care from a



It's easy to judge Christians by the buildings in which they've chosen to worship.

community?

- Where are warm beds available and vegetables grown for eating?

At First United Church in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, more than 100 people are allowed to sleep on its pews on cold winter nights. Columbus Mennonite Church in Ohio dug out

asphalt from its parking lot and planted a garden with flowers and shrubs. Wood Heights Baptist Church in Toronto, Ont., converted flower beds into vegetable gardens and use the fresh produce for community meals and distribution at the food bank.

It's easy to judge Christians by the buildings in which they've chosen to worship. I know I'm prone to drawing quick—and often ungracious—conclusions about people based on where they live or the size of their sanctuary. It's harder, but better, to investigate further and look for signs of hospitality and generosity.

A church in Seattle, Wash., bought an old movie theatre. To offer a service to others, it built storage bins with padlocks for people without homes. "One of the stigmas of homelessness is that you carry all your possessions on your back," said Jonathan Neufeld, pastor of Seattle Mennonite Church, in an article in *Geez* magazine, from where most of these examples are taken.

The social climate in the suburbs and cities can be hostile to low-income folks and others in need. Churches in these neighbourhoods may not be what they appear on the outside. Behind their doors

there may be agents of love and hope busily offering help and organizing for change.

Aiden Enns is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., and the editor of Geez magazine. He can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.

person and hate the act while still holding on to my beliefs.

I do not envy our church and its leadership that is facing this question with its membership and trying to understand its role in this matter. May the power of God and the love he gives us through his Son guide us in our journey.

ROB MARTIN, ELMIRA, ONT.

✉ **Osama bin Laden was no 'follower of Jesus'**

RE: "U.S. MILITARY killed 'a child of God' when they shot bin Laden" letter, Aug. 1, page. 16.

At times it is embarrassing to be called a Mennonite.

It is cause to celebrate when the likes of Clifford Olsen, Ted Bundy or Osama bin Laden are apprehended. The communities of B.C., the colleges of the U.S., and, indeed, any place in the world is safer without these three stalking for their next victim.

Talk about taking a verse out of context. The complete verse of John 3:16 is: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (NIV version). I believe that if bin Laden had been a follower

of Christ he would not have murdered the many thousands of people he did. In John 8:44, Jesus says: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him."

I believe that God loved the many firefighters who gave their lives on 9/11 to try and save others. In John 15:13, Jesus says: "Greater love has no man than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." Those firefighters laid down their lives for complete strangers.

Hopefully, *Canadian Mennonite* is never read by the families of bin Laden's victims.


G.A. (FRED) REMPEL, ELM CREEK, MAN.

✉ **Assembly coverage excluded our children**

RE: MENNONITE CHURCH Canada assembly issue, Aug. 1.

Our family participated in the MC Canada assembly in July. My husband was a delegate, I volunteered and our two daughters attended the children's assembly. We all had a great experience.

When the Aug. 1 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*



Anti-Modern Pathways:

'Horse and Buggy' Mennonites in Canada, Belize and Latin America

An academic and community conference that seeks to understand the ways, perspectives and faith of the Old Colony Mennonites

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Thank & Welcome

Larry César



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Rockway Mennonite Church
32 Weber Street West
Kitchener, Ontario

Please RSVP by October 15, 2011
Phone: (519) 571-0060 or Email SarahCain@mwc-cmm.org



arrived in our mailbox, our seven-year-old noticed that the issue was focused on the assembly, with “full coverage inside.” She quickly scoured the pages for photos and headlines.

A few minutes later, she said, “Mom, I can’t find anything about the kids’ assembly in here. Can you?” I looked through, and my heart sank. She was right;

there was not a word.

Many pages of that issue focused on inclusion in the church, so I wonder why kids were excluded from this coverage. Even the Young Voices section only focused on youth and young adults.

Children have profound and inspiring visions of a new world that can speak to the church today. I want my seven-year-old daughter—who loved the assembly and was quite interested in reading that issue of *Canadian Mennonite*—to know that she is welcome, included and important to the church right now.

REBECCA SEILING, WATERLOO, ONT.

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/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Dyck—Adrian Gafic (b. July 28, 2011), to Sashira Gafic and Joel Dyck, First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Jantzi—Grace Vera (b. Aug. 21, 2011), to Ryan and Brittany Jantzi, Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

Reimer-Schmidt—Bastian Michael (b. June 25, 2011), to Christina Reimer and Michael Schmidt, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Rodine—Freya Sophia (b. July 25, 2011), to Erika Enns Rodine and Joshua Rodine, First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Baptisms

Emma Reesor—Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 28, 2011.

Marriages

Armstrong/Neumann—Ashley Armstrong and Kurt Neumann, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., June 11, 2011.

Bergen/Kerber—Mark Bergen and Julie Kerber, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Aug. 13, 2011.

Bousquet/Bueckert—Donna Bousquet and Evan Bueckert, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Aug. 20, 2011.

Friesen/Lehr—Tami-Lynn Friesen (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Steven Lehr, in Drake, Sask., Aug. 27, 2011.

Goertzen/Teichroeb—Daniel James Goertzen and Erin Naomi Teichroeb, at Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Aug. 27, 2011.

Goerzen/Martin—James Goerzen (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) and Lindsay Martin, at Niagara United Mennonite, Aug. 20, 2011.

Gray/Leis—Nicole (Nikki) Gray and Scott Leis, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Aug. 27, 2011.

MacDonald/Piper—Lucas MacDonald and Elizabeth Piper (Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.), at Avon Mennonite, Aug. 27, 2011.

Deaths

Dirks—Beth (nee Budzak), 86 (b. March 18, 1925; d. Aug. 20, 2011), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Epp—Menno, 79 (b. April 11, 1932; d. Aug. 2, 2011), Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Friesen—Margaret (nee Hamm), 97 (b. May 21, 1914; Aug. 12, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Guenther—John A., 82 (b. June 3, 1929; d. Aug. 16, 2011), First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask.

Jahnke—Jaron Tyler, 28 (b. Oct. 18, 1982; d. July 29, 2011), Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Jantzi—Ira, 82 (b. April 22, 1929; d. Aug. 23, 2011), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Neufeld—Benjamin, 83 (b. Aug. 11, 1928; d. Aug. 27, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Ramlochan—Russell, 48 (b. Feb. 10, 1963; d. Aug. 24, 2011), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

Redekop—Helen (nee Janzen), 87 (b. Nov. 1, 1923; d. Aug. 8, 2011), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Rourke—Laura, 50 (d. May 21, 2011), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Regehr—Henry, 71 (d. Aug. 21, 2011), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Scheidel—George, 89 (d. Aug. 16, 2011), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

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

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

Pontius' Puddle



WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

A place to belong

BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN

A place to belong: These few little words became especially important to me as I reflect not only on the upcoming 60th anniversary of Mennonite Women Canada in 2012, but also on a recent experience that helped me to see that such a “belonging place” had been missing in my own life since we moved and changed churches a few years ago.

Due to a friend’s serious illness, a group of women from my “new” home church decided to make a quilt



Mennonite
Women
Canada

one another. . . . Spending time together would allow us to understand, support and hold one another accountable, as well as to share our faith story with those who know us and then with others.”

The other echoed similar thoughts, noting that “this mutual task of quilting helped us converse in a meaningful but casual way, just as our mothers and grandmothers might have done.” She also wondered whether anyone would have felt “connected enough” to go and watch her first-ever skydive the next morning if the quilting evening hadn’t happened?

Probably not. But we now have these shared but vastly different experiences of quilting, parachuting, and sharing our needs and thoughts through e-mail conversations, as a foundation for newfound friendships, and perhaps even the formation of a new faith-based place to



for her. As we sat around that quilt frame—something new to me—for two evenings, I realized that it was “the fellowship of a ladies circle” that I had been missing, a place where laughter and a cup of coffee are as important as sharing our good, difficult and exciting times. For one of us this included jumping out of a perfectly fine airplane! It was a time to discover friendships, new and old, while trying to provide some touchable form of comfort for a friend.

Wasn’t this the reason our mothers and grandmothers met in their ladies clubs/circles, or yes, *Frauenverein*, to quilt, sew, cook or bake, providing items for those in need, whether they be next door or far away in a country they might never see?

Realizing what was missing in my own life was one thing, but discovering through two e-mail conversations shortly afterwards that I had not been the only one who had been touched by these evenings, became an unexpected blessing!

Both e-mails expressed a similar yearning for long-ago connections around a quilting frame as well as concern about the widespread loss of connection between today’s women.

“It is a discouraging fact,” wrote one, “that we, as a group of women, can all attend the same church for years, or not so many years, and still know so little about

belong. This new place may be similar—but different—from ladies groups/circles of the past, but they may better meet the needs of women in our churches today.

That’s something I’ve thought about for some time because I believe that today’s women are still looking for what our mothers and grandmothers looked for: fellowship, the opportunity to share our faith and God-given gifts, and to help spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

And I’m convinced that given time and patience, a renewed format, regardless of what activities it may pursue—whether quilting or parachuting, or something else entirely—will reflect what Mennonite Women Canada is hoping to portray in our current purpose statement which encourages us, like our mothers and grandmothers before us, to:

- **NURTURE OUR LIFE IN CHRIST.**
- **ACKNOWLEDGE AND SHARE OUR GIFTS.**
- **HEAR AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER.**
- **SERVE AND MINISTER ACROSS THE STREET AND AROUND THE WORLD. ☸**



Waltrude Gortzen is the MC B.C. Women’s Ministry representative and a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Bolivian Mennonite rape trial ends in convictions

Sentences range from 12-and-a-half to 25 years

By ROSS W. MUIR
Managing Editor

Eight members of the Manitoba and Riva Palacios Mennonite colonies accused of raping more than a hundred women and girls were found guilty on Aug. 25 after a two-month trial. A ninth, Jacob Neudorf Enns, escaped from the Palmasola Prison in Santa Cruz some time ago and remains a fugitive.

Seven of the accused were sentenced to 25 years after being convicted of aggravated rape; the maximum allowable under Bolivian law for this crime is 30 years. Peter Wiebe Wall, a veterinarian, was sentenced to 12-and-a-half years for his role in supplying materials to make a sedative spray normally used to anesthetize cattle, that was used to render entire families unconscious and allow the perpetrators to rape the women and girls, ranging in age from eight to 60. All eight accused, who range in age from 20 to 48, pleaded not guilty.

As many as 130 women and girls claim they were raped, but because of the sedative used, finding eye witnesses and hard evidence of the crimes—believed to have taken place from 2005-09—was difficult to come by.

This has led some to question if justice was, in fact, served.

Jake Heppner of Steinbach, Man, spent eight weeks in Bolivia investigating colony life in late 2009 and early 2010. In a February 2010 report of his trip, he wrote, “Everyone is aware the Bolivian court system is plagued by endemic corruption that is fuelled by bribe money. Since the colony has much more economic clout than those accused, the chance of an unfair conviction . . . is quite possible.” Heppner reported that, according to Bolivian law, prisoners are not supposed to remain in custody longer than six months without

a trial. “Many believe that [alleged bribes by colony leaders totalling more than \$100,000 US] is what is keeping them in jail,” he wrote, adding, “I tend to agree.”

Canadian Carl Zacharias, who produces the weekly Low German radio program, *Zacharias Fetalt* (Zacharias Speaks), and David Janzen, a staff member of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference in Bolivia, have their doubts.

“[One defendant] told me several times that he is simply not guilty of the crime and that some day when we will be standing on the throne of judgment everyone will

Seven of the accused were sentenced to 25 years after being convicted of aggravated rape; the maximum allowable under Bolivian law for this crime is 30 years.

ses that he was innocent,” Zacharias told *Mennonite Weekly Review*, claiming that two men from Manitoba Colony told him that the rapes have continued following the arrests in 2009. In the same article, Janzen said, “Some have admitted to many things they have done in the past, but insist to this day they have not done the things they are charged with today.”

In an Aug. 17 *Time Magazine* article, defence attorney Luis Loza said his clients’ confessions to colony leaders were made “only under threat of lynching.” In the article, a husband and father of two of the victims said the accused “will be lynched” if they are acquitted and returned to the colony.

In fact, as reported in the Oct. 19, 2009, issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, Franz Wieler Kloss died a few days after being hung from a pole by his arms for nine hours by colony members who suspected him of having taken part in the mass rapes.

What of the victims?

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Bolivia has sought to help the colonists improve their lives, but colony leaders have rebuffed some attempts. Heppner’s 2010 report mentioned a conversation he had with a Manitoba Colony leader about getting help for the rape victims; the bishop told him that help was not required since they were unconscious during the attacks.

John Janzen, MCC Canada’s Low German coordinator, confirmed the reluctance of the colony leaders to accept assistance. “MCC has longstanding experience in supporting both victims and perpetrators of crimes,” he said. “MCC has offered to develop these programs in Low German communities in Bolivia, but until now the Mennonite churches in communities in Bolivia have declined this type of assistance.”

Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, who reported on the trial for the Christian Science Monitor News Service, stated that “the crime, the way the community has responded to it, and the trial itself point to

much deeper problems for women in such reclusive sects.” She quoted Abe Warkentin, founding editor of *Die Mennonitische Post*, as saying, “Women are not seen as equal to men in these colonies, and this will continue to lead to ever more social problems.”

This is not good news for women like Susana Banman, one of the victims who spoke to Friedman-Rudovsky. “Even still, I can’t sleep through the night,” she told the reporter, pleading with her, “I’d like to speak to someone [about the experience].” According to Friedman-Rudovsky, none of the victims have had the opportunity to speak to a psychologist.

“We will be at peace when there is a guilty verdict,” Abraham Wall Enns, the Manitoba Colony’s head civic leader in 2009, told Friedman-Rudovsky. For the colonies’ men, maybe; the women, perhaps not so much. ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS FROM BURKINA FASO



Norm Nicolson, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Burkina Faso, at work in his sound studio.

What do I hear?

BY LILLIAN NICOLSON
Mennonite Church Canada
TIN, BURKINA FASO

Norm sat down in the kitchen and turned on his computer. “Do you want to hear what I recorded today?” he asked.

“Sure,” I said as I cleared the supper dishes off the table. He had started recording the story of Adam and Eve in the Siamou language that day.

Solo’s voice spoke out of the computer: “*Díry.. ‘brè funkp. ‘`gbâr ye, J.n.s. ri j.n.kpár nì .áan bré*” (In the creation of the world beginning time, God the sky and earth created).

Zacob, a young boy from the courtyard sitting next to Norm, turned quickly to the computer with big eyes. Then the door opened and Seybou and Amidou, who had been studying on the porch, slid into the house and parked themselves in front of the computer to listen. Soon all of the five children who had been studying on the porch gathered around Norm,

avidly listening to the story of creation told in Siamou. They sat silently, soaking in every word, something I have never seen them do before.

A week later, Norm played the completed recording to the elders of our courtyard. They also sat for the entire 20 minutes, heads down in concentration, not moving a muscle except for an occasional tongue click signalling understanding.

When the story was over, I explained that five stories—Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph—were ready to be printed.

One elder said, “I can’t read. Those books are useless to me. You need to record all those stories so I can listen to them on cassette tape.”

And so the rest of Norm’s work began.

Moussa, from the translation committee, and Solo sat in the studio as Norm set up the recording equipment. Solo adjusted the microphone and Moussa practised reading the story they were about to record. When Norm was ready to start, he gave a hand signal and Moussa read a phrase while Solo listened. Solo then

repeated the phrase into the microphone. After several verses they stopped and listened to what they had recorded, to check for hesitations or errors. When Norm finished editing, they returned to their reading-repeating-recording.

This process seems more complicated and time-consuming than simply recording one person reading the story. It requires training in team work and an understanding of how editing works with computers. It requires communication between all members of the recording team. But the final product, as Solo noted excitedly on the phone to our fellow mission worker, Paul Thiessen, is well worth it.

“The recording is crystal clear! There is no background noise and my voice is easy to understand! And it sounds like I am talking naturally! Like I am telling a real story and not slow like when I am reading!” ❧

Norm and Lillian Nicolson are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Burkina Faso, West Africa.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS FROM BURKINA FASO

You can't take peace for granted

BY ANNE GARBER KOMPAORE
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

Recently, I went next door to the Internet café to send off some rather heavy e-mails.

As I was working, I heard a rising rabble of voices out on the boulevard. At one point the shouting reached a crescendo, making me wonder whether violence was going to follow. What was happening? I decided it was time to get out of there!

As I stepped out the door I paused for a few minutes to observe the situation and pray for a calming spirit. And, to my surprise, the quarrel started calming down. I asked the more discrete bystanders what was going on. They explained that two motorcyclists had run into each other. They must not be very injured, I surmised, to have the energy to carry on such an argument!

Afterwards, I reflected on my own reactions to the incident and contrasted them with my idealistic desire to contribute to peacemaking. I have to admit my first reflex was not to step into the fray, but just to get as far away as possible from potential violence. In North America, probably the first reflex would

be to call the police. But what would you have done if you had been in my situation?

In Burkina Faso, we hope the military mutiny is over. Several hundred soldiers lost their jobs and some are in prison, I am told, and, unfortunately, some lost their lives. Some civilians also lost their lives from stray bullets, some women were raped, businesses lost millions of dollars, and the tourists are staying away. Once the military was finished its rampage and the demands of students and teachers were satisfied, workers of other institutions decided it was their turn to demand their rights, meaning that at different times we were not able to make phone calls, buy bread, or even pay our taxes!

I thought our crises were mainly limited to cities. Was I wrong! I went to visit Mennonite Brethren colleagues in the small town of N'dorola, and upon arrival I saw some men in military uniform lounging under a tree with their guns propped up beside them. It turns out that some farmers who decided to boycott

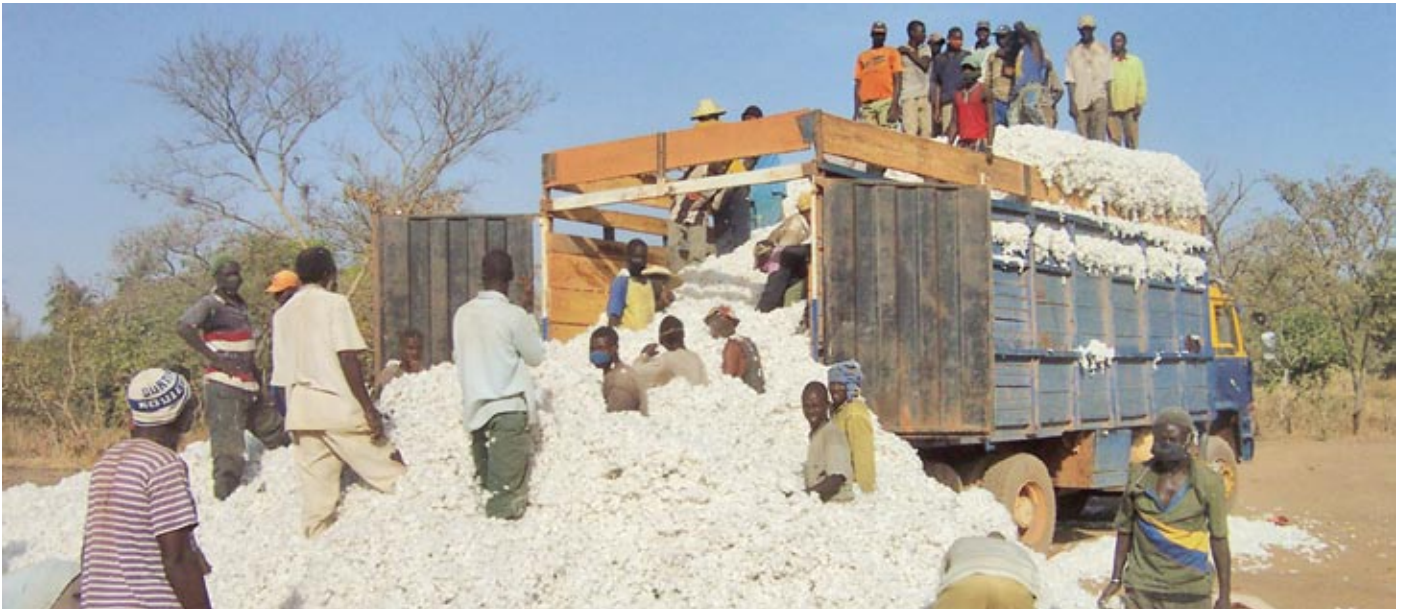
cotton growing this year were destroying the fields of the non-boycotters, and, in some cases, their livestock, too. This kind of violence has spread to other provinces in Burkina Faso, and the local news reported that more than a thousand hectares of cotton plants had been destroyed along with the death of one person.

Yes, social unrest continues here. But government leaders are waking up to the fact that justice is part of the equation for peace. There are also factors beyond their control: prices keep going up, but salaries and cotton revenues are not keeping pace. At any rate, it is deeply engrained in all of us now that we cannot take peace for granted.

We thank God for each day of peace, and pray for economic stability and well-being for all. ☸

Anne Garber Kompaore has been an international ministry worker in Burkina Faso since 1982. She recently completed her assignment with Mennonite Church Canada, but continues freelance Bible translation and teaching work with the interdenominational mission agency, Commission to Every Nation. She lives in the capital city, Ouagadougou, with her husband Daniel. This article originally appeared in Kompaore's personal newsletter.

FILE PHOTO BY TANY WARKENTIN



In 2007, farm workers load a truck with the cotton harvest in more peaceable times.

'Just Peace' congress launches chair of peace theology and ethics

BY DIRK VISSER

Algemene Doopsgezinde Societëit
AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

The academic Congress on Just Peace, held over two days in late June at the Free University of Amsterdam, marked the official launch of the university's new chair of peace theology and ethics.

The chair, funded by the Algemene Doopsgezinde Societëit (Dutch Mennonite Conference), will be occupied by Fernando Enns, a Mennonite theologian who, in recent years, has led a number of peace initiatives, most notably the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence, which came to an end earlier this year. (See "Speaking together with one voice," June 13, page 14.)

During the festive inauguration ceremony, Enns presented the same lecture he used to close the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation a month earlier in Jamaica, laying out a wide range of contexts for peacemaking: peace within communities, peace among peoples, peace in economic relations, and peace with the environment. The biblical understanding of peace—shalom—and saving and

transformative justice allow no subordination of peace and justice, but include them as one, he said.

To respond to the current challenges from this perspective, Enns went on to explain how Christology, pneumatology (the branch of Christian theology concerned with the Holy Spirit), and ecclesiology need to be revisited within the ecumenical church from a distinct Mennonite perspective, and in dialogue with people of other faiths.

At the Amsterdam congress, which also celebrated the 275th anniversary of the Doopsgezind Seminarium, the main focus was on three themes that were also prominent in Jamaica as follow-up issues for peace work:

- **THE ROLE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCHES;**
- **THE INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT OF PEACE WITH JUSTICE;** and
- **THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTEXT.**

The first keynote speaker was Jürgen Moltmann, a prominent German

theologian, whose theme was "A culture of life in the midst of deadly threats of our times." He spoke of the "terror of the universal death," referring to a fascist general in the Spanish Civil War who shouted, "Viva la Muerte."

Similar messages can be found in letters of Taliban-suicide bombers, he said. Over against this "religion of the dead," Moltmann proposed a culture of life, saying deterrence can't guarantee peace, but justice will save the peace among the nations. Solidarity and community are the alternatives to poverty, he concluded.

The congress included lively debate.

"Can religions be instruments of reconciliation?" Dutch theologian Eddy van der Borcht asked. Since religious traditions often take sides in conflicts because of their identification with ethnic groups, national identities are a threat for the unity of the churches, he said, noting, "Ultimately it is easier to speak about peace than about unity."

Mient Jan Faber, the former secretary general of the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council, claimed that justice for everybody isn't possible. "Don't think that churches are able to reconcile conflicting groups," he said. "Reconciliation is only possible in the generation after a severe conflict."

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a South African professor of psychology, challenged that assumption. As a member of the former Truth and Reconciliation Commission in that country, she said, "I don't believe in crimes which cannot be forgiven. We should not dehumanize the perpetrators, but humanize the offenders. In that case, the impossible is possible."

"Just peace is a broad and a complex problem," said Alle Hoekema, president of the Seminarium's Jubilee Committee, said. "We Mennonites shouldn't think that we have the answer to all the problems. But

PHOTO BY DERK STENVERS



German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, left, and Fernando Enns, the Free University of Amsterdam's new chair of peace theology and ethics, both spoke at the university's academic Congress on Just Peace, held in late June.

with this new chair, paid for by the Dutch Mennonites, we let it [be] known that we have the courage, in an ecumenical setting, to ask questions which are important for us. The answer will hopefully be formulated ecumenically.”

The article was released by Mennonite World Conference.

/// Briefly Noted

CwM leaders adapt well to seasonal uncertainties

The start of the annual camping season is always a nervous time at the Mennonite Church Manitoba offices, wondering if there will be enough qualified volunteers to staff the summer program. This year was especially uncertain, with the flooding that assailed Camp Assiniboia throughout the spring, requiring that certain programs be cancelled or modified. “I am incredibly grateful for the leadership and amazing inventiveness of the young leaders that have come out of our churches,” says Ken Warkentin, MC Manitoba executive director, adding, “With a little ingenuity and a few dollars, they were able to do incredible things.” Under Aaron Nussbaum’s leadership as director of Camping Ministries, the camp leaders developed a new ropes course and created a mobile cave for spelunking to replace some of the activities cancelled because of water issues. “They were able to take these ideas, incorporate them and make meaningful spiritual connections,” Warkentin says. In each of the three Camps with Meaning facilities, Warkentin was impressed with the quality, creativeness and commitment of the leadership. “The way the young adults interacted with all those in their care throughout the summer—providing spiritual guidance, leadership and care—has been an incredible gift.”

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2011 TOURS

ISRAEL/PALESTINE
with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (December 7-11)

2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY
and FRUITS (January 20-29)
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR STEVE LANDIS (April 25-May 4)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)
GLORY of RUSSIA:
MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (August 23-September 3)
TOUR OF LITHUANIA (in partnership with Lithuania Christian College
International University) (September 12-19)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)

MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (October 12-24)
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE
with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL
(November 12-21)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

2013 TOURS

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MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Financial crisis looms

Spiritual care program at Mennonite Personal Care Homes in need of funds

STORY AND PHOTO
BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

What makes a Mennonite personal care home Mennonite? This question is central to the critical financial situation that the Bethania Group faces in its two personal care homes.

Bethania Personal Care Home in north Winnipeg provides services to 147 residents. Pembina Place, housed on the second and third floors of a six-storey Manitoba Housing complex in south Winnipeg, provides care to 57 older adults. Both of these facilities fall under the auspices of the Bethania Group, which describes itself as “a Mennonite organization that demonstrates Christian love by compassionately offering a continuum of wellness, housing and personal care services for older adults.”

Although an inter-Mennonite board oversees these two facilities, “99.9 percent of our budget is provided by Manitoba Health and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority,” says Ray Koop, CEO of Bethania Group. “Years ago, our residents would have been predominantly Mennonite. Now less than a third of our residents are Mennonite. We are still highly desired by the Mennonite community, but we are limited primarily to the external system that determines who is admitted.”

This system of funding “has a negative impact on how we can hold ourselves to be a Mennonite facility if the only measure is the ability to give preferential treatment to Mennonites,” Koop says. “I do believe being a Mennonite facility is more than admitting only Mennonites. As an organization, we want to support our community, but there is a multitude of ways we can do that.”



Ray Koop, CEO for Bethania Group, and Ferdinand Funk, chaplain at Bethania Personal Care Home, stand in front of the Bethania facility.

The most significant way that Koop feels the Mennonite identity can be retained is through the spiritual care programs at the two facilities. Ferdinand Funk, chaplain at Bethania, and Melita Rempel-Burkholder, chaplain at Pembina Place, oversee the spiritual care of their residents. “This is one of the ways we can support and advance our Anabaptist faith and understanding,” says Koop, noting that, although providing spiritual care is part of the mandate that Manitoba Health has placed on personal care homes, the province provides no public money for this program.

The presence of a spiritual care program makes a difference in the Mennonite homes, in Funk’s view. “We provide care in a much more holistic way than you might expect in a non-spiritual based community,” he says. “Basically, it is living out the way we understand our Christian faith—with compassion, love, respect, doing unto others as you would expect them to do to you, and meeting people where they are on their spiritual path.”

As Mennonite chaplains, Funk and Rempel-Burkholder meet the spiritual care needs of people of many different faiths. “We understand that meeting the needs of people where they are on their faith journey is the priority,” says Funk. When people enter a personal care home, they often come with a deep sense of loss. Helping them come to a sense of peace about their life is one of Funk’s goals. “Everyone has

spiritual needs, whether they are religious or not. This particular environment opens the door to addressing those needs,” he says.

For Bethania and Pembina Place a critical challenge is looming. The spiritual care program is funded entirely through donations. “It has been really difficult for the last number of years,” Koop says. “We haven’t really expanded our program and each year the amount of donations we receive are increasingly insufficient to cover the cost of the program.”

While the Interfaith Health Care Association of Manitoba has been lobbying the government to provide funding for this program, Koop does not see a breakthrough soon. “We’ve been meeting with our local churches to let them know there is a problem, that the amount of donations has declined and is not meeting the cost of the program,” he says. “We are not in a crisis mode today, but probably in three years, if we don’t see any significant shift, we’ll have to do something, whether that’s finding other funding sources or increased government revenue, or looking at reducing program costs.”

The annual spiritual care fundraising dinner on Oct. 24 at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, is one of two annual fundraisers. Individual donors help raise the remainder of the \$100,000 needed for the program, according to Koop. ☛

Chinese symbols illustrate Christian message

Douglas Au practises creative evangelism in China

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Douglas Au has spent the last three years in China doing evangelism. After hearing a presentation by China Soul, a ministry run by Chinese pastors living in the U.S., some of whom had been involved in the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, he felt a call. Although the member of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, Ont., considers himself a Canadian, he believes that the gospel transcends nationalities.

Certified as an English-as-a-second-language teacher, he went to China in 2007 to teach English in training schools and universities. He first went to Guangzhou, a southern Chinese university city, because of his proficiency in Cantonese. He stayed there a few months, worshipping in a government-approved church, but found no work.

An experience with a cult took him near

to Nanjing, where he met a couple from the city who introduced him to a leader of 10 house churches that were connected to China Soul. Au returned to Guangzhou, but after being prompted by a vision he went back to Nanjing.

More than a hundred Chinese students became Christians during Au's time in China.

Upon his arrival, he found work in a university, where he taught business management. Part of the course was on ethics and Au pointed his students to the biblical basis of ethics. Such sharing in class was prohibited and Au knew he could not stay long, even though another vision encouraged him to remain in education.

One day Au's wife Jocelyne bumped into

the pastor of another local house church who invited them to join and help with Bible study, preaching and evangelism. The pastor was doing campus ministry with an "English corner" to help students learn the English language; he was using resources from the local International Church congregation, where only non-Chinese nationals can worship.

The connection between the International Church and "English corners" has meant that non-Chinese teachers can become involved in evangelism without attracting as much attention to themselves. This has been a very successful ministry for Au, who taught students how to accept the spiritual dimension of existence.

Using Chinese characters, he showed how they tell biblical stories. The symbol for "devil" is made up of the characters for motion, secret, garden and man, an apt parallel for the devil in Genesis 3. When a "tempter" is indicated, this symbol for devil is modified by the symbols to "hide" and "two trees," suggesting the trees of life and knowledge in the Garden of Eden, and the fact that the devil confronted Adam and Eve under the Tree of Knowledge.

More than a hundred Chinese students became Christians during Au's time in China. When converts accepted Jesus, they were connected with a house church for pastoral care.

Au plans to return to China later this year to continue to follow his heart's calling. Until now, he has supported himself in his ministry, but now that he wishes to expand it he has been looking for support in North America. His plan is to use the training he received in Accelerated Christian Education to establish an accredited learning centre catering to local Christian families in China, so they can home school their children and help them qualify for an American high school academic diploma.

Says Brian Quan, pastor of the English congregation at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, of Au, "His passion and desire for evangelism [is] his life calling." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOUGLAS AU



Douglas and Jocelyne Au of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church spent three years in China, where Douglas led more than a hundred Chinese students to Christ through his evangelistic efforts at 'English corners.'

Bridging the great divide

MCC Manitoba tries to break down the barriers between urban eaters and rural producers

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba learned firsthand this summer of the great divide that exists between urban eaters and rural producers, as Jeremiah Doerksen completed a two-month summer internship studying the issue.

The purpose of the study was to begin to lay some groundwork for addressing misconceptions and misunderstandings between these groups, and to find ways to build understanding and support for one another.

"MCC has been involved in food and food security issues for a long time, and helped create the Manitoba Food Charter," notes Steve Plenert, the peace program coordinator who directed the study. "The question of food security is central to disaster relief and working towards justice."

Doerksen and Plenert spent the summer talking with both farmers and city dwellers. They learned that people in the city want their food to be easily accessible. They want it to be there when they want it, not necessarily when it is in season. They want it inexpensively, but they want it perfect and unblemished.

Plenert says he was struck by "the passion with which farmers carry out their work. They care deeply about their animals, their land and their work. 'As a farmer, I am only as good as my soil,' was a recurring refrain."

They found that the commitment to honour and care for the land ran deep in the farmers they met. The practice of crop rotation and trying to minimize chemical use are among their practices, but often farmers run into barriers with their urban cousins.

"Farmers encounter criticism from city people when they find out they aren't practising no-till, for example," says Doerksen, noting, though, that "[urbanites] don't

understand that the practice doesn't work well in some Manitoba soils, or they don't understand the limitations of a short growing season."

Even in rural towns they heard the desires of people for cheap food and good access to it, as well as complaints about the inconveniences of odours from farming operations and smoke from burning stubble.

"I found more passion and less cynicism than I expected from the farmers," says Plenert. "They see their work as being essential to the world and they take it very seriously."

Farming has become an extremely demanding and complicated business that demands a greater knowledge base and diversity of skills than ever before. The vagaries of weather and the market, rising costs of equipment and land, and volatile prices all combine to create a situation where farmers have to be prudent, astute and flexible.

"Farmers feel more isolated from their communities and churches than they once did," says Plenert. "They prefer not to raise farming issues in the context of their congregations. Even though lots of farming images are used in churches, it is not the guiding ethos." Instead, farmers feel antagonism and blame for water pollution from the run-off of phosphorous and nitrogen from their fields, or for air pollution from burning stubble.

"We are hoping to open the lines of communication between the two groups, to provide more education around these issues," says Doerksen, noting that MCC Manitoba, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Canadian Mennonite University and A Rocha, a Christian environmental organization, are planning to host "Germinating conversations: Farming, food, faith and the land" in Winkler, Man., in November.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMIAH DOERKSEN



Jeremiah Doerksen completed a two-month summer internship with Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, learning of the great divide that exists between urban eaters and rural producers. He is pictured in a cornfield outside Altona, Man.

A special effort will be made to invite urban churches to this event. Plenert and Doerksen also hope to invite farmers to a conversation in the city before seeding time next spring.

"The range of issues is large, and all we can do is become more informed and walk towards the issue, rather than be complacent," Doerksen concludes. ▮



Mitchell Braun of Abbotsford, B.C., performs water tests while on a volunteer assignment in Haiti with Engineering Ministries International Canada.

Helping design a world of hope in Haiti

Story and Photo by Engineering Ministries International

Mitchell Braun from Abbotsford, B.C., a civil engineering graduate from the University of British Columbia, completed a project trip to Grand-Goâve, Haiti, where he was part of a team of architects and engineers from across North America who volunteered their time with the Calgary-based Engineering Ministries International Canada.

The team spent a week in Haiti preparing the design for a children's orphanage, school and church/multi-function conference centre for Haiti Arise Ministries in the earthquake-affected community of

Grand-Goâve.

Braun, a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, assisted in the investigation and design of water supply, wastewater disposal and storm water drainage, including performing water testing, sizing septic tanks, and percolation testing.

At the end of the week, the team was able to present concepts for a master plan and a schematic building design to Haiti Arise, and will provide it with final plans in the coming months. Braun will spend the remainder of his internship in Engineering

/// Briefly noted

Manitobans come together for East Africa aid

Across Manitoba, fundraising and awareness-raising efforts for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's famine relief programs in Eastern Africa are moving people to action. Just over 1,600 hectares of cropland were planted for food relief, according to Harold Penner, Manitoba resource coordinator for the Foodgrains Bank. In Rivers, Esther Krahn and six of her grandchildren planted corn in the spring to sell at the local market. The children added baking to their corn sale and raised over \$600; they also received nearly \$2200 in additional donations for the Foodgrains Bank. On Oct. 15, the Canzona Choir, under the direction of Henry Engbrecht, will present a fundraising concert for the Foodgrains Bank at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, with Catherine Daniels as featured soloist. On Oct. 16, the concert will be presented at Winkler Berghaler Mennonite Church with the Central Region Youth Choir joining in. Called "A Musical Grow Project," committee chair Pearl Braun says, "We hope to see this become an annual event just like the farming grow projects."

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Ministries International's Calgary office working on the Haiti Arise project report, pulling together sections from various volunteers into a coherent whole.

For Braun, the trip was part of a larger experience with Engineering Ministries International. Previously, he travelled to Niger with a project team charged with the design of Phase II of the Serving in Mission (SIM) Galmi Hospital Redevelopment Project.

"In Africa, I spent my time surveying and then doing 3D architectural models," Braun says. "This time, it was all civil [engineering] all the time. I learned so much about exactly what I wanted to learn about, which was awesome." ///

MCC PHOTO BY MICHAEL BADE

Canadian Olympic speed skating gold medalist Cindy Klassen, centre, tries a traditional goat milk beverage and enjoys the friendship of other cyclists and supporters of the Cycle for Life: Build Peace, Stop AIDS tour through Kenya earlier this year.



Canadian Olympian fuels interest in MCC peace clubs in Kenya

BY GLADYS TERICHOW
Mennonite Central Committee

A recent 480-kilometre bicycle tour in Kenya that included one of Canada's most-decorated Olympians has given peace clubs in Kenya a welcome boost. These peace clubs, supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), encourage Kenyan youth from different ethnic groups to build friendships.

The recent surge of interest was fueled by a five-day tour earlier this year that included speed skater Cindy Klassen, who won five medals at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games.

"[P]eace clubs have been started in many different regions following the trip and,

even of late, we have been receiving calls and visitations from different quarters asking that we visit and help them start some," says Waihenya Njoroge, founder and co-ordinator of the Lari Memorial Peace Museum, who notes that about 30 primary and secondary schools plan to start peace clubs this year, bringing the total to about 180 schools.

"That is awesome. That is such good news," says Klassen, who incorporated the cycling tour into her training schedule.

"With speed skating, it's all about things for yourself," Klassen said of her reason for getting involved. "You have to get the right

training and the right nutrition, and you're always thinking about the things that you need. And so to be able to give back like this is so important to me. This is not about me. This is about doing something for the less fortunate in the world."

MCC has supported the peace clubs since 2008. The clubs use computers and social networking to encourage interaction among youth from different ethnic groups. In addition to providing peacebuilding training manuals and other resources, MCC has provided more than 200 computers and assisted schools in setting up computer labs.

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ALBERTA PHOTO

'That is awesome. That is such good news.'
(Cindy Klassen)

The bicycle tour was a joint effort between MCC Kenya, MCC Alberta and the Lari museum. Five Canadians and 14 Kenyans participated. Klassen, the only female cyclist in the group, says children ran alongside the bicycles and were excited to see the gender, geographic and ethnic differences among the riders.

The cyclists rode through a region where 1,300 people died and 640,000 were left homeless because of post-election violence in 2007 and '08. They made frequent stops along the way to talk about peace clubs and the importance of finding ways to overcome the bitterness and anger created by past conflicts and violence between ethnic groups. In many communities, government officials, police departments and other dignitaries helped the cyclists increase awareness of peace clubs and other Lari museum activities.

Klassen says she learned much about the deep-rooted conflicts and violence in Kenya, and was inspired by the commitment of the Kenyan cyclists to pursue peace, healing and reconciliation. "The hope they had for peace was incredible," she says. "They were so hopeful that this cycle tour would make a difference."

She was also touched by the strong support for peace clubs and their work, saying, "We heard people say the future of their country is their children and that peace needs to start with people talking with each other."

The Lari Memorial Peace Museum was started in 2001. The organization's commitment to peacebuilding stems from unhealed wounds and painful memories from a massacre in Lari in 1953. The museum is starting peace clubs in at least one larger primary or secondary school in many of the 42 major tribal communities.

Besides the trip through Kenya, the Cycle for Life: Build Peace, Stop AIDS Tour also included a 12-day, 1,500-kilometre ride through Alberta this summer that raised \$238,000 for MCC-supported peace and HIV programs. 卐



This year's inaugural MCC Alberta Summerfest—formerly relief sale—included a 2.5-metre-high canvas teepee created and donated by inmates involved in MCC's M2 visitation program at Drumheller Penitentiary. The teepee brought in \$750 at the live auction. In total, the event raised more than \$170,000 for MCC's international relief and development efforts.

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GOD AT WORK IN US

Helping through interior design

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.



If you are out running errands in Saskatoon and your travels take you to the bank, a convenience store or your doctor's office, there's a chance you will encounter the work and influence of Nicole Tiessen in the various buildings you pass through.

Tiessen is an interior designer. And she loves her job at Aodbt Architecture + Interior Design in Saskatoon. That comes through clearly in her smile and enthusiasm as she talks excitedly about how she gets to help people by what she does.

Helping those less fortunate through non-profit work and living out her faith

through her job is a natural extension of her walk with God. "I try and live my faith by what I do," says Tiessen, who attends Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. "I live it through my life, through what I do, how I treat people . . . and the work we do with our clients."

"There's a lot to what I do in a day, but it's the ability to help people and to make a difference in buildings, that's why I chose this path," she says. "I have the ability to change a community by designing a school or [as an example] to increase awareness of mental health and addictions in Saskatoon."

One of the challenges she faces is overcoming a false premise in many people's minds that she gets to coordinate colours with curtains. "That's the biggest misconception, that I do residential work and I pick paint colours," she says.

Tiessen patiently explains the difference between interior designer and interior decorator: "Interior design is about building code analysis, construction drawings and space planning." In her job, Tiessen helps to plan the working spaces in commercial buildings that house healthcare, education and corrections organizations, to name just a few.

Tiessen, 30, went to school in Vancouver, B.C., for four years to earn a bachelor of interior design degree. She worked for a year in Vancouver before returning to her roots in Saskatoon.

A typical day will involve meeting with Aodbt clients, but before she and the team can do that they must first win the race for the job. "There's a request for proposals. We submit a document saying what we bring to the project, including our resumes—the work we've done—and our costs," says Tiessen. Interior design is just one part of the overall proposal.

Applicants wait to be short-listed for the project and then the teams undergo an interview with the organization that put out the original proposal. The client then picks the firm it wants.

For each job that Aodbt tenders, she will work as part of a team to hear the needs of the client and design a usable working space based on its needs. She stresses the group approach that the firm uses. "Projects are complex. It's a team effort," she says.

Part of her day might involve going to the construction site, but that usually only happens if there are questions about the design or if someone made a mistake in the design. That being said, however, being onsite also gives her the chance to reconnect with the client and to see someone put flesh and bones to her idea. "It's a really interesting feeling to see something you drew or thought of being built," she says.

One of the unique aspects of design in Saskatchewan, says Tiessen, is that most firms do not specialize in one area. In bigger cities, there's a tendency to pick one area in which to design, for example, the healthcare industry. But because the local economy has been sluggish in the past, Aodbt has been taking on many different kinds of commercial projects. That, in turn, allows designers like Tiessen more chance to gain experience in different areas of design.

At the end of some days Tiessen puts in a few more hours, but these are unpaid. Furthering the reach of her faith, she tries to donate her time and expertise to help non-profit groups. She believes she can also live out her faith beyond her job in how she serves on building committees and by using her design experience to help others.

Examples include helping design a new student lounge at Rosthern Junior College, Sask.; the Friendship Inn, a local drop-in centre that serves meals to the poor; and a housing project called Station20 West that Aodbt staff have helped with where needed.

"It's an opportunity for me to contribute through design," she says of these projects. Tiessen is thankful for a boss who encourages the staff to take advantage of these opportunities to help, and she is thankful for a chance to give back to others. ❧

PHOTO BY MICHELE FRIESEN



Nicole Tiessen sits in the sample room in the design studio of Aodbt Architecture + Interior Design in Saskatoon, Sask.

COVER STORY / PERSONAL REFLECTION



Fly like an eagle

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent

Amy Dueckman overcomes her fear and discovers newfound courage through the thrill of skydiving.

On a gorgeous summer afternoon, I willingly tumbled out of an airplane from more than 3,000 metres above the ground, entrusting my life to a piece of nylon, a ripcord and a stranger strapped to my back. It was the boldest, craziest thing I had ever done.

Why would a relatively conservative middle-aged woman like me, someone who is definitely not a risk-taking adventurer, try skydiving?

Some years ago, before the term “bucket list” became popular, I did make a list of things I wanted to do before I die. It included safe things, such as ride in a limousine and go on a cruise. Skydiving was definitely not on the list, but I knew it was on my daughter’s.

Then this last year a new courage began rising in me, a desire to do things I’ve been afraid to do, just for the building of character. The outrageous idea of skydiving crept into my brain. Why not treat my daughter to her dream and show my own mettle at the same time? We would go skydiving together, mother and daughter.

So that is how I found myself perched at the open door of a small airborne Cessna, terrified as I looked down at the patchwork of earth far below me. I heard

my tandem instructor say, “Ready, set, go!” and suddenly I was hurtling towards the ground at 190 kilometres an hour. Air rushed at my face and I thrust my arms out. What a thrill! It was like flying!

Once the parachute opened and slowed our descent, I looked down upon the city below me and tried to take in as much as possible of the beautiful view of the sky, mountains and Fraser Valley. It was peaceful and relaxing, not scary at all. The all-too-short ride ended with a smooth landing. Family and friends who had gathered to watch us cheered. I cheered inwardly, too, proud of myself for overcoming my fear and doing something that only 1 percent of people ever do.

I have mentally relived the experience many times since, wishing I could do it all over again.

In many ways it was a spiritual experience and a metaphor for life. Life, I have decided, is something like skydiving, filled with both fear and joy. It passes all too rapidly, like the wind rushing past my speeding and falling body. There is so much to see and experience, but I cannot do or see everything around me. I may wish I could do it all again, but one ride through life is all I get. Our time on earth is short. *“Remember how fleeting is my*

life” (Psalm 89:47a, NIV).

Recently I received a diagnosis of a life-changing health condition, serious but treatable. Life has turned on a dime. Priorities and perspectives change. The future is an unknown. Things I’ve always heard about God seeming closer at such a time become less clichéd and more real.

The Bible talks a lot about courage and faith. God does not want us to be fearful people. Isaiah 41:13 says, *“For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, ‘Do not fear; I will help you.’”* I am reminded now more than ever that I must rely on God completely. Did I not entrust my safety—my very life—to that of the tandem jump instructor harnessed to me? How much more trustworthy is God!

Skydiving is not for everyone, of course, but it has affected and changed me. I discovered something about myself, that I have more courage than I thought, that I need not be fearful of things I once feared. *“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles”* (Isaiah 40:31).

Skydiving is the closest I will ever come to soaring like an eagle. And if I can face jumping out of a plane, I feel I can face anything. ❧

/// Obituaries

Longtime Bible school teacher/pastor dies

Born on April 11, 1932, in Lena, Man., Menno H. Epp's life's work as a Bible school teacher and pastor spanned more than 40 years. He died on Aug. 2 in Saskatoon, Sask., following a brief illness. Epp taught at Bethel Bible Institute in B.C. for about 12 years and was involved in the establishment of Camp Squeah there in 1960, serving as its director during its initial years. Epp graduated from Canadian Mennonite Bible College in the 1950s, and was ordained to the ministry at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church in 1964. From 1969-71 he attended Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., after which he became pastor at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary,



Epp

Alta., until 1984. In 1984, he graduated with a doctor of ministry degree after writing *The Pastor's Exit*. From Calgary, Epp and his first wife, Irma, moved to Leamington United Mennonite Church, Ont., where he served as pastor from 1984-98. During this time his first wife died and he married Elsie Peters Neufeld. During his pastoral career he was moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada from 1991-96. He also served as chair of the AMBS board for five years. Upon retirement in 1998, the Epps moved to Saskatoon, where they became members of Wildwood Mennonite Church.

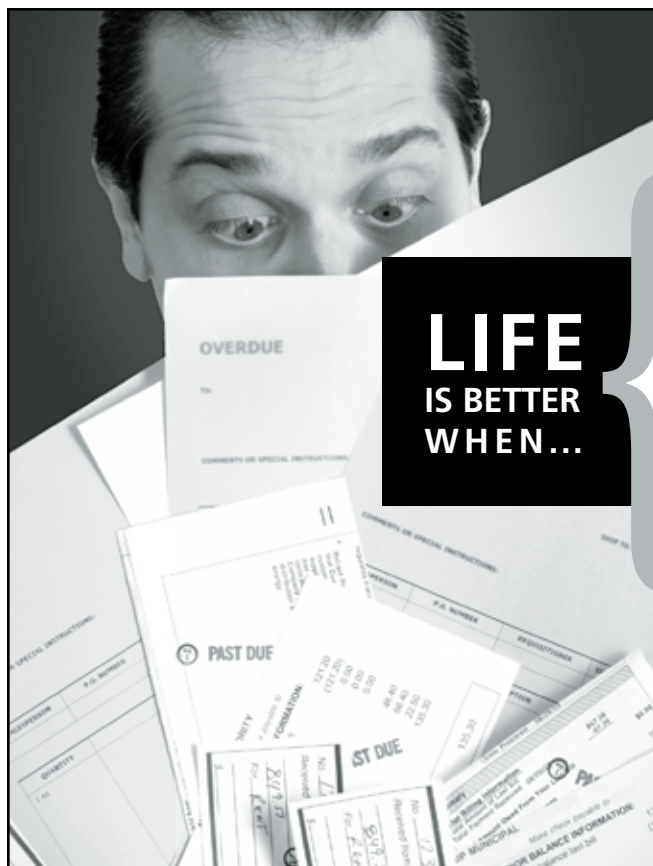
—BY LARRY KEHLER

Christian activist dies at 77

Gerald Vandezande, a Christian activist who worked closely with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) on a number of causes in the 1970s and '80s, passed away on July 16. Menno Wiebe, then MCC Canada's native ministries director, worked

with Vandezande on several causes, most significantly Project North, an inter-church coalition for solidarity with Aboriginal Peoples in the face of the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. MCC also connected with Vandezande in the formative years of its restorative justice programs, according to Peter Rempel, executive director of MCC Manitoba. Vandezande, who was born in the Netherlands on Christmas Day, 1933, and came to Canada with his family in 1951, is perhaps best known for his work with the Toronto-based Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC). According to an obituary in the Aug. 16 *Globe and Mail*, "In 1961, he uprooted his family and took a 50-percent pay cut to become executive secretary and the first employee of the ... CLAC, which faced some problems. The Ontario Labour Relations Board refused to recognize it, believing a union based on Christian principles would discriminate against non-Christians. And many clergy opposed taking the government to court."

—BY ROSS W. MUIR



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ARTBEAT

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Not just 'frosting on the cake'

Meditations on the soul of an organization

Herald Press

*What does it mean for a faith-based organization to make faith and spirituality an integral part of its board meetings and planning? That's the subject of *Setting the Agenda: Meditations for the Organization's Soul*, a new book from Herald Press by Edgar Stoesz and Rick Stiffney, who reflect on some of their key convictions that Margaret Benefiel refers to in her foreword as a "courageous and groundbreaking" venture into "the largely uncharted territory of spirituality and board leadership."*

What is the unique contribution of this book alongside other books you've written on various aspects of board work over the past 17 years—books such as *Doing Good Better*, *Common Sense for Board Members* and *Doing Good Even Better*?

Stoesz: Much of my work to this point has been about better governance—more effective meetings and governing techniques. The purpose of this book is to help strengthen the faith dimension of faith-based organizations, not only the inward and the outward look, but also the upward look. The book takes a holistic approach that does not use spirituality to escape the hard decisions that boards face, but rather to navigate through the complex issues that organizational and congregational leaders face.

You have expressed concern about the disconnect between health-related agencies and the faith communities that birthed them. In what way do you see this book addressing your concern?

Stiffney: If an institution does not tend to its roots in a community of faith, the core values may continue to be great human values, but they are devoid of a theological source. This book will remind governing boards of spirituality as a source of power in dealing with the

types of challenges that all boards face.

What is your most inspiring and instructive example of spirituality as an integral component of board work?

Stoesz: At a recent all-day planning session, a board met first in a circle with a three-part candle in the middle, reflective of the triune God. The day was interspersed with silence and consciously seeking the Spirit's guidance—and frequent reminders that "the work is thine, O Christ our Lord."

Much as we need the conscious manifestation of the Spirit in our midst, equally important is what I call the "subterranean." Even as we progress through a routine agenda, we should do it with an awareness of God's presence and guidance.

Stiffney: As I observed a denominational board process, a complex issue, what impressed me was the way in which Christian faith helped to frame the dilemma and how various methods of board engagement—prayer, silence, intense give and take, personal sharing, space apart and time together—released spiritual power in the discernment. The board had also done its homework ahead of time by gathering critical input and anticipating responses to its decisions.



What pitfalls should boards avoid as they seek to ground their work spiritually and theologically?

Stiffney: Many faith-based nonprofits treat faith more as "frosting on the cake," rather than as "leaven in the bread." Faith and spirituality should influence the whole of board engagement and not be used simply as a perfunctory act to open and close

a meeting.

Stoesz: The biggest pitfall is being too busy with the urgent to reserve quality time for the important. The other extreme is the pitfall of using spirituality as an excuse not to face practical realities. The book quotes the text: "Look not on the things that can be seen—they are transient." However, boards need to look at things that can be seen—budgets, cash flow, changes in the marketplace—but not only at the things that can be seen. An appropriate motto for board work should be: "Not plan or pray, but plan and pray."

If boards were to successfully integrate spirituality into their work, what difference should this make for the constituents, clients or residents of a faith-based organization?

Stoesz: Meaningful spirituality helps to get the ownership question right. Boards serve in a fiduciary capacity; they do not own the organization. . . . Boards deal with the unknown; their best and most urgently needed work is probing and anticipating the future. To do this they need to let go of the present and draw on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Stiffney: Naming and claiming the place of faith and spirituality in governance will enrich and deepen the experience of individual board members and senior staff. . . . Board members begin to view their work in relationship to the vocation of the organization. Their spirits and the soul of the organization are touched. The resulting decisions will be wiser, better seasoned or more deeply reasoned. ☞



Stoesz



Stiffney

New releases from Herald Press

By STEVE SHENK

Herald Press

Carrying for people with disabilities

How can congregations offer supportive care for members with significant disabilities—and their families? That is the subject of an 89-page handbook to help churches organize their own supportive care groups.

It was published jointly by MennoMedia and the Anabaptist Disabilities Network. Entitled *Supportive Care in the Congregation: Providing a Congregational Network of Care for Persons with Significant Disabilities*, it is a thorough revision and update of earlier versions. The authors are Dean Preheim-Bartel, Aldred Neufeldt, Paul Leichty and Christine Guth.

"I have experienced firsthand the

profound blessing of congregational supportive care for living with the disabilities in my family," says Guth, who currently serves as program director for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network. "Likewise, I have experienced firsthand the nightmare of having little or no support network for agonizing struggles in our family. . . . Having survived the nightmare and come into the blessing, I know just how significant small gestures of support and caring can be."



People with disabilities are often cared for by their parents. So what happens when the parents grow old and die?

Now *After We're Gone: A Christian Perspective on Estate and Life Planning for Families that Include a Dependent Member with a Disability*, a 61-page book—or handbook—is available to help parents plan for the day when they are no longer around to care for their adult children with disabilities. It was released jointly in June by Herald Press and Anabaptist Disabilities Network.

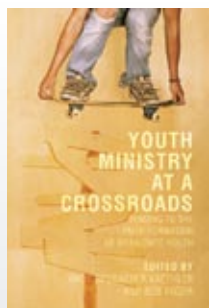
"*After We're Gone* introduces options and resources for the Christian family and faith community as they interact with the legal system to make provisions for the ongoing care of loved ones with disabilities,"

says Paul Leichty, who was executive director of Anabaptist Disabilities Network when the book project was undertaken.

"Caring for an adult who is dependent due to a significant disability is a major responsibility," says Leichty. "Making provisions for that person's physical, emotional and financial well-being after the death of the caregiver can be complex and confusing."



New from Herald Press



Youth Ministry at a Crossroads

Tending to the Faith Formation of Mennonite Youth
Andy Brubacher Kaethler & Bob Yoder, editors

Youth work isn't for the faint-hearted. It's tender and tough, requiring savvy to understand the allurements facing our young people today. What you will find in this book, co-published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, is wisdom and encouragement from a variety of people who have dedicated themselves to youth work.

\$18.50. www.MennoMedia.org/YouthMinistryataCrossroads

800-631-6535
Waterloo, ON office

Herald Press is the book imprint of MennoMedia



MennoMedia

An agency of Mennonite Church USA
and Mennonite Church Canada

Volume honours Alan and Eleanor Kreider

The friends of Alan and Eleanor Kreider wanted to publish a book in honour of the veteran teachers, authors and missionaries. But when the Kreiders got wind of the project, they insisted that the book had to be useful to today's Christians.

"Please make of any such piece something that builds the church," they wrote to the editors, "something rooted in the daily reality of God's people, something that equips and empowers followers of Jesus to live out more faithfully their calling as active participants in God's reconciling mission in the world."

The editors, James Krabill and Stuart Murray, attempted to honour that request.



The result is *Forming Christian Habits in Post-Christendom: The Legacy of Alan and Eleanor Kreider*. It was co-published by Herald Press and the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

The Kreiders have been teaching and writing about mission, community and worship from an Anabaptist perspective for almost four decades. While most of this ministry took place in the United Kingdom and North America, their influence spread to continental Europe, the Middle East, Asia and beyond.

“The contributors to this volume—all affected in some way by the Kreiders’ ministry—are a global multi-voiced choir,” say the editors in their introductory essay. “They are younger and older; academics and community workers; new believers and veterans of the faith.”

Krabill is senior executive for the Global Ministries division of Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, Ind. Murray works as

‘The contributors to this volume—all affected in some way by the Kreiders’ ministry—are a global multi-voiced choir. They are younger and older; academics and community workers; new believers and veterans of the faith.’

(The editors)

a trainer and consultant for the Anabaptist Network in the United Kingdom; last year, he authored the Herald Press book, *The*

Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Fretz fund provides grant for book on Lorna Bergey

The J. Winfield Fretz Fund of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario has provided \$2,000 to the Waterloo Chapter of the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario for publication of a book of the selected writings of Lorna Bergey. For more than 30 years, Bergey prepared and presented research on Mennonites in Waterloo Region, becoming one of the area’s most respected historians. J. Winfield Fretz was the first president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario. The fund is available to any individual or charitable, church or community-based organization that requires financial support to assist in the publication of research—in book, film or other forms of media—that illuminates the experience of Mennonites in Ontario. Deadlines for submission are May 1 and Oct. 1. Visit www.mhso.org for further details.

—Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario



Join us for the LAUNCH

The event will feature a local choir conducted by Henry Engbrecht. The choir will sing hymns which appear on the Canzona CD *‘Lasst die Herzen immer fröhlich’* and the soon-to-be-released Christmas CD *‘Stille Nacht’*

and
a presentation of the ‘bonus features’ of the revised DVD on the making of *‘And When They Shall Ask’*

St. Catharines United Mennonite Church – Saturday, September 24
 335 Linwell Road Choir Rehearsal Program
 (905) 935-8017 2:30 PM 7:00 PM

Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church - Sunday, September 25
 19 Ottawa Street N Choir Rehearsal Program
 (519) 745-5144 2:30 PM 7:00 PM

Clearbrook Mennonite Brethren Church – Saturday & Sunday, October 29 & 30
 2719 Clearbrook Road Choir Rehearsal Program
 (604) 850-6607 2:30 PM 7:00 PM

Free Admission & Refreshments

DVD’s & CD’s available at the Launch
 or from
www.mennonitemediasociety.com
www.canzonachoir.com



young voices



PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN



Jack Layton inspires young people to vote for change

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent

"My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world." (Jack Layton)

In Canada, there is a low turnout of young voters. In fact, according to a 2008 study done by Elections Canada, only 38 percent of young people are heading to the polls to vote.

Stefan Epp, 26, a Winnipegger who attends Home Street Mennonite Church, thinks this is because young people may feel alienated or disconnected from politics or politicians. But he says the late Jack Layton, leader of the New Democratic Party, had a remarkable ability to rally forces to work together from different age

"I think Jack renewed a hope in a lot of us, that there is a possibility that our well-being as Canadian citizens is important and that our voices can be heard," she says.

On issues such as the environment, healthcare, poverty, housing shortages and militarism, the government has not done what is best for those on the margins of society, these young people believe.

"They have gone from a world leader to a world disgrace," Epp says of Canada's environmental record.

And for Dueck, who works at a drop-in

Epp and Dueck believe that Layton may have inspired young people and others who would never have voted, to vote for change.

groups, political parties and regions of Canada.

Emily Dueck, 27, from Toronto United Mennonite Church, agrees. She has often been cynical about politicians, especially Conservative politicians. Prior to Layton assuming the leadership of the NDP, Dueck says she thought of politicians as a bit dishonest and that their agenda included "not standing up for those who are on the margins, looking out for big businesses and corporations, their economic standing in the world, and not looking out for the needs of regular citizens."

But Layton made a big impression on her, so much so that she stood in line for nine hours to attend his funeral in Toronto.

centre in Toronto that Mennonite Central Committee runs, the bulk of the homeless and impoverished people she works with do not vote at all because they don't think their vote counts.

Epp and Dueck believe that Layton may have inspired young people and others who would never have voted, to vote for change. "My hope is that young people can imagine a better world, and work for a better world within the current political system," Epp says. "There is a possible route to creating the change they want to see in the world."

While it is evident that Layton's words inspired Canadians, as many people attended his funeral or watched it on television, Epp and Dueck hope that his words will motivate

young people to go to the polls and to continue to call on the government to do more and behave in ways that are socially just.

With provincial elections coming up in both Manitoba and Ontario in October,

Epp hopes that Layton's message of hope and social change will motivate young people to be involved politically at the provincial level as well. ❧

Random acts of kindness along the road

Five young men take their RV on a cross-continent mission to do as much good as possible

By EMILY LOEWEN

Young Voices Editor

Early last August when five young men pulled their RV into Brightwood Ranch in rural Alberta, they exchanged the adventure of ziplines and horseback riding for the opportunity to help set up a campsite and assist an elderly man move house. That's only one example of the good deeds done this summer by Jeremy Enns, Adam Epp, Jamie Grantis, Charles Neufeld and Josh Willms as they drove their 1979 GMC Vanguard across the continent.

The idea for the five-week odyssey started with plans for a fun trip to B.C., but soon developed into a mission to spread love and random acts of kindness across the country.

"A passion for travel with a greater pur-

pose is something we share," says 20-year-old Enns, a member of Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. "When we thought about how blessed we all are, we realized that we couldn't go out and not spread the love that God has shown to each of us."

Before embarking, the five friends organized a garage sale, which raked in \$1,500 for their "blessing pot," a fund they used solely for good deeds. Food and gas money

came out of their own pockets. The five also compiled a list of services they hoped to do for others, including buying groceries for a single mother, purchasing Tim Hortons coffee for everyone in a restaurant, and helping out with construction projects.

After five weeks, the group managed to complete almost everything on the list, often with assistance from family or friends they knew in the area. Three days from the end of their trip, the group still hadn't managed to find a family to buy groceries for. When they pulled into Iowa, however, they asked a friend's mom for any service ideas, "and the one thing she said, without us even asking, is that there was a mother who was coming

The five also encountered challenges along the way, including other mechanical troubles and tensions that arose among five people living in a small space for five weeks.

from a tough situation who could use some help," recounts Enns. They managed to talk their way into her empty apartment, leaving groceries, school supplies and a note explaining what they had done. They never met the woman or her children, "but that almost made it all the better," they wrote on their blog.

Some of the other random acts of kindness included distributing snacks outside the Vancouver (B.C.) Aquarium, chopping

Josh Willms, Adam Epp, Charles Neufeld, Jamie Grantis and Jeremy Enns in Jasper, Alta., where they managed to climb a mountain without proper preparation or equipment.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEREMY ENNS



Josh Willms, Adam Epp, Charles Neufeld, Jamie Grantis and Jeremy Enns in Jasper, Alta., where they managed to climb a mountain without proper preparation or equipment.



Jeremy Enns, Charles Neufeld and Jamie Grantis pose with Lily, their RV, purchased for their cross-continent trip.

wood for a wood-furnace-heated home, running games at a Vacation Bible School, buying movie tickets for 20 people in Winnipeg, Man., and gardening in Thunder Bay, Ont.

Of course, the young men also managed to have some fun. In their travels they had the opportunity to climb a mountain in Jasper, Alta.; take in a baseball game in Seattle, Wash.; and pose with Canada's many roadside attractions. The highlight, however, was the "running of the bulls" in Strathmore, Alta.

"We learned upon arrival that the running with the bulls was not, in fact, limited to trained professionals, but rather open to the public," says Grantis, 19. "We had almost no choice but to sign up." In a moment of bravery—or foolishness—Grantis attempted to mount a running bull, which set him apart from the crowd and won him the \$1,000 prize.

This proved to be a happy coincidence, as the day before their RV, dubbed Lily, had

required a new transmission costing more than \$1,500. "This was possibly one of the strangest answers to prayer, and demonstrations of how God can sometimes show his provision in some very interesting ways," Grantis acknowledges.

The five also encountered challenges along the way, including other mechanical troubles and tensions that arose among five people living in a small space for five weeks.

"We were thankful for God's provision of patience and understanding," says Grantis. "We all had a common goal in mind, which helped a lot."

This fall, all are heading back to university or pursuing a career, but the trip has left them with a treasure trove of positive memories.

"It was really cool to see how God had his hand helping us do his work across this continent," says Enns.

For pictures and stories, visit their blog at justwonlife.blogspot.com/. ❧

Do young adults want their own Christian community?

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices

Ana Loewen knows what it's like to feel disillusioned with the church. As a teenager, a negative experience in the church she grew up in led her to seriously question the Christian beliefs she had been raised with.

"That affected how I viewed church and how I viewed Christianity," says Loewen, now 30, of the negative experience. "So I didn't want to have anything to do with it."

It wasn't until she served in Uganda as part of Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together program in 2000 that Loewen became a Christian. "After a month or two of being in Uganda, I started to feel my heart change," she says. "I just felt that for the first time in my life I saw people living out their faith in a way that was attractive to me, in a way that seemed genuine."

Today, Loewen is a member of Trinity

Mennonite Church, DeWinton, Alta., where her husband Will is the pastor. Because she knows what it feels like to struggle with the church, she wants to reach out to young adults in Alberta who feel the same way.

For the past 10 months, Loewen has been researching whether or not a community for young adults is needed in Calgary. A project of Mennonite Church Alberta, the Calgary Young Adult Christian Community would be a group for young adults aged 18 to 35 who are not currently connected to a church, who are new to Calgary, or who simply want to meet and fellowship with other Christians. The group would provide opportunities for young adults to get to know each other, attend events, study the Bible and get involved in the city by volunteering.

While Loewen has already organized a

few events and attracted a few members for the community, she says the time has really been about researching the idea and assessing whether or not there is a need—or desire—for such a community. She will present her findings in November to an advisory committee that includes members of MC Alberta's Missions and Service Committee.

The process has been difficult because

oversees the community initiative, says he has mixed feelings about the response so far, but adds that it is too early to tell what MC Alberta will do.

"We're trying to determine what is the best course of action," Hobden says. "What [MC Alberta] is trying to do is make sure that we meet the needs of the people that are there. It's important that we don't just start a program [before doing] the research

'I just felt that for the first time in my life I saw people living out their faith in a way that was attractive to me, in a way that seemed genuine.'

(Ana Loewen)

it has been hard getting a response from people to gauge whether or not such an initiative would be worthwhile. Letters she sent to MC Alberta congregations didn't garner much feedback, and networking among her own peers is difficult because Loewen herself is new to Alberta.

"One thing I've found is that this isn't really attracting people who have left the church," Loewen says. "It's mostly attracting those that are wanting to meet new people, those that are lonely and those that are new to Calgary."

Loewen has established a website for the group (cyacc.ca) and used social networking sites like MeetUp.com, Facebook and Twitter to get the word out. Still, the events she has planned have only drawn four or five regular attendees.

Glenn Hobden, an MC Alberta pastor who is chairing the committee that

and making sure all the ducks are in a row, so to speak."

Whether they think it is a good or bad idea, or an idea that needs to be refocused, Loewen invites people to e-mail her at ana@cyaac.ca with their feedback.

If her final report in November finds that the need is there, Loewen wants the new young adult community to be safe for those who may have been turned off by church but who still are trying to work out their faith.

"I've certainly learned in my journey that you can't do Christianity alone," Loewen says. "It's a community thing. You need accountability and you need someone to share ideas with and to pray with, and to pray for. It would be a shame to lose some brothers and sisters in the faith because they felt they didn't have anywhere to go." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANA LOEWEN



Ana Loewen has spent the last 10 months researching whether or not Mennonite Church Alberta should establish a Calgary-based community for young adults.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Calendar

British Columbia

- Oct. 1:** Mennonite Disaster Service dessert fundraiser with great food, good music and reports from First United Mennonite youth group who served in Kingcome Inlet in July, at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, at 6:30 p.m.
- Oct. 1,2:** Thanksgiving Vespers with *Abendmusik Choir* at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, 8 p.m. (1) and at Knox United Church, Vancouver, 8 p.m. (2).
- Oct. 3-5:** Pastor/spouse retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: The Life-giving Sabbatical—three perspectives.
- Oct. 14-16:** MC B.C. Women's retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: "The business of everyday life."
- Nov. 18-20:** Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

- Oct. 15:** Deadline to register for the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta 25th anniversary celebration with Jim Lore's view of Mennonite settlement in Carstairs/Didsbury area, happening at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, on Oct. 29. Register by calling 403-250-1121 on Thursdays, or e-mail mhsa@mennonitehistory.org.

Saskatchewan

- Oct. 1:** Book launch of *Pembroke Years*, at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon, at 2 p.m.
- Oct. 4:** Youth Farm Bible Camp annual fundraiser at the camp, from 5 to 7 p.m.
- Oct. 9:** Retirement celebration for Don Unger, minister of Hoffnungselder Mennonite Church, at the Rabbit Lake Hall, at 1:30 p.m. Lunch will follow the program.
- Oct. 14-15:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat.
- Oct. 22:** MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.
- Nov. 4-5:** MCC Saskatchewan Encounter and annual general meeting, at Eigenheim Mennonite Church, Rosthern.

Manitoba

- Sept. 30:** CMU faculty lecture and recital, at 7:30 p.m. Topic: "It's not only about you: Theology and human

rights." Speaker: Paul Doerksen. Recital features *Quartet for the End of Time* by Olivier Messiaen.

Oct. 1: CMU fall festival featuring MennoCross bike race, class reunions, fall fair, faculty samplers, barbecue and festival worship; noon to 8 p.m.

Oct. 1: Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association fundraiser dessert coffee house at Fort Garry EMC with Matt and Baka (House of Doc), Andy and Trish Funk, and Mark von Kampen & Dale Kraubner (FMC Simpletones) at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 14: Going Barefoot communicators conference, at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Keynote speaker: John Stackhouse, editor of *The Globe and Mail*. Topic: The future of media. Plus workshops on media, fundraising, marketing and design. For more information, e-mail John Longhurst at jlonghurst@foodgrainsbank.ca.

Oct. 14-16: Manitoba Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. For more information, visit marriageencounter.org. To apply, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705 or e-mail prmmme@gmail.com.

Oct. 15,16: "Musical Grow Project" fundraiser for Canadian Foodgrains Bank with Canzona, Catherine Daniel and Central Manitoba Youth Choir; (15) Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m., and (16) Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

Oct. 21-23: Scrapbook retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, call the Camps with Meaning office at 204-895-2267.

Oct. 22: Camps with Meaning musical celebration at Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, at 7 p.m., featuring the Faith and Life Women's Chorus and Male Choir. A dessert reception to follow. For free tickets, call 204-895-2267.

Oct. 24: Bethania Spiritual Care fundraising dinner, at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m. Featuring Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Choir. Speaker: Tim Frymire. Theme: "They who laugh, last: Aging, spirituality and humour." For tickets, call 204-654-5042 or e-mail Brenda.Searles@Bethania.ca.

Nov. 4-6: Annual quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, call the Camps with

Meaning office at 204-895-2267.

Nov. 5,6: Camps with Meaning annual celebration banquets; (5) at Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, at 5:30 p.m.; (6) at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, at 5 p.m. For free tickets to either event, call 204-895-2267.

Nov. 17: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Evening of the Arts, at Westgate, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Sept. 26: Fall seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and Retreat Centre. Theme: "Faith and funerals: Our final witness." Speakers: Jim Erb ("Answers to questions about funerals you were afraid to ask"), and Gerald Good and Martha Smith-Good ("Planning a funeral service consistent with our faith"). For more information or to register, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

Sept. 28: MC Eastern Canada workshop, "Preparing pastors and congregations for the new frontier: Tools to engage new media with integrity," with Geoff Vanderkooy of PeaceWorks Technology Solutions; at Conrad Grebel University College, 1 p.m. Webcasts to Niagara, Toronto and Leamington.

Sept. 30: Shalom Counselling Services presents "Mental illness and what I did about it," with James Bartleman, former lieutenant governor of Ontario from 2002-07; at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 4,6,11,12,20: MC Eastern Canada presents "Faith Formation Conversations: Written on Their Hearts"; (4) Niagara Cluster at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.; (6) Northeast and Quebec Cluster teleconference, 7 p.m.; (11) GTA Cluster at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, 7 p.m.; (12) Stratford and Wilmot Cluster at Hillcrest Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, 7 p.m.; (20) Woolwich Grey and Wellesley West Cluster at Community Mennonite Fellowship, Drayton, 7 p.m.

Oct. 7: CD release concert for Kyle Wijnands' *Beautiful Brokenness*; at Milverton Mennonite Church, 8 p.m. Wijnands is the part-time youth pastor at Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank.

Oct. 20-22: Ten Thousand Villages fair trade craft sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (20, 21) and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (22). Call 905-627-4132 for information.

Oct. 22,23: Pax Christi Chorale kicks off its 25th anniversary season with Salieri's *Mass in D-Major* and other works performed by the Chorale, Youth Choir, orchestra and soloists; (22) at Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, Barrie, at 7:30 p.m.; (23) at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m.

Oct. 28-30: Marriage Encounter weekend at Jericho House, Port Colborne. For more information, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667 or visit marriageencounter.com.

Oct. 29: MC Eastern Canada fall gathering, "Equipping the church for money sanity," with Nathan Dugan; time and place TBA.

Oct. 29: Menno Singers present Faure's *Requiem* and other works by various French composers, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m. Tickets available from Mennonite Savings and Credit Union branches and choir members.

Oct. 31: Deadline to register for MC Eastern Canada and MCC Ontario's learning tour to Israel and Palestine, Yella 2012, which takes place May 6 to 29, 2012. To register, visit ontario.mcc.org/yella2012/application.

Nov. 2-5: Annual Ten Thousand Villages festival sale at Vineland United Mennonite Church. Tea and lunch room open every day; (2,3,4) 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; (5) 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Nov. 6: MC Eastern Canada and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate present Make a Difference Day (formerly Junior Youth Breakaway), at Rockway, Kitchener, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Nov. 12: MCC Ontario annual conference, at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ont.

Nov. 18: Spirituality and aging lecture at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Speaker: Dr. Steven Sandage. Topic: "The role of forgiveness in psychological and spiritual well-being in late life." For more information, or to register, e-mail infocguc@uwaterloo.ca. \$50 fee

Nov. 21: MennoHomes' 10th anniversary celebration and annual general meeting, at Elmira Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. Celebrate 10 years,

100 units and \$10 million of affordable housing.

U.S.A.

Nov. 3-6: MEDA annual convention—Business as a calling: Enduring values/ Lasting impact—in Lancaster, Pa. Plenary sessions feature Tom Wolf, Joyce Bontrager Lehman, Kim Tan, Ervin Stutzman and the MEDA year-in-review. For more information, or to register, visit BusinessAsACalling.org or call toll-free 1-800-665-7026.

Classifieds

For Sale

Yamaha Grand Piano for Sale. Black, 6ft. 1in, C3E, 25 years old. Well maintained, \$16,000 or best offer. Contact Sharon Wilkinson at 905-642-6859 or aubrey_phmark@hotmail.com.

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

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Employment Opportunities

ASSOCIATE PASTOR PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH RICHMOND, BC

Peace Mennonite Church invites applications for the full-time position of **Associate Pastor**.

This position places major focus on youth ministry and family ministries, along with a minor focus on general congregational ministry.

Applicants should have a relevant degree in Christian ministry, an understanding of contemporary Anabaptist theology, and an interest and ability to relate to young people.

Please send resumes either by mail to: The Search Committee, Peace Mennonite Church, 11571 Daniels Rd., Richmond, BC V6X 1M7, or by e-mail to office@peacemennonite.ca.



Mennonite Central Committee Ontario invites applications for the position of **OPERATIONS DIRECTOR** Kitchener, Ont.

This position requires a person with a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking.

The Operations Director will give overall leadership to the practical and administrative functions of MCC Ontario including finances, insurance and risk management, physical resources, information technology and general office management, and will serve on the Leadership Team, reporting to the Executive Director.

This full-time salaried position begins December 2011. Application deadline: Oct. 10, 2011.

Complete job description available on MCC's website at www.mcc.org/serve. To apply send cover letter and resume to Cath Woolner at cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Fraser Valley Pregnancy Centre, Aldergrove, B.C., is accepting applications for the position of Executive Director. Details at www.fvpc.ca/employment.html. Apply with cover letter, resume, and references (.pdf) to employment@fvpc.ca. Closes October 7, 2011.



Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

PROFESSOR OF ANABAPTIST STUDIES AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking a professor of Anabaptist Studies and Historical Theology. Responsibilities include teaching with distinction and advocating for Anabaptist and Mennonite perspectives in conversation with other Christian traditions. Qualifications include a Ph.D. in Anabaptist studies or historical theology, passion for the church and the significance of these areas of study for the church, and ability to communicate well and inspire students. Teaching experience and international or cross-cultural experience a plus.

By November 15, send letter of application, CV, and list of references to Rebecca Slough, Academic Dean, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517 or electronically to rslough@ambs.edu. Full job description at www.ambs.edu/employment.



Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

PROFESSOR OF FAITH FORMATION AND CULTURE

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary is seeking professor of Faith Formation and Culture to teach at the interdisciplinary intersection of congregational education, spiritual development, cultural hermeneutics and theological contextualization, exploring Christian faith formation across the life span. Qualifications include a terminal degree (Ph.D. preferred), ability to communicate well and inspire students, and passion for the church and faith formation as a missional vocation. Preparation for ministry, teaching experience and cross-cultural or international ministry a plus.

By October 31, send letter of application, CV, and list of references to Rebecca Slough, Academic Dean, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517 or electronically to rslough@ambs.edu. Full job description at www.ambs.edu/employment.



Mennonite Central Committee Ontario
invites applications for the position of

ASSISTANT MANAGER, CHRISTIAN BENEFIT SHOP, St. Catharines, Ont.

This position requires a person with a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and nonviolent peacemaking.

Qualifications include: strong interpersonal skills with demonstrated leadership skills, and willingness to work as a team with Board and volunteers. Previous retail experience is an asset.

This salaried position begins December 2011. Application deadline: Oct. 24, 2011. The General Manager position was advertised in the last issue.

Complete job description available on www.mcc.org/serve. To apply send cover letter and resume to Cath Woolner, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1 or cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTA YOST



At her ninth birthday party on Aug. 20, Abby Yost of Hillcrest Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont., had her blonde hair cut off to make wigs for cancer patients. This was Abby's third charity birthday party. Instead of giving Abby gifts, party guests this year donated \$530, which will go to the Canadian Cancer Society in memory of Abby's Great Grandma Daisy, who succumbed to cancer in January, and other relatives who have died of cancer.

God at work in the World snapshots

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH JANZEN



Anne Siemens, left, Lena Williams and Mary Willms are just three of the 20 or so members of the Grace Mennonite Church Women's Group in St. Catharines, Ont., that work at creating quilts each year. The quilts, mostly of the 'tie' variety, are distributed far and wide, going to seriously ill members of the congregation, the United Mennonite Home for the Aged in Vineland, fundraising raffles, the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale for auction, and to Mennonite Central Committee to help those in need around the world.