

C A N A D I A N

Mennonite

January 26, 2004
Volume 8, Number 2



Sculpture
page 9

Called to ministry

Recent issues have featured stories of pastoral leaders who took a variety of “paths to ministry.” Some felt an inner call; some were tapped on the shoulder by mentors or friends; others were drawn by a variety of life experiences. And at least one was called by reading *Canadian Mennonite*!

Nancy Mann (page 4) says that she was convinced to change careers by reading the June 17, 2002 issue on “Calling pastors.” The editorial of that issue was headed, “Responding to the pastor shortage,” and the main article asked, “Will there be pastors tomorrow?” She is currently studying in the graduate theology program, ministry option, at Conrad Grebel University College.

Our community of readers not only helps to shape the magazine, it keeps us going. Thank you for your loyalty and support.

Her comments underscore the significance of *Canadian Mennonite* as a partner of the church. Our mission statement (in masthead below) says we are “a periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church.” This language is based on Hebrew 10:23-25, which calls Christians to “stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another.”

Members of Mennonite Church Canada meet on these pages every two weeks as they read about people and programs of the church, and about issues of faith. They meet in the Letters section as they respond to each other and carry the conversation forward. (The church and the magazine recognized its joint ministry last fall with a Partnership Agreement. See January 12 issue, page 20.)

Our community of readers not only helps to shape the magazine, it keeps us going. This past year, as we faced shortfalls in subscription payments in two provinces, readers responded with record donations and many notes of encouragement. Thank you for your continued loyalty and support.

This is a year of transition for *Canadian Mennonite* as new leadership is being sought. Keep us in your prayers as we prepare for the change. And remember the board of directors as it meets in Winnipeg February 5-7 to plan for the new year. See the masthead below for the list of directors who represent you on the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board.

In this issue, we continue the focus on ministry with a slightly different twist. J. Nelson Kraybill proposes a Mennonite alternative to the “Four Spiritual Laws” to guide our understanding and our witness (page 6). Jack Suderman assesses the “missional” vision to see how it has shaped the church over the past two and a half years (page 8).

The cover of this issue, featuring a magnificent sculpture that hangs at Conrad Grebel, ties into the “Focus on post-secondary education” (page 19). For more on the sculpture and its creator, see page 9.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

Mailing glitch

Some of you may have noticed that your January 12 issue was late, or maybe it went to an outdated address. Something mysterious happened to the production of mailing labels for that issue, causing a delay and lots of frustration. After much consultation with Canada Post and the printer of our labels, we have concluded that an outdated mailing list was somehow substituted for the correct one.

With this issue things should be back to normal. If you are missing the January 12 issue, let us know and we'll send you one.

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Head office: 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: (519) 884-3810 **Toll-free:** 800-378-2524 **Fax:** (519) 884-3331
E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Interim Editor/Publisher: Margaret Loewen Reimer
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Staff: Betti Erb, associate editor; Natasha Krahn, admin. assistant; Tammy Sawatzky, art director; Barb Draper, editorial assistant.

Advertising: Barbara Burkholder **Phone:** 800-316-4052
Fax: (519) 884-3331 **E-mail:** advert@canadianmennonite.org

CANADIAN
Mennonite

National correspondent: Leona Dueck Penner, Winnipeg, Man. Phone: (204) 888-6781
E-mail: dueck-penner@mennonitechurch.ca

Regional correspondents:

Eastern Canada: Maurice Martin, Phone: (519) 662-1031
E-mail: mauricem@sympatico.ca

Manitoba: Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Phone: (204) 745-2208
E-mail: erpetkau@cici.mb.ca

Saskatchewan: Karin Fehderau, Phone: (306) 933-4209
E-mail: k.fehderau@sasktel.net

Alberta: Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Phone: (780) 436-3431
E-mail: timanddonita@attglobal.net

British Columbia: Angelika Dawson, Phone: (604) 870-0494
E-mail: ajdawson@telus.net

Board of directors: *British Columbia:* Henry Neufeld, Aiden S. Enns.

Alberta: Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, Jan Wilhelm. *Saskatchewan:* Bernie Thiessen.

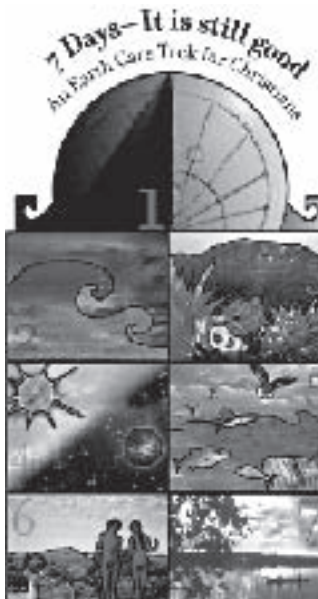
Manitoba: Ron Loepky, Bernie Wiebe, Paul Krahn.

Ontario: Lloyd Koch, Mary Lymburner, Betty Dyck, Brice Balmer.

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Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the Feb. 9 issue by Feb. 5.

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Cover: 'Ties that bind' by
Jo-Anne Harder. See page 9.
Photo by Jennifer Konkle

Waterloo, Ont.

Three calls to pastoral ministry

How does one hear a call to ministry? Does it come as a deep passion for the church and a desire to serve God through ministry in the church? Does it come from the encouragement of others? Does it come as an inner nudging that will not go away? In a vision or a dream?

I first heard the call of God to ministry from a university career counsellor. As we were exploring career options, she said: "You are very involved in your local church. Have you ever considered pastoral ministry?"

At the time, I was heavily involved as a youth sponsor in the United Church in which I was raised. However, my image of what would be required to be a pastor, and my sense of my own skills, made me dismiss her suggestion.

My second call came as an inner nudging that would not go away. After several years of "career meandering," I found myself working as a career and personal counsellor at the University of Waterloo. When my family and I had moved here, I discovered the Mennonite church and became actively involved at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener.

My passion for church life remained, and I began studying theology part-time. Economic realities and family life, however, did not make a career change practical at that time.

My third call to pastoral ministry came from the *Canadian Mennonite*! "Calling pastors" was the theme of the June 17, 2002, issue. "Will there be pastors tomorrow?" asked the article in the Faith & Life section. The editorial was "Responding to the pastor shortage."

After 15 years as a university counsellor, I was feeling more confident about my skills in counselling and group leadership. My daughter was about to leave home for university.

Could this be the time?

I began by exploring the ministry option in the Master of Theological Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College. I began to explore seriously what would be involved in my making a career transition.

In fall 2003, I took a leave of absence from my job and committed myself to full-time studies at Conrad Grebel. To gain more practical experience, I arranged a pastoral internship at my home congregation.

A pastor once told me that one's calling is where your passion and skills intersect. I am enjoying my year of study and ministry immensely. Many new experiences have been challenging and invigorating. I have been affirmed by the



Mann

pastoral team and by many congregational members for the gifts I bring to pastoral ministry.

As a result, I have submitted my application to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and have indicated that I am open to a pastoral position next fall.

Of course, there are times of doubt and discouragement. When I feel I have misjudged a situation, or neglected to give due attention to a pastoral task, I feel disheartened. When I see the church being less than what I believe God has called her to be, I feel saddened.

During these times, I remind myself of the enthusiasm with which I was first welcomed into the Mennonite church.

"Do you want to follow Jesus?" the people asked. "So do we. Come, and join us in this journey!" Lord willing, I shall.—**Nancy Mann**

Paths to ministry

Winnipeg, Man.

Walking with others toward faith

I remember it clearly. Not that it was an audible voice or a visual opening of the heavens, but rather an inner question: "I wonder if I'll become a minister."

For some, that question would be the natural outcome of a desire to serve Christ more deeply. What made the question remarkable for me was that I was around 10 years of age. I have little memory of any church connection. Nor do I remember contact with people who were vocal about their faith in Jesus. For all intents and purposes, I was biblically illiterate.

This began to change when my best friend gave me *Good News For Modern Man* for my 18th birthday. I had assumed that the Bible was like any other literary masterpiece—moving from introduction through the story to appropriate conclusion. I was confused by the fact that Matthew, Mark and

Luke seemed similar in content. I remember thinking that a good editor would be helpful in tightening up the story line.

Nevertheless, what I read in those pages touched something within me and I look back on that event as a turning point in my spiritual life.

What I remember most clearly was that the Jesus people were being invited to follow was a Jesus who modelled and invited others to a new way of living. At the heart of this new life was the conviction that God's grace is demonstrated as those who follow Jesus respond to the problems of the world in a non-violent way.

Although I knew nothing about Mennonites, God brought me into contact with the Mennonite church. What I had discovered about the Jesus of the gospels found a home for me. In time I made a personal commitment to Christ as my

Divine chaos

The leader apologized to me after my visit to this congregation, “Sorry, the service was a bit chaotic.” It was indeed.

Children—boatloads of them—made too much noise on this sultry August evening (their summer services were on Thursday evening). The 18-year-old worship leader sang too loudly. I felt the rush of wind over my neck as a child swung a flag too close to my head. During sharing, a young adult with a strip shaved up the middle of his head, talked about how, in one of his many wanderings, a stranger was a servant to him.

We all did actions to one of the songs. There was no sermon but there were opportunities for people to receive prayer, or write or draw a prayer to God. Just before the service ended, we gathered in a circle and commissioned the worship leader who was leaving for a year of service, while the children noisily ate snacks at the back of the worship area.

It was all a bit crazy. But in the chaos, God showed up. The teenage worship leader led me powerfully into God’s presence. I was moved by the

Lord and Saviour, and joined the church. In response to the support of church members over the years, I became more involved in the congregation. The question that ran through my mind when I was 10 reappeared. Although I fought it, I realized that if I were to find peace within myself, I needed to respond. With my wife and 11-month-old daughter in tow, I enrolled at Canadian Mennonite Bible College to test that call.

This past year marked my 20th year in ministry. As I look back, it is clear that the events of my coming to faith continue to influence my ministry. The Holy Spirit was working on me long before I was able to acknowledge God’s presence, or the importance of knowing Jesus. This has helped me to recognize that God brings people to faith in a variety of ways.

I find within myself a patience and humility towards the spiritual walk of

fact there are still churches reaching young adults on the edge. The chorus-based, power-point worship style obviously connected with these folks.

One of the leaders eagerly showed us around after the service, pointing out the new rooms (one a computer room and one a drama room), the art hallway, and funky painted areas—all part of a workshop rotation model they are using for their children’s education. And they don’t even call it Sunday school!

I mused that our churches are dying for want of some divinely inflicted chaos. We have worship pretty much down pat.

When the Spirit appeared in the New Testament, chaos resulted: tongues of fire, babbling speech, spontaneous preaching. Paul’s call to order, was correcting a situation where people were basically nuts for Jesus—in their new life in the Spirit they had gone over the top.

That’s hardly our problem today. Our services are as predictable as a meal at McDonalds, quite boring, often not very nourishing.

I was grateful for the chaos of this

others, especially those outside the church. If God was gracious enough to see beyond my weaknesses, should I not extend that same grace to others? At the same time, I look for ways that the church and I can play a part in others’ pilgrimage towards faith. At the heart of this is the importance of understanding Jesus.

At the heart of Jesus’ life was the refusal to use violence to accomplish his purpose. It was only when I discovered this gospel value that the Jesus I read about became real. I hold to the conviction that whenever the church supports acts of violence it takes away from the witness of Jesus’ life. The message of grace and salvation is called into question.

Like other Christians, I am a “pilgrim on the way.” I enjoy journeying with others as we seek to embody the grace of Jesus in a way that invites others to follow Christ. —**Bob Pauls**

worship service, for all the young people who showed up, for leaders willing to take huge risks to reach people.

I was grateful this was a Mennonite church, and that there are models of churches doing old things in new and chaotic ways.—**Jim Loepp Thiessen**

The writer, former pastor at Shantz Mennonite Church in Ontario, is Missional Formation Partnership facilitator for MC Canada.

Carrots and haircuts

Hello pastor, I’m sorry to bother you, but I need some help.” Holding the phone to my ear, I was glad she couldn’t see the “here we go again” look on my face.

“What sort of help are you looking for?” I sighed as she related a familiar story: hard times, inadequate social assistance, empty wallet, empty fridge. The twist was her dietary restrictions that called for expensive organic foods.

“I’ll see what I can come up with,” I said, giving myself time to think.

I called back. “I have a row of organic carrots in a garden behind the church. You’re welcome to dig. I can also provide a grocery voucher.”

In minutes my phone rang again. “The bus connections are horrible,” she said. “Can you send money?” I rolled my eyes, and again promised to call back.

She called first. In a tearful voice she confessed: “Pastor, the Lord has convicted me, and I need to tell you I lied. I am on a small income, and I do need organic food. But I’m going to my friend’s wedding tomorrow, and I need a haircut so I was trying to get money.” Her voice quavered.

“Thank you for your honesty,” I managed. My mind whirred.

Then a light bulb went on. Someone in our congregation attends a beauty school. I called.

“If that lady can call right away, I think I can set up free styling for her.”

One week later, my phone rang. The voice was clear and happy.

“Hi, it’s me. Remember, I called last week? I went to the wedding, and I was beautiful! It felt so good. By the way, do you have any Bible study materials I can maybe use?”

We’re still talking.—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Four Spiritual Truths of God's salvation

We need a clear, simple framework to explain our understanding of Christianity, says J. Nelson Kraybill. Here he offers a Mennonite version of the Four Spiritual Laws.

If God strikes out at people who do not conform, and even meted out punishment on Jesus at Calvary, why should Christians hesitate to support violence against nations and individuals who transgress? Jesus, however, shows us a better way.

If someone asks you how to become a Christian, can you give a short, clear answer? There are various ways to explain salvation, and theologians write volumes. But in day-to-day witness, many of us need a thumbnail framework to explain the basics of our faith.

In 1965, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade drafted a summary of how to be saved. His “Four Spiritual Laws” are as follows (with his capitalizations):

- 1) God LOVES you and offers a PLAN for your life.
- 2) Man is SINFUL and SEPARATED from God. Thus he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.
- 3) Jesus Christ is God's ONLY provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.
- 4) We must individually RECEIVE Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

In booklet form, Bright backed up each of these points with New Testament texts. Seeking to avoid the scare tactics of fire-and-brimstone evangelism, the Four Spiritual Laws emphasized God's care for each individual.

In Bright's summary, salvation happens when we put Christ rather than self “on the throne” of our personal lives.

The Four Spiritual Laws booklet ends with this prayer: “Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

The Four Spiritual Laws have had an astounding impact on the worldwide church. Translations are available in hundreds of languages. God has used this instrument to point thousands to salvation in Jesus Christ.

Yet many Mennonites—myself included—have not used this formula for sharing the gospel. This is not because the Four Spiritual Laws are wrong, but because Bright's summary gives too incomplete a view of salvation.

Anabaptists generally agree that God is love, that human-kind is sinful, and that we are separated from God. We believe Jesus is the way for us to be reconciled to God. But the Four Spiritual Laws omit essential parts of salvation. They place too much emphasis on the individual, as if salvation is a private transaction apart from God's plan to redeem all of creation.

Ways to explain salvation

The Four Spiritual Laws represent one way to explain salvation. The closing prayer reflects “substitutionary

atonement” theology, which holds that someone must pay when sin offends God. In this view, Jesus took the punishment we deserve.

Such an explanation can be inferred from the New Testament, and should be included in our theological toolbox, but to use that explanation as the primary way to understand salvation could make God look like an angry deity who “evens the score” with violence.

Ethical, social and political implications of salvation are absent in the Four Spiritual Laws approach to evangelism. The prayer, “Make me the kind of person You want me to be,” is too easily understood as a private commitment to holy living.

In much of the West, “Christian” behaviour is taken to mean attending church regularly and giving up lying or sexual immorality or substance abuse. Appropriate Christian behavior generally is not also taken to mean loving our enemies, sharing possessions, caring for the environment, and giving loyalty to Jesus above nation, class or ethnic group.

Substitutionary atonement teaching did not become prominent in the church until medieval times, with Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109). The church of the first centuries emphasized what was called *Christus Victor* (“Christ is victor”) theology: In Christ, God intervened in the world to stand up to Satan and his forces of idolatry, materialism, violence and domination. Jesus came to free all of creation from the warping power of sin, showing with his life and teaching what it means to be fully human in the will of God.

The way God intervened in our broken world was by confronting the structures and practices of evil with truth, authority and suffering love.

Jesus called the Pharisees “white-washed tombs,” dined with despised tax collectors, touched lepers, healed demoniacs, calmed the storm, and called followers to lives more holy than the most esteemed spiritual leaders. In so doing he disarmed the powers of evil by taking off their mask of respectability and legitimacy.

Such bold confrontation evoked response, and Jesus absorbed the abuse that followed without hatred or revenge. Jesus called men and women everywhere to become part of the peaceable Kingdom of God. The Gospels—especially the Sermon on the Mount—spell out in practical terms what this kingdom looks like. Salvation happens when, by Holy Spirit power, we “turn around” (the literal meaning of repentance) and move toward obedience and service in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was more than mere example. He is Lord because he is God-with-us, continuing to break Satan’s stranglehold in our lives and our world.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead allows us to be victorious over sin in our lives and confront the powers of death and sin in our world. We become part of “one new humanity” (Ephesians 2:15) in the church of Jesus Christ.

Salvation for our time

Christus Victor theology is a useful way of explaining salvation in our day, when conflict is so prominent. Terrorism threatens the West as people from less economically-privileged regions strike out at our wealth and power. World religions, especially Islam and Christianity, are competing with each other. Brutal conflicts fester in Palestine, Iraq, Colombia and other parts of the world. Species and habitats disappear as human greed or carelessness destroy the natural world.

In this age of conflicting global allegiances, we need to proclaim that Christ “disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them” through the cross (Colossians 2:15).

Salvation surely has a personal

dimension, and it means letting Christ be the centre of our individual lives. But we live in hope of a “new heaven and new earth” (Revelation 21:1). We know that God through Christ plans to “reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven” (Colossians 1:20). The gospel message compels us to be involved economically, politically and socially in a world which God seeks to redeem.

Because substitutionary atonement theology accents punishment, it could appear to justify war, capital punishment and other forms of violence that plague our world. If God strikes out at people who do not conform, and even meted out punishment on Jesus at Calvary, why should Christians hesitate to support violence against nations and individuals who transgress? Jesus, however, shows us a better way.

The “Lion of the tribe of Judah” also is the “Lamb that was slain.” He has conquered through the cross and resurrection, ransoming people “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:1-9). We who “once were far off [from God] have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace . . .” (Ephesians 2:13, 14). Jesus confronted the powers with truth and has overcome evil with love.

Is there a succinct summary of this salvation theology? I offer my summary (in the box) as an alternative to the Four Spiritual Laws.

No thumbnail explanation will ever do justice to the majestic grace of God in offering us salvation. New Testament authors use a variety of images to explain the meaning of Jesus’ death. We need them all, including vicarious (substitutionary) suffering, sacrifice, redemption, reconciliation, justification and adoption.

But if we must accent one explanation for evangelism today, I opt for *Christus Victor*. Salvation through Jesus Christ is the triumph of love, not the appeasement of a vindictive God.

—**J. Nelson Kraybill**

The writer is a New Testament scholar and president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

Four Spiritual Truths

J. Nelson Kraybill offers this summary of salvation theology, according to Mennonite understandings.

- 1) A God of love made you and me in his image as a good part of creation. God wants us to live at peace with our Maker, our world, and one another.
- 2) Sin destroys harmony in creation when we try to run our own lives apart from God. Suffering, greed, violence and broken relationships result.
- 3) Jesus died on the cross because he confronted the powers of sin that fracture our world. Jesus healed the sick, forgave enemies and lived in the joy of the Kingdom of God.
- 4) You can have a new beginning by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. God forgives when we confess our sin, and the Spirit of God enables us to follow Jesus in all of life.

Prayer: *God, I have sinned by turning away from you and trying to run my own life. Separated from your love, I am shaped by the powers of greed, lust and violence that bring chaos to the world. Forgive my sin, and let me start anew. Thank you for your Son Jesus, who defeated Satan and brought the Kingdom of God to reality. Give me power to live like Jesus—loving the enemy, sharing possessions, serving others, caring for creation and speaking Good News of your salvation. I commit myself to the church as the body of Christ. I give allegiance to Jesus and his way of forgiveness above every other loyalty. Amen.*



Revisiting the 'missional church' vision

When Mennonite Church Canada launched its new structure and program in 2001, a "missional church" vision focused the direction. How has that vision shaped the church? In this two-part series, Jack Suderman offers an assessment.

A missional church is one that organizes its entire life around what it perceives God to be doing. We must learn to "look around and see what we can do to fit in with what God is doing in the world."

That's the way Mennonite Church Canada moderator Ron Sawatsky described the missional vision at Abbotsford 2001. What have we done since then?

Primarily, what has happened in these two years is that the missional vision has been thoroughly aired:

- All area conferences in MC Canada have focused at least one of their assemblies on clarifying this vision for themselves.
- MC Canada staff has been invited to well over half of MC Canada congregations to help process implications of the missional vision for their settings.
- Several congregations have adjusted their program and structure to fit the vision.
- Articles in the *Canadian Mennonite* have focused on many aspects of this vision.
- A Missional Formation Leadership Course is providing dialogue among 50 leaders from across Canada. A similar course is being planned for regions.
- Resources have been generated, including Sunday School curricula and a CD of children's music.
- A new magazine from Mennonite Publishing Network, *Leader: Equipping the missional congregation*, was unveiled last July.
- Colleges and seminary have initiated workshops and courses to explore the missional church vision.
- Mission workers, conference ministers and Christian educators have participated in workshops and conversations about implications. Boards and Councils across the church have devoted time to discern this direction for their ministries.
- There has been much informal conversation.

Is it possible to assess the fruits of this exploration? We have received much feedback at MC Canada and I have tried to monitor both written and verbal responses. I will limit myself to broader areas of response.

(There have been three formal "soundings," one in Canada and two in the United States, on missional emphases. Mennonite Publishing Network asked whether "missional" should be in the title of its new *Leader* magazine. Canadian respondents were 97 percent affirmative, Americans 80 percent. The Missional Project Team USA asked about the usefulness of missional language. About 78 percent were very positive; another 12 percent made suggestions to make it more effective.)

Positive impact

What seems to be "catching?" about this vision?

- *Clarifying purpose.* For many, these conversations have been a reminder that the church indeed has a compelling purpose in the world. This purpose has been clarified in ways that make sense to people.
- *Strengthening identity.* We have heard that there is a heightened sense of identity as God's people, connecting with the purposes of God for the world.
- *Regaining confidence.* Clarifying purpose and identity have generated a renewed sense of confidence in being God's people on earth, even in the face of increasing marginalization of the church in our society.
- *Energy and creativity.* Confidence, identity and purpose are translating into new energy and creativity for

ministry. We have heard numerous stories of new initiatives, reshaping of ministries, and more persons willing to get involved.

- *Alignment.* The concept of "alignment with God" is catching. It is both logical and imaginative.

- *Imagination.* With a renewed sense of identity comes a fresh imagination. This relates not only to new ways of doing things, but to an energized

understanding of how we are to be an alternative people in a post-Christendom world.

- *Global yet local.* The slogan "from across the street to around the world" relates to the missional vision by recognizing

that God is present in all contexts and that all contexts are in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- *Reciprocal movement.* In recognizing the presence of God everywhere, we have gained a new appreciation for the need to learn about God from everywhere. Mission is not a one-way street.

- *New missionary context.* We are increasingly aware that the familiar world of "Christendom" is crumbling. This calls for new assumptions. A missional framework is helping reshape our understanding of the church.—**Jack Suderman**

The writer is executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness Council. The second in this series will look at criticisms and successes of the missional church vision.



Sculpture gathers images of Mennonite experience

Can a work of art reflect 500 years of Mennonite experience? Metal artist Jo-Anne Harder has attempted to do just that in a copper sculpture that hangs in the new atrium of Conrad Grebel University College (see cover).

The sculpture, entitled “Ties that bind,” explores “themes of place, memory, and identity,” according to the artist. The 41 panels include symbols and images of landscape, religious life, family and culture. The work portrays “a psychology of separation and a gradual assimilation and engagement with, not only the rest of the world, but with each other as Mennonites.”

Harder, who lives near Elora, Ontario, said her work tells a story of loss, but also of “endless resilience and hope for new beginnings.”

The seed for the sculpture was planted when D’arcy Luxton, a retired lawyer, inherited money from a family friend. At the time, he was reading Frank Epp’s book, *Mennonites in Canada*, and felt that he should use the inheritance to commission a sculpture on the Mennonite story. Luxton approached Harder about creating a wall piece in metal, with the intention of donating it to an institution.

Everyone agreed that the new four-storey atrium would be the perfect venue for the sculpture. The choice held personal meaning for Harder, since her husband Ed, two daughters and sons-in-law all attended Grebel.

After spending three months in the Grebel library researching Mennonite history, as well as digging through her own family archives, Harder began preliminary plans.

“I wanted to include all parts of the Mennonite story [including] the global Mennonite community we have today,” Harder remarked. Countless images are incorporated into the sculpture. Many are open to interpretation, while some have more definite meaning.

The work is divided into seven rows, with four to seven plates in each row—similar to a patchwork quilt. The

work is nine-and-a-half feet tall and six-and-a-half feet wide.

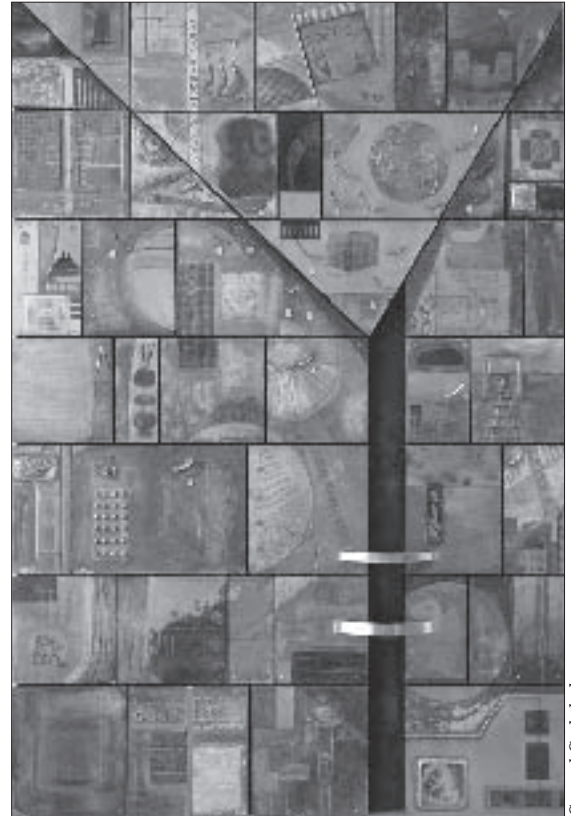
The plates are in no particular order, but each focuses on one element in Mennonite history. Harder worked with individual panels to emphasize the history of separation.

Images include pictures from *Martyrs Mirror*, chicken wire representing imprisonment, shaped notes, a map of a “street village” in Russia, a head covering, ingredients for borscht, and an etched letter from her grandfather to his parents in 1900.

An empty strip running through the sculpture is bridged with two braces, bringing to mind the crossing of rivers and divides. Music pieces of different backgrounds are part of the sculpture, as well as images of bread and wine, and seeds scattered around the earth.

The words “past (im)perfect” on the sculpture suggest that the past, while imperfect, is sometimes idealized in people’s memories, noted Marlene Epp, history professor and dean at Grebel.

The sculpture took almost a year to create. The most meaningful parts were the visual memories of her childhood, such as the traditional floor plan of a Mennonite house. Also, the ladder reminds her of picking cherries on her family’s fruit farm in Niagara.



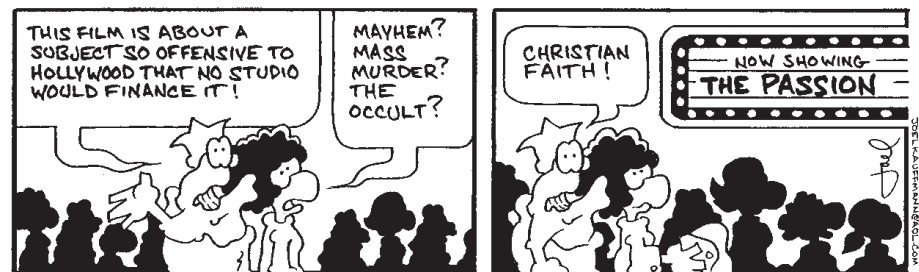
Conrad Grebel photo

Ties that bind by Jo-Anne Harder. 9.5' x 6.5' copper metal sculpture

“Ties can bind you or constrain you,” said Harder, referring to the double-edged title. “Historically and spiritually, we are bound to each other.... The past is binding, and has a direct effect on the future.”

Henry Paetkau, Grebel president, said the sculpture adds “a quality of meaning to our new atrium and is a great conversation piece.”—From Grebel release by **Jennifer Konkle**

Pontius' Puddle



Abbotsford, B.C.

Stage manager explores faith and art

It's a busy time for Evan Klassen, stage manager of the Pacific Theatre in Vancouver. The company has been performing "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," Klassen's first production with the group, and more are coming up.

Klassen's choice of career has been quite a journey. He grew up in Winnipeg where he attended Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church. He graduated from Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute and went to Concord College, now part of Canadian Mennonite University.

The arts have been a part of Klassen's life from the beginning—his parents both played with the Winnipeg Symphony. But when he declared his intention to study theatre, they were "not exactly impressed," hoping that their son would pursue music.

Theatre is "not exactly something you can make a living at, or so they said," Klassen says. Nonetheless, they have supported him. And making a living in the theatre has not been a problem.

"I have worked in the arts for a long time in Winnipeg...doing ushering, concessions, box office, house management and more recently as a stage manager," he says. "I have worked a lot with Manitoba Theatre Centre and the Manitoba Opera. I also got to spend the last summer in Nova Scotia, working as the Apprentice Stage Manager at the Atlantic Theatre Festival, a summer repertory theatre company."

As a stage manager, Klassen ensures that rehearsals and performances run smoothly and keeps an up-to-date record of the playing text and associated materials.

"I 'call' the show each performance, which means I make sure that all technical cues like lights, sound, effects, scenery are executed accurately," he says. He works closely with actors, directors, producers, publicity, and costume designers.

Working at Pacific Theatre, a company founded by Christian actors, is an opportunity to further explore the connection between faith and art.

"As I took my theatre training, I was also working on my Christian Studies degree. This gave me a great opportunity to think through the connection between my faith and art," he says.

"Art, I believe, is a great expression of faith and of our connection to God. It is worship, much like hymns, dramas and sermons that we present on Sunday morning. Theatre specifically provides the chance for the spoken word, visual art and music to

come together in a meaningful way. What better way to express our love for God?"

But Klassen has found that most people in the church don't see the connection between theatre and worship. His own congregation was not sure how to support him in his choice of profession.



Klassen

"Any attempt to explain that I work in theatre but not as an actor was usually met with blank stares and comments of, 'Oh, good for you,' but with no real understanding of what is involved," he says. "I think that the biggest problem that I've come up to... is a lack of understanding of what theatre is."

Klassen is happy to be working in an environment in which he is able to express his faith.

"The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" is perhaps one of the best plays to exemplify love for God, he says. He felt "incredibly honoured to be working on this production of a classic piece of Christian literature."

Klassen will be stage manager for a number of productions coming up at Pacific Theatre, including "Hungry Season" and "Chickens." The theatre web site is at www.pacifictheatre.org.
—Angelika Dawson

Vancouver, B.C.

Calendar features Christian seasons

As the art director for a church calendar, Lois Klassen saw an opportunity to interpret scripture through visual images.

"Worship is so often text-based," said Klassen. "It's great when a congregation finds ways to engage artists." She works with textiles, collage-based sculptures and installations.

The calendar, *Salt of the Earth*, is produced by University Hill United Church here. Although it recognizes the twelve months of the year, it marks time by the seven traditional seasons of the Christian church: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost.

The calendar, now in its fifth year, was the brainchild of Ed Searcy, minister of University Hill, who hoped it would challenge Christians to think about time in a different way. The calendar has been distributed to United churches across the country and sold as a fundraiser for mission projects.

This year, producers paid special attention to the art, with images commissioned for each season. Klassen worked with two other artists: James

Ceaser, a glass and metal sculptor, and Juliet Neun-Hornick, an 11-year-old painter and sculptor.

The calendar lists weekly readings from the lectionary. For her images, Klassen chose Luke 1:78-79: "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

"I liked the idea of the anticipation of light because we spend so much time sitting in the darkness, waiting," said Klassen. Her work shows footprints around a shimmering fabric circle, in a darkened theatre.

In another piece Klassen created, an empty wooden bowl sits on top of a comforter, which she made from donated fabric scraps for Mennonite Central Committee. "Here I Am" (Isaiah 58:6-9) is written on the bottom of the bowl.

"When you've given everything away and the bowl is empty, that's when you'll find God," she said.

To obtain a calendar, call (604) 224-7011 or go to www.uhills.westweb.com.

—From report by Marcie Good

Cursed is the ground: War and God's creation

The Christian story of creation describes a garden of beauty and abundance. Man and woman live at peace with one other and with God.

When they sin, they are driven from the garden into inhospitable land. Because of their sin, God says: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you..." (Genesis 3).

When Cain kills his brother Abel, God says: "Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength" (Genesis 4).

These stories point to a connection between peace and the state of the earth. God brings forth a wondrous creation. Where people live in harmony with God's intention and in peace with one other, the beauty and abundance of the garden is preserved. Where there is violence and sin, the land is cursed and, in turn, curses.

The sin of violent conflict is one of the preeminent ways that humankind contributes to the "cursing" of God's creation. Warfare pollutes air and water, erodes soil, denudes forests, destroys natural habitats and kills wildlife. Mass movements of refugees put undue pressure on the land. The collateral damage of warfare to the environment is colossal.

For example, during the Vietnam War, the U.S. military used a potent

herbicide called Agent Orange to denude forests, making it more difficult for Viet Cong guerrillas to take cover in the jungle. Besides creating severe health problems for the population, about 40 percent of Vietnam's forest was destroyed, some permanently.

During the Gulf War in 1991, oil production sites were primary targets for both U.S.-led and Iraqi forces. About 10 million barrels of crude oil were spilled into the Persian Gulf or turned into toxic fumes. Some 30,000 marine birds were killed, 20 percent of mangrove swamps contaminated, and 50 percent of coral reefs affected. In addition, missiles coated with depleted uranium disbursed tons of radioactive dust through the atmosphere.

The impact of this environmental disaster has demonstrated itself in dramatic increases in cancers and birth defects. The long-term impact on soil, animals and groundwater remains unknown. Weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, threaten the very survival of the earth.

A significant environmental factor in

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is water. About a quarter of the water use by Israel originates in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza). Although Israel restricts water use, illegal Israeli settlements use about four times as much as Palestinians.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda has been portrayed by the western media

as an ethnic conflict between Hutus and Tutsis. Analysts argue that ecological scarcity and structures of international trade were more significant factors.

Rapid population growth after independence, plus rapid transformation of pasture into agricultural land for export crops—primarily coffee—put undue pressure on the soil. As land became more scarce and degraded, poverty deepened. When the price of coffee plummeted in the early 1990s, resentments were ripe for exploitation by political factions.

Analysts suggest that the growth of terrorist groups, particularly those that target western interests, are rooted in resentment over unequal access to the earth's resources. Peoples around the world are aware that laws governing financial assistance and global trade benefit those who are already wealthy. They see their agricultural land, forests and fishing grounds depleted to meet western demands, their water resources under the control of foreign corporations.

Many view the current "war on terrorism" as not about democracy and freedom, but about American control over Middle Eastern oil.

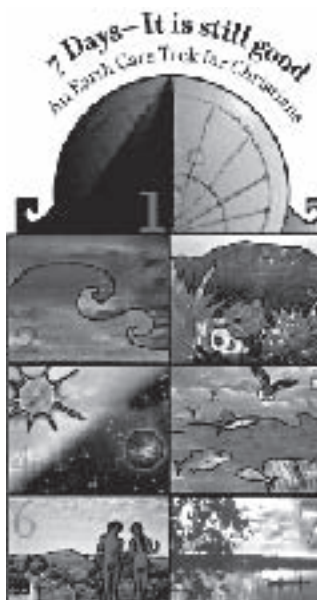
Degradation of nature and conflicts over resources are important causes of violent conflicts, both within and between states. Human violence and ecological destruction feed each other, and the land is cursed.

Peacemaking and earthkeeping must go hand in hand. Peacemaking must include care for the earth and just access to the earth's resources.

The apostle Paul promises that in God's good time, God will bring healing to a broken creation (Romans 8:19-20). Human sin and violence, and the curse they cast upon the land, will be overcome.

In the meantime, Christian peacemakers are called to live in ways that participate in that healing.—**Esther Epp-Tiessen**

The writer coordinates Peace Ministries for Mennonite Central Committee Canada.



7 Days is an "earth care trek" that links faith with ecological concerns. The web-based trek is divided into monthly topics corresponding to the days of creation. The site offers information, material for reflection and worship, and suggestions for action. 7 Days comes from Peace Ministries, Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Find out more at www.mcc.org/7days.

Letters

Letters express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily those of Canadian Mennonite or the church. We publish as many as space permits, unless they attack individuals or become too repetitious. Letters are edited for length and style. See page 2 for address information.

Church membership not most important

My wife and I have rejoined the church we belonged to before we left Winnipeg 17 years ago. So we have moved back into familiar territory. The church has welcomed us beyond expectations, for which we are grateful.

Having been part of different Mennonite churches in different communities over the years, we have gained many friends, a rich experience. But rejoining a church does cause renewed thought about what it means.

Many adjectives have been used to define what is meant by church. Many of these have lost their impact as new

terminology appears. Many have had little impact on, or meaning to, non-believers.

The term “visible” church seems to have all but disappeared. “Missional” is being used by many churches, presumably to differentiate between those churches with a mission and those without. And then we have the term “seeker-friendly,” as though some are not.

But my thoughts go beyond all this to whether signing the church membership register is equivalent to having one’s name in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Not at all. I say this in full recognition of the significance of church membership, but also of the overriding significance of being in the Book of Life.

Scripture tells us that there were both wise and foolish virgins, the latter being denied access to the Bridegroom. Scripture also tells us there will be those claiming to have prophesied in Christ’s name, cast out demons and done other works in his name, to whom Christ will say: “Depart from me, you workers of iniquity; I never knew you.”

How sad. From this one must conclude that there are those who are

able to keep up very respectable appearances but in the end will be rejected by Christ. This reminds me of a refrain: “Does the light still shine for you, my friend? / Does Jesus know your name? / Does he know the secrets of your soul / And how you played life’s game?”

Something to think about and read about in his word.—**Frank J. Thiessen, Winnipeg, Man.**

Church’s priorities are skewed

We have just celebrated the season of peace and goodwill toward all. As the calendar turns over, media report the following:

- A war to halt the production of “weapons of mass destruction” continues in Iraq with skilled militia and weapons of destruction.
- North Korea pursues a nuclear weapons program while its citizens starve.
- An AIDS epidemic is ravaging Africa and an earthquake has killed thousands in Iran.
- Business has improved at Canadian banks with record earnings being reported. Food banks too report that

Ushering in the New Year

I have wonderful friends. I love them dearly. They know me through and through, and manage to love me anyway. However, even friendship’s fealty could not prevent my buddies from smiling mischievously when I announced, at the end of November, “I’m ushering at church next month.”

You see, I’m not what you’d call a logistically skilled person. I lose things. Fix-it projects around the house are never attended to. Complex tasks—like checking the oil—require a major output of thought and energy.

In spite of this less-than-rousing response from my support group, I resolved to do a good job as usher. I helped to slip in the bulletin inserts. I greeted people with genuine bonhomie. I offered each person a bulletin, deferring non-violently to my partner when it looked as though he needed to hand out a few to keep things even. I even managed to pass the offering plate with reasonably well-coordinated aplomb.

Then I confronted the big challenge. It

was the last Sunday of the month: sharing Sunday. That meant no sermon. People’s sharing would be the message. I was given



the clip-on mini-mike to bring to each speaker.

“Unless you’d like me to do it,” said my ushering partner, who was filling in for his adult son.

“No,” I boomed, with far more confidence than I felt and leaning heavily on an ever-popular potluck image: “This will be a piece of cake.”

I was nervous at first but Leroy, our sound man, patiently showed me how to

work the mike. I felt like that rather famous “Homeric” cartoon character as I repeated to myself: “Mike goes on, mike goes off.” I sensed a pattern.

Before long, I was suavely striding from person to person, holding the mike for each. I felt downright useful. I even did my best Las Vegas imitation and said, “Well, since I’m holding the mike, I’d like to do a little sharing, too.” Life couldn’t get any better, thought I, for such a practically challenged sort.

I thought wrongly. Our chief usher asked me if I’d be willing to serve again in 2004. I beamed. In some mystical Mennonite way, I had arrived.

So, I’m signed up for November 2004. If you happen by our church during that month, you should be able to recognize me. I’ll be the guy leaning over the mike, trying to remind himself of that on and off pattern that seemed so easy to understand a few months ago when I ushered in a new personal era of organization and common sense.

business is up and it's difficult to keep up with demand.

- Governments are freezing programs and warning Canadians not to "count on government largesse," while record numbers of children are growing up hungry, illiterate and below the poverty line.

In such a world, opportunities to obey Christ's command to "love thy neighbour" are abundant.

So, what issues currently dominate the discussion in the B.C. conference and the broader church? How do we as disciples of the Prince of Peace respond to the world in which we live and have stewardship over?

We single out an easily targeted minority and use it as a lightning rod for all things wrong with the conference. Ultimatums are delivered by pastors and leaders. Members are divided. The needy are forgotten.

Wow. What an inspiring message for the new year. Should we expect our numbers to grow this year?

May peace be with us... and inspire our better natures.—**Gordon Wiebe, Westbank, B.C.**

World put off by division in the church

We live in a world where the Christian church is in a tenuous position. It does much good, yet sometimes what is portrayed to the world is its divisions and pain—whether its own pain or the pain it inflicts on others.

In light of that, and in light of our call by Christ Jesus, I'm saddened to hear of the discussions in Mennonite Church British Columbia, as well as the responses of some congregations to the discussions on homosexuality.

The church has such potential to do good, yet we get caught up in issues

that detract from that ability. Divisions within the church cause people to question not only the church, but Jesus. Why would people follow Jesus if his followers can't agree?

We have a responsibility to other congregations within our denomination to try to remain united, despite our differences. We have a responsibility to other Mennonite groups, and other denominations, to remain open to discussion and learn from each other. We have a responsibility to Jesus to present to the world something cohesive and whole, not something that fractures and causes pain.

In the article about the discussions in British Columbia (Dec. 22, page 20),

a youth pastor was quoted as saying that youth in our society think the church is trying to brainwash them. I'd add that the church doesn't speak a language that youth understand.

We use Christian words and concepts, assuming that all who walk through the doors of the church will understand what we're talking about. That is simply not the case anymore.

When I did a Bible study with youth a number of years ago, very few of them could give a definition of the word "grace." However, youth in our world do understand divisions, and the pain that can be caused by them. What image are we portraying when we split over issues, instead of working together despite differences?

When we discuss topics such as homosexuality we forget that we are not just discussing an issue, but also how we view the Bible. Who interprets the Bible? Which interpretation will we hold as authoritative?

We in Mennonite Church Canada and the broader church have a lot of work to do.—**Katie Derksen, Ottawa, Ont.**

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Winnipeg, Man.

Leaders share stories of how God is working

Former enemies worship together. Ash trays outside the church doors offer respite for new worshippers.

Stories of changed lives and changing congregations highlighted the final session of the one-year missional leadership course sponsored by Mennonite Church Canada.

Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen told the powerful story of West Abbotsford, a B.C. congregation of older members that has opened its doors to residents of two addiction treatment centres.

“It was a church that wasn’t sure it really had a reason to exist anymore,” she said. The congregation now has “butt cans” outside its front doors allowing smokers to take a quick break.

“God has given so much compassion, so much flexibility to the elderly people in our church. I just stand in awe,” she adds. The congregation is seeking to rezone a nearby property so it can open a transition house for recovering addicts.

Lay leaders, pastors and others have been studying together and inspiring each other through four three-day sessions in 2003.

Ferd Funk, pastor at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, told a passionate story of personal renewal through a recent learning tour to Colombia organized by MC Canada. He told of a Colombian congregation that welcomes men who have left paramilitary groups in a country that has been locked in a bitter civil war for over 50 years.

These men, seen as deserters, live in constant fear for their lives and the lives of their families. Now they meet former enemies in church.

“For now,” says Funk, “the greatest victory is that dogs and cats eat out of the same plate. The lives of men and women who were once enemies are being transformed by the power, the love, and the forgiveness of Jesus



Billy Chiew, youth pastor at Vancouver Chinese Mennonite, shares a moment with Jim Shantz, conference minister of Mennonite Church Alberta.

Christ. This is what happens when justice and peace embrace.”

Native church leader Norman Meade told the story of a struggling congregation that is choosing leaders from within. The Manigotagon Community Chapel in northeastern Manitoba lost its leaders in last year’s cuts to MC Canada ministries. Meade, a soon-to-be retired provincial government employee, has chosen to return to his home community and take up the mantle of leadership.

He is confident that the congregation will thrive. Of a recent worship service, he said, “Eight people participated...some preach, some pray, some teach, and together we are one. We have come a long way in 45 years, but we have a long way to go.”

For some, the missional leadership course provided tools for renewal. Billy Chiew, youth pastor at Vancouver Chinese Mennonite, hopes that people in his church will “really get excited once again about God, about what he is going to do.” He believes the course

will make him an instrument of renewal.

For others, the course was an affirmation of their own leadership. Ed Olfert, pastor at Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, said, “In many ways we were a missional church long before we knew the language. This has certainly sharpened the understandings and given us permission to go with even more passion in some of the directions we’re going.”

He added, “These 80 hours [of study] have been a tremendous encouragement that God calls us to go towards hope, to name hope, to get alongside hope and to have that energize us.”

Some of the stories told at the final session are available in audio format at www.meennonitechurch.ca/news. MC Canada hopes to offer Missional Church Leadership courses in area conferences in the future.—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Sincelejo, Colombia

Kidnappers release Colombian man

Juan Castilla Urueta, kidnapped in northern Colombia on December 17, was released after 12 days. Urueta is the son of a Mennonite leader who is regional coordinator of Justapaz, the peace and justice ministry of the Colombian Mennonite Church.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia allowed Urueta to return to his family on December 30, after Mennonite leaders helped to negotiate a ransom. Another man kidnapped with Urueta was also released.

Urueta and a friend were working at a farm owned by the Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace (Council of Evangelical Churches of Colombia) when armed men arrived and

forced them into a van. The farm grows food for displaced people. About a week later, Urueta's family received a message saying that their son was unharmed.

At the time, it was not clear who the kidnappers were. Several guerrilla groups are believed to operate in the area.

Urueta's case is an example of the suffering in the Montes de Maria area and of the desperate need for peacebuilding, say representatives from Justapaz. The peace and justice group is working with other organizations and churches on human rights issues in this troubled region of Colombia.—Mennonite World Conference release from Justapaz reports

Funding cuts endanger task force

The Mennonite Environmental Task Force is on the verge of collapse, after almost 15 years of promoting environmental concerns.

The task force has no more financial or administrative support from Mennonite Church USA and Canada and, given MC USA's recent staff reductions, no official liaison within church structures.

The task force "is at a crossroads," said David Neufeld, acting chair. Neufeld is manager of water policy at the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. After a December 3 conference call, members are cautiously optimistic about convincing the churches on both sides of the border to help, he said.

The task force was part of a "Stewardship of the Earth" resolution passed by delegates to the joint assembly at Normal, Illinois, in 1989. The resolution said that the low priority churches give to environmental problems is a serious mistake, because caring for the environment relates to the "Christian's desire to be an earth caretaker and peacemaker."

Task force members agree that they don't want just a web-based group that is not officially linked to the church, said Neufeld.

Members plan to send a second letter to MC Canada and USA re-

questing that churches provide minimal help, such as providing donations through the church, assisting with mailing, hosting the web site and appointing members.

The letter follows "Agenda for a renewed Mennonite Environmental Task Force," a report submitted over a year ago. The task force received no formal reply to this submission, Neufeld said, and the group will not proceed if church officials do not respond.

"We're not prepared to go it alone," said Neufeld. "Verbal support isn't good enough."

Church leaders acknowledge that the task force may not survive. Many networking relationships are currently in peril, noted Marlene Kropf, director of the MC USA Office of Congregational Life, which had been providing a liaison to the task force.

Both Canadian and American church leaders say they are still concerned about environmental issues.

"How do you work creatively at integrating this environmental concern into the staffing and funding that we have left?" asked Justina Heese, executive secretary of Christian Formation for MC Canada.

Prior to the budget woes, the task force prepared resource materials,

Surrey, B.C.

Big changes for MCC Housing

This year marks the 20th anniversary and a new name for MCC Housing, a program of Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia.

Delegates at the recent annual meeting of MCC B.C. voted overwhelmingly in favour of new directions for the organization and a new name—More Than a Roof. Among the changes is the end of ties to MCC.

"This is a logical next step in establishing independence," Housing director Lorne Epp told delegates. "As we enter our 20th anniversary year, it's become increasingly apparent that these changes be a necessary and appropriate part of our business plan."

The organization houses approximately 650 people and manages over \$20 million in assets, making it larger than MCC B.C. can be responsible for.

The MCC B.C. board applauds the work done by the Housing Society in creating its new name and constitution, said Ernie Schmidt, MCC B.C. board chair. "We look forward to a continued healthy working relationship as together we stand with those who need assistance and encouragement."

Delegates discussed accountability of the new housing entity and membership structure. The session concluded with Schmidt leading in a commissioning prayer for the work of More Than A Roof Mennonite Housing.—From More Than A Roof release

held seminars, contributed articles to Mennonite publications, and distributed a newsletter. It financed its activities through fundraisers, a bequest and small stipends from the denomination.

Perhaps its most significant contribution was *Creation and the Environment* (Johns Hopkins University Press), essays from a "Creation summit" in 1995.

The Confession of Faith includes "some very clear statements about caring for the environment," said Neufeld. "Is the church prepared to back up its statements with some modest support?"—From report by **Kristi Bahrenburg Janzen**, *Mennonite Weekly Review*

Macau, China

Leaving ancestor worship behind

With the breeze off the Pearl River Delta ruffling their clothes, A-Bik and her aged mother reach into their bag, take out handfuls of splintered wood and fling them far out onto the waves.

Earlier in the day, they had gone to an ancestral temple to get the name plaque of A-Bik's father who died about 20 years ago.

Although she and her mother had long ago stopped worshipping the soul of their loved one, her mother recently urged A-Bik to "take care of" that remaining plaque.

Following a recent seminar on deliverance at the Macau Mennonite Church, A-Bik realized that it was important to deal with this. They invited my husband George and me to go along.

A-Bik is a single mother, living in government housing and raising two sons, ages 17 and 11. She is on the janitorial staff at a large school and also cleans at the Mennonite Centre.

In a recent conversation, I asked her how she came to know Jesus.

"I grew up in a Buddhist family that worshipped anything and everything: ancestors, gods, goddesses, and at any little shrine along the road," she said.

She heard about Jesus when she was little and would sometimes attend the Catholic church. When she was pregnant with her youngest child, she was very distressed. A school social worker introduced me to a pastoral counsellor.

"When I first accepted Jesus it was because my life was so difficult and so I wanted



A-Bik enjoys arranging flowers for the Sunday worship services.

eternal life," she said. "Then I came to realize that Jesus has prepared a way for me to walk, that he wants to set me free here and now, so I am in the process of changing. I still have so many areas in which I need to be set free!"

A-Bik and I started meeting to study and pray. We now have a small group of women, most invited by A-Bik. She asks for prayers from women in North America: "Please pray for my economic situation. Pray that my children do well in school and that they will walk in God's way.

"I desire that they also marry Christian women. Pray also for my relationship with my mother."—From report by **Tobia Veith**

Tobia and George Veith, members of Cornerstone Church Mennonite in Saskatoon, are Mennonite Church Canada workers in Macau. This summer they will be joined by Tim and Cindy Buhler (Northview Community Church, Abbotsford, B.C.) who are currently in Hong Kong. Shirley Liem (from Kudus, Indonesia) also works with the Macau team supported by MC Canada.



A church barbecue on a rooftop in Macau is the result of mission outreach by George and Tobia Veith, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers there. They have been joined by Joseph and Janet Li, a couple attending Macau Mennonite Church. Paul Ng, a young man with whom they have worked, has expressed a desire to be baptized. On November 2, church members gathered on the roof of his apartment for a barbecue and a house blessing on his new apartment. Paul shared how Jesus is transforming his life.—MC Canada

Winnipeg, Man.

Manitoba board faced difficult year

Board members of Mennonite Church Manitoba admit that the past year has been a challenge.

The search for a new executive director, developing bylaws to align with the new vision and constitution, and dealing with financial pressures have weighed on board members. More recently, they have felt accusation from their constituency.

"The board felt considerable criticism from the delegate body at Plum Coulee," said Edgar Rempel, executive director of MC Manitoba. "We're not infallible, but how can we communicate and dialogue about issues and concerns in a way that isn't damaging?"

The criticism board members heard on October 18 was not unexpected. "They were aware there were certain individuals quite upset with the way the board was proceeding," said Rempel, particularly with cutbacks to program and to the *Canadian Mennonite* subscription plan.

Two of eight board members resigned following the October meeting. The board appointed Gordon Driedger from Altona to complete Robert Martens' term, and Ted Fransen from Morden to complete Al Loeppky's term.

"The board has followed through on all the decisions [presented at the October 18 meeting]. As of January 31, the Abundant Life radio program will end. The recording engineer position ended on November 30 and we will continue recording services on a contract basis," said Rempel.

"The board feels the ministry redefinition [particularly concerning Evangelism and Service Ministry and the new Church Community Building Ministry] can't be delayed."

Delegates at the October meeting spoke to decisions but were unable to provide a mandate to the board because there was not a quorum. Delegates urged against the cuts. The 2004 budget, however, proposes cutting MC Manitoba's financial commitment to *Canadian Mennonite* by 50 percent in subsequent years.

The board will present its budget at

the annual delegate sessions on February 20-21 at Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain. It projects an overall increase of three percent in congregational giving.

"If congregations are able to provide... a one-half percent increase, we will be able to begin planning for some initiatives in the Leadership and Evangelism and Service Ministries," said Rempel.

Frustration over the lack of a quorum at the October meeting prompted a proposed constitutional change for annual meetings. The current constitution does not allow for additional votes assigned by congregations to be used in determining the quorum, which stands at 199, or 60 percent of eligible delegates and 60 percent of congregations represented.

The board will propose a reduction in the level of quorum required and is urging congregations to send a full slate of delegates (1 for every 30 members) to the February meetings.

A second constitutional revision recognizes that congregations of MC Manitoba are also members of MC Canada.

The February delegate meeting will focus on "together presenting Jesus Christ to the world," the third part of the MC Manitoba vision statement.

"We want our constituency to hear stories of our congregations and we want the congregations to hear the stories of our ministries," said Rempel. The board hopes that the theme and concerns that board and delegates bring will inspire dialogue and demonstrate unity.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Winnipeg, Man.

Ecumenical involvement significant

Although Mennonite Church Canada is a small denomination, its involvement and influence in the broader church is significant.

So said Dan Nighswander, MC Canada general secretary, in a recent report on meetings of the Canadian Council of Churches he attended last November.

Keith Regehr (Breslau Mennonite Church) represents the Council in the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network, and brought a report to the November meeting. Nancy Regehr (Rockway Mennonite Church) presented a report on behalf of Project Ploughshares, a peace project of the Council, headed by Ernie Regehr.

The Council also received an update from Gord Alton, pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Stouffville, Ontario, who represented the Council at a consultation on the theological implications of AIDS.

Other Council initiatives are also of interest to Mennonites. There was a two-day forum in Ottawa in October, "Challenges of state sovereignty, unilateralism and intervention: Case studies of Iraq, ballistic missile defence

and the Congo."

A conference on "Just trade agreements? Churches in North America addressing globalization" was to be held January 11-14. Youth delegates presented a proposal for a Canadian Christian youth conference. The idea was received enthusiastically, said Nighswander.

A biotechnology reference group has produced a publication called "Life: Patent Pending." Reports may be found on the Council web site at www.ccc-cce.ca.

A resolution for MC Canada to become a full member of the Council, and of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, will be presented in 2004.

Nighswander said a significant part of the Council meeting was participants speaking about what they value in their faith traditions.

"This kind of honest denominational-ecumenical sharing represents to me the most important quality of the CCC format and membership," said Nighswander. "I continue to be impressed at the amount of time this group devotes to prayer and Bible study."—From MC Canada release

Strasbourg, France

Koinonia quilt travels the globe

The Koinonia quilt, begun in Africa last August, is on a mission to do battle with AIDS. It has already travelled to North America and Europe, with more stops to come—including Ontario, in February.

At Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in Zimbabwe, more than 400 people from around the world hand-stitched patches onto muslin squares. The patchwork then travelled to California, where the last blocks were sewed and Elaine Wiens from Reedley did the final machine quilting.

On October 27, the quilt was displayed at an AIDS workshop in Fresno, California. Then it went to Germany, for display in Mennonite churches in Berlin and Regensburg, and for AIDS awareness events.

On December 6, the quilt arrived in France for display in churches there, beginning with Strasbourg Mennonite. For their Christmas project this year, French Mennonites collected money

for the AIDS work of Congolese Mennonites.

On January 18, the quilt will be at a Weierhof Mennonite Church service, one of a series of televised services on the theme of peace happening in Germany this year. Weierhof was selected since it is a historic peace church, said pastor Andrea Lange.

"This is exactly the kind of thing I want to have happen with this quilt," said Pakisa Tshimika, an AIDS expert who works with MWC's Gift Sharing Program. While he and a colleague were planning workshops about AIDS for the Zimbabwe assembly, they came up with the "global Anabaptist quilt" idea. Tshimika knew nothing about making a quilt, but knew a college classmate, Pauline Aguilar from

Reedley, California, who had donated a quilt to raise funds for MCC's Generations at Risk project.

Aguilar arrived in Zimbabwe with fabric and solicited help from conference goers. People stitched the tiny pieces together, often adding their name, the name of an AIDS victim or a special message.

"It's a true celebration of unity in diversity," said Aguilar. "Each block is unique, but the variations of size and stitching don't stop the flow of connection and unity."

Tshimika expressed hope that the travelling quilt will pay its way, connect churches and people involved with AIDS programs, and raise funds for the struggle against AIDS. To request the quilt, e-mail:

PakisaTshimika@mwc-cmm.org.

—From MWC release by **Ferne Burkhardt**

Akron, Pa.

Volunteers advised on border crossings

Despite controversy about security procedures at American border crossings, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) projects in the United States are continuing to receive Canadian volunteers.

"The border is a hurdle, but it is a small one," said Lois Nickel, coordinator in the MDS office in Winnipeg. Although volunteers have expressed frustration over increased scrutiny, MDS has noticed little change in the number of volunteers turned away in the name of Homeland Security. (In the December 22 issue, two Saskatchewan volunteers described their experience of being turned back.)

"In our experience, the personality of the border official remains the strongest factor in border rejections," said Carla Hunt, MDS human resources coordinator. "A handful of volunteers are turned away each year, but the majority is welcomed."

In the first week of 2004, 12 Canadian volunteers crossed successfully. MDS relies on open borders to support the hundreds of volunteers who travel back and forth each year.

The border has been an obstacle since the organization began in 1950. Since September 11, 2001, however, volunteers are reporting lengthier interrogations and

extensive searches by border officials who perform their duties under the watchful eye of Homeland Security officials.

In December, the security threat level in the U.S. was raised. Fingerprinting and photographing visitors has begun. These changes do not affect visitors from Canada, but they do make volunteers wonder what will happen next.

MDS has released suggestions that have helped volunteers in the past:

1) Volunteers may contact the Winnipeg office to obtain a letter of introduction stating the destination and intended length of assignment.

2) At the border, volunteers should be prepared to show passports, or driver's licence and birth certificate. Passports may become mandatory soon.

3) Volunteers are encouraged to be polite but not offer more information than asked for. If asked, they should clarify that they are volunteers, not workers. If their credibility is questioned, they should present the letter.

4) Past volunteers report greater success at crossings with high volumes of traffic.

Although MDS cannot guarantee a volunteer's entry into the U.S., the organization welcomes all who wish to help. Questions can be directed to the Canadian MDS office, phone toll-free 1-866-261-1274.—From MDS release

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Post-secondary Education

Coping with the double cohort

Siblings Michael and Erin Janzen both graduated from high school and came to Conrad Grebel University College the same year. Are they twins? No, but because of Ontario's educational restructuring, they graduated together as part of the "double cohort."

The decision to remove Ontario Academic Credits (OACs or Grade 13) from the high school curriculum resulted in a double graduating class in 2003, and an extra 32,350 students ready for post-secondary education.

How did the double cohort work out at Mennonite schools in Ontario?

United Mennonite Educational Institute in Leamington reported that all its graduates stayed in the province, either for school or work. Jane Klassen, secretary at UMEI, noted that the biggest change for UMEI students is that they no longer have to switch to another school for the OAC year (UMEI offers grades 9-12).

Tom Bileski, director of Community Relations at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, said they had "pretty well a normal graduating class in an abnormal setting." While 30-50 percent of Ontario graduates returned to their school for another year, Rockway had only three students return. However, many decided to take a year off before going to university.

With 72 percent of students going on to university (down from 80 percent last year), all but 3 students from Rockway got into their first choice of university.

Conrad Grebel worked hard to prepare for the extra students. The residence building was expanded, classrooms reorganized, and an apartment building constructed for upper-level students.

"The looming double cohort turned out to be the catalyst that Grebel needed to begin a massive building project," said Paul Penner, Operations Manager. "Grebel can now accommodate 172 students on campus—up from 116." In addition to the yearly growing demand for Grebel courses, there is a marked increase in first-year courses this year.

To accommodate the increased need for housing, Grebel had some "off-campus residents" in the fall term. These students ate all their meals at Grebel and participated in residence life. They moved into the residence for the winter term.

Continued on page 20

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Double cohort

Grebel has only eight students from outside Ontario, but plans are to admit more next year. While the Mennonite number remained at about 50 percent, 67 percent of the residents are in first year, and only 7 percent were from UMEI or Rockway.

Erin, a Rockway grad who is in environmental science, could tell that she had had an additional year of high school. "I've noticed the difference, especially in calculus," she said. "Most of the stuff we're doing is review for me, but the majority of the class (grade 12 graduates) haven't learned it yet."

Marlene Epp, dean at Conrad Grebel, has not noticed a difference. In fact, a grade 12 graduate earned the highest mark in her second-year Mennonite History course last term. Epp noted that students needed an extra high average to get into university last year, so these students have all met high standards. —From Conrad Grebel release by Jennifer Konkle



Students and guests braved stormy conditions on December 5 to witness the groundbreaking for a new student centre at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C. Turning the soil, from left, are president Paul Wartman, chair Brian Friesen, student president Nathan Ramer and project manager Fred Strumpski. The building's 34,000 square feet will house food services, career and wellness centres, student life offices, prayer chapel, lounges and activity areas to serve the campus community of more than 600. Planners anticipate that the centre will be completed by September.—From Columbia release

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AMBS phonathon contacts alumni

Thirteen students from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary phoned alumni last fall in the first fundraising phonathon in more than 10 years. "It was especially enlightening for them to realize what a seminary education really costs and how important the church is in helping to sponsor their education," said Ron Ringenberg, director of development at



the seminary, located in Elkhart, Indiana. The goal was to raise at least \$25,000 in pledges. The students contacted 564 alumni and raised \$38,313. Subsequent gifts, however, have been larger—Ringenberg estimates current results at \$46,000, of which \$17,000 came from 134 Canadian alumni.—
From AMBS release



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Church in Peru exploding with growth

It was Steve Shank's second visit to Yarcacunca, over 14,000 feet above sea level in the Peruvian Andes, and he couldn't believe his eyes. Last February he had shown the Jesus film in this remote Quechua village of 30 families, and Shank had met only a handful of believers.

Now a vibrant fellowship of 30 baptized believers proudly showed off their new adobe block and thatch church (built for \$60) in the village. The young pastor is training in the Mennonite Bible Institute, sometimes travelling six hours down a treacherous mountain, or hosting a Bible teacher in his village.

"Up there, we looked down on a jet plane landing," Shank said. "But we had to stoop when we entered the village homes. The low ceilings and connected animal corrals help provide much-needed heat."

After visiting what may well be the highest Mennonite church in the world, Shank and Ruben Carrasco, president of the conference of ten Peruvian Mennonite churches, travelled down through the district of Paruro.

"Rains in the early part of the year make travel to and from the villages treacherous and nearly impossible," Shank explained. "It's a region of 80 villages that have never had an evangelistic witness, but it's starting. People are spiritually hungry, and the gospel is spreading rapidly."

"The Peruvian Mennonite conference has grown from four to ten churches in the last year and a half. The church in San Juan de Quiwares, for example, is made up of eight families.... They don't have their own church building yet, but they're already reaching out to two neighbouring villages," said Shank who is with Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), based in Virginia.

The Mennonite church also oversees a health program. Patricia Verde, a Honduran doctor who has worked on the EMM team for five years, coordinates the program. Along with Angela Kline, a nurse from Pennsylvania, she visits Quechua villages to set up



Photo by Jonathan Charles

A church retreat at the San Jeronimo Church in 2001 brought together members of five Mennonite churches in Peru.

mobile clinics. In each village where the church has spread, the medical team follows, also training local Christians in primary health care.

"We're seeing whole communities transformed," Shank said. "Verde is as much an evangelist as she is a doctor. She prays for people even as she dispenses medicine."

By next year Peruvian Mennonites hope to begin their own Spanish-English Christian school. A school is a high priority because Quechua Mennonite children are often discriminated against in the local schools, both for their faith and their ethnicity.

Shank's visit also included the unhappy task of telling the group that financial assistance from North America for next year would most likely be cut. Carrasco responded, "Don't worry, brother. God will meet our needs. We're happy for whatever you are able to share with us, and we plan to keep on growing, no matter what!"

Shank said, "If you need your faith increased, spend time with this group. I'm just trying to keep up."—EMM release by **Jewel Showalter**

New centre for faith and media

December 10 marked the launch of the Centre for Faith and the Media. The centre, based in Calgary, is a non-profit organization for educating journalists and being a resource to the media for their reporting on religion and spirituality. Given the diversity in Canada, and the renewed interest in spirituality, media need to "take seriously the role they can play to increase our tolerance and understanding with information that challenges stereotypes," says the centre. It provides workshops for journalists and also for members of faith communities who want to access the media more effectively. For more information, e-mail faithandmedia@telus.net.—From release

Calcutta, India

MCC trains first peer mediators in India

When faced with a conflict, I have a choice." This fall, Barbara Mitchell, a peer mediation trainer from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, took that message to students in India.

Mennonite Central Committee sponsored four peer mediation training sessions—the first that MCC has done in India—October 27 to November 7. The training drew 93 students and 21 teachers from 14 schools in Calcutta.

"Before knowing about mediation, I thought that any conflict began with a quarrel and ends with a fight, but now I know that a conflict can begin with a quarrel, but we can finish it in a peaceful manner," wrote one student after the session.

MCC has been offering mediation training in India and has heard many stories of villages, and people, transformed by it. Ayesha Kader, director of MCC's Global Family Educational Assistance Program,

sensed it was time to help children find their voices in managing conflict.

In the training, Mitchell asked groups of four to resolve conflicts and practise their new skills. A teacher coached each group. The sessions included role-playing, activities and games to help participants see the value of nonjudgmental language. Students learned about "I-messages" and paraphrasing, and how disputants find their own solutions in conflict.

"If you...remember only one thing, it should be this: I have a choice!" said Mitchell. "We don't always create the conflicts that enter our lives, but we can always choose our response."

She offered two questions to ask when faced with a conflict: 1) How can I make the conflict smaller? and 2) How can we both win?

At the end of each session, participants discussed how they might take what they learned to a peer mediation program in their own schools.—From MCC report by **Twila Miller**

New resources

The following are new listings from Faith & Life Resources:

- *Jesus Christ: Mission Accomplished*, the final unit in "The Bible Then & Now" series, guides children to know Jesus as servant leader through participating in the dramatic events of Holy Week. "Fun Then & Now" activities help Bible times come alive. See fuller information at www.mph.org/vbs.
- *The Anabaptist-Mennonite Time Line* is back by popular demand. This 36-inch by 96-inch "poster" charts Anabaptist-Mennonite events from 1425 to 1986. Events are depicted in the wider religious, political and cultural context.
- *Training Ministry Teams: A Manual for Elders and Deacons* helps congregational leaders bring clarity and purpose to their roles. Topics of the nine sessions include: working as a ministry team, decision-making, mediating conflict, visitation and partnering with the pastor. Sessions conclude with group assignments.
- *Relatively Speaking: Strengthening Family Ties* is the fourth study in the "Closer than a Brother" men's study series. The final one will be *Closer Than a Brother: Building Deeper Relationships*. Other titles in the series are *Sex and Faith: Celebrating God's Gifts* and *The Meaning of Tough: Using Wealth and Power*. To order, call 1-800-245-7894 or e-mail: flr@mph.org—From release

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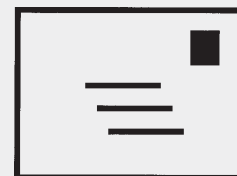
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Mailing glitch

A mysterious glitch crept into the mailing of the January 12 issue. It appears that an outdated address list somehow found its way into the label printing process. That explains why some of you received the issue late, or had it go to an old address. We trust that this issue is back on track. If you are missing the January 12 issue, let us know and we'll send you one.—The Editor

Winnipeg, Man.

Heese retires in September

In September, Justina Heese will retire from her position as executive secretary of Christian Formation. Heese has led the Formation area of Mennonite Church Canada for the past five years, through the transformation from Resources Commission to the new MC Canada structure.

"I see my role really as not needing to manage all of the Formation areas, but to be the encourager and the person who enables others to do this," she says, reflecting the gentle, enabling style that has marked her leadership.

A high point of her leadership is the emerging collaboration between Christian Formation and Christian Witness, the outreach ministry of MC Canada. "We are more consciously striving for a seamless system of ministry," she said.

The appointment of Samson Lo to the office of Multi-cultural ministry is another highlight for Heese. "He is the catalyst for a whole bunch of things that are happening" in the diverse ethnic groups in MC Canada. Multi-cultural leadership training has been especially significant—85 leaders in MC Eastern Canada and 40 in Manitoba have taken the training, conducted by Maurice Martin.

"We have attracted and started congregations," notes Heese, "but it has taken a while to discover something that they can embrace, that takes them to the next step...this is the genius of this cooperative venture."

An ongoing source of satisfaction for Heese is seeing people optimize their gifts, perhaps indicative of her background in education. There is an abundance of creativity, innovation and giftedness in the church, she says. "To put people into a job where they can blossom is one of the most satisfying things that happens here."

There have also been disappointments. Having to release staff due to budget restraints was one of the toughest things she has experienced. But she acknowledges that such

unpleasant tasks come with a job that has a \$874,000 budget responsibility.

Heese hopes that one task she has been coordinating for five years will be finished before she leaves: the translation of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* into Chinese. Trying to translate a complex theological document into a complex language like Chinese, while maintaining consensus on the essence of the content, has been a challenge.

"Cross-cultural stuff is tricky business," she says, since skill in languages, theological training, and knowledge of Anabaptist/Mennonite interpretations and history are all key pieces.

An ongoing challenge is adult Christian education at the congregational level. In some congregations, she has seen adult education on Sunday mornings dwindle from full

participation to only a handful of participants.

"You can't participate in biblical discernment without knowing the Bible," she emphasizes. "If we don't know anything about the Bible...how do we see where God is working? There is a big disconnect." Heese admits that the solution is elusive.

"The denomination has the opportunity and the responsibility to alert congregations to what exciting things exist, and for the way they could be taught, but the actual decision to learn is a congregational decision."

Although polls suggest growing societal disillusion with institutions, Heese is confident about the future of MC Canada.

"One of the interesting things to me is how many gifted people there are who are willing to give their time and energy to working for the church," a clear indication, she says, that the life of the institutional church is far from over.—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**



Heese

PRONATs, a Mennonite Central Committee Bolivia program for working children in Santa Cruz, recently celebrated its 10th anniversary with an open house and party. Enjoying the festivities are MCC worker Israel Pereira and (left to right): Javier Moreno, Gabriel Rodriguez, Raul Rodriguez and Gary Ramirez. Local media covered the event. The program offers tutoring, activities and school visits for children who shine shoes, wash windshields and sell candy in the city. The goal is to encourage children to remain in school and maintain family ties so that they do not become street children.—MCC release

Photo by Mary Beth Leeper

Akron, Pa.

MCC sent food aid to 32 countries

In 2003, Mennonite Central Committee sent food, or funds for food, to 32 countries, providing aid for victims of war and natural disaster, for people living in poverty and for those trapped in situations beyond their control.

In all, \$325,490 was provided to purchase local food. Approximately 3,100 metric tons of food—wheat, maize or beans—were shipped.

“We’re still seeing a lot of internal conflict and hunger,” said Willie Reimer, director of Food, Disaster and Material Resources for MCC.

In Iraq, MCC provided funds for vegetables or high-protein food for more than two dozen hospitals, and canned meat for orphanages and schools.

A total of 322 metric tons of canned meat was shipped to locations from North Korea to Liberia to Haiti, with 76.6 metric tons of canned meat and dried food going to Bosnia.

In southern Africa, devastated by drought in 2002, a combination of food aid and funds to buy food locally helped people in Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe survive until the next harvest.

That effort continues in Zimbabwe, where the outlook for the next year remains grim, said Reimer.

In northern Uganda, where MCC is providing a major food aid package in coming weeks, an estimated 1.2



Photo by Matthew Lester

Wheat donated through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank is loaded onto camels for nomadic families in Ethiopia whose pastures have dried up.

million people have been displaced. Many more leave their homes each evening to avoid abduction by rebel forces. The food will be purchased locally, a strategy that saves time and shipping costs, and helps pump money into local economies.

When MCC decides to send food aid, it concentrates on alleviating immediate hunger and then on longer-term food security.

“Emergency aid is the first step,” said Reimer. “People need the energy to be able to work and create their own assets.”

In India, the focus is on developing the community. In Jharkand, eastern India, a two-month project will provide locally purchased rice and lentils for 1,161 people who are building a road, embankment and water tank. The food is desperately needed, but the construction will provide benefits far beyond feeding families. Farmers will gain access to water for agriculture and be able to cultivate fish.

Reimer stressed that MCC strives not to overlook countries whose situations still go unnoticed by the press.—From MCC release

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Winnipeg, Man.

Eden reaches out to urban churches

Eden Health Care Services chose the Mayberry Fine Art Gallery here to host a *faspa* (lunch) for area Mennonites on November 16, bringing new prominence to Eden's role for its urban constituency. Eden is based in Winkler, Manitoba.

"Half of our constituency lives in Winnipeg," said Ekhard Goerz, director of Eden. "We need to be aware of the needs that exist in this community."

Recovery of Hope, an arm of Eden, has been operating in Winnipeg since the early 1980s, when Mennonite pastors in the city sought an affordable, faith-based counselling service for families and couples. Since then, Recovery of Hope has established offices in Steinbach, Winkler and Portage la Prairie. This year it provided counselling for more than 4,000 people.

"Sixty percent of these people are from Winnipeg," said Joanne Klassen, director. Financial support from urban Mennonites, however, does not reflect that proportion—another reason Eden wanted to renew its connection with Winnipeg churches.

"The nice thing about *faspa*," said Goerz, "is coming together to share stories." Phil Ens, board member for 18 years, told of his father who suffered bouts of depression in the 1950s and 60s, before southern Manitoba had a mental health centre.

"It was a difficult time for our family," said Ens. "Thanks to the vision of our forefathers, my father eventually received some fine treatment."

Randy Goossen, director of community psychiatry with Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and Henry Tessman, director of Concordia Hospital, spoke of the need for mental health supports in "shared care" initiatives emerging in the city. They underscored Klassen's words:

"We live in a time of unprecedented pain.... In any given year, one out of every ten Canadians will qualify for a



Photo by James Friesen

Joanne Klassen, director of Recovery of Hope in Winnipeg, visits with Randy Goossen, psychiatry director for Winnipeg.

mental health diagnosis. One of every four will experience depression in their lifetime, and one of every four will have trouble with anxiety."

Eden anticipates more conversations with urban churches, for financial and prayer support and involve-

ment in concerns related to mental health.

"The needs and opportunities are here. We need you to think about this," Goerz told guests at the Mayberry.

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Didsbury, Alta.

Service for a Long Winter's Night

Some of us walk into Advent tethered to our unresolved yesterdays the pain still stabbing, the hurt still throbbing.

It's not that we don't know better; It's just that we can't stand up anymore by ourselves.

On the way to Bethlehem, will you give us a hand?

This poem by Ann Weems was in the bulletin at the second annual "Blue Christmas" service on December 23 at Bergthal Mennonite Church here. The evening offers support and encouragement to those for whom Christmas is not all gravy, tinsel and packages.

The service acknowledges that the festive season tends to heighten emo-

tions, making it a particularly difficult for those experiencing family deaths, broken relationships and health crises, or changes such as an empty nest or loss of a job.

"Christmas is outwardly a time for happy things," said deacon Marj Loewen. "This service is a way to acknowledge the real hurts and needs of people. They can come to the service pondering, thoughtful, and even sad. It's okay."

The evening is not intended as a time for personal sharing or expression of grief, although that may occur. It is a warm invitation to experience the support and healing found in God's love.

"Trying to help people understand what the service is can be frustrating,"

Chun Chon, Korea

Baseball makes friends in Korea

Last August, Mina Kim, a rambunctious 4th-grade student, returned to Korea from Canada, where his father had been on sabbatical. School had not yet begun and Mina was bored.

"I wish I had somebody to play baseball with," he said. I happened to be in the right place at the right time.

My glove and a couple of balls had been sitting in a drawer. We played catch for an hour. But Mina wanted to do more than play catch. I suggested that he find some friends and meet me on Sunday afternoon at the school.

That first Sunday, Mina brought two fourth-grade friends, and Dawhee and Dajin, a kindergarten kid and a first-grader. Dawhee and Dajin had no clue about baseball, so the learning curve was steep. But Mina was happy, so we agreed to meet the following Sunday.

Mina and his friends each brought a friend, and Dawhee and Dajin brought their older sister. We learned more fundamentals of baseball and laughed a lot. By the third week I felt like the Pied Piper, as our numbers doubled. A ninth-grader whose family had spent a year in the United States came with a bag full of equipment. Things became more competitive and we expanded our schedule to Saturday and Sunday

said Gay Best, a deacon. "People sometimes don't come because they are scared they might be asked to share personal experiences, or that they might be too emotional, or that the service is going to be a downer."

Through scripture reading, reflections and music, participants were invited to look to Christ as the saviour who walks beside his people. Although only a handful of people attended, the deacons felt the service should continue on an annual basis.

"It's an opportunity that people will learn to make use of as time goes by. It will be one of the building blocks of a strong community," said Best.

This year, the congregation invited wider participation by advertising in the local papers. —**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**



Erwin Wiens, with children on his lap, participates in the service at the Jesus Village Church where he serves.

afternoons.

Lately, we've had about 25 kids. It gets a little crazy at times, since we have to share our space with a soccer game and guys shooting hoops.

Before each game I sit everyone down and go through the basics. Then Mina or Jinwhoo translates it into Korean. One week several parents came to watch and one knew enough about the game to help with coaching. One mom kept score. Others brought pop and snacks.

Korean parents seldom, if ever, play with their kids in public. I suspect that a 60-year-old pastor with limited language skills playing baseball with 25 kids is quite a novelty. Parents are beginning to express their appreciation by bringing food to our house.

And I love it. Actually, baseball is just one of many joys in our time here. Marian and I are thinking about how difficult it will be to leave in 2005. We love our church and we love our work.—**Erwin Wiens**

Erwin and Marian Wiens, from Windsor Mennonite Fellowship in Ontario, are Mennonite Church Canada workers in South Korea.

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Edmonton, Alta.

Children's clubs growing in Alberta

Church-based clubs for children are experiencing a resurgence in popularity in Mennonite congregations in Alberta. Common through the 1970s and 1980s, clubs were largely abandoned in the 1990s.

Increased activities for children, greater busyness on the part of parents, volunteer burnout—all appear to have caused the demise of church clubs.

In the past two years, four Alberta congregations have begun regular clubs for children. Lethbridge Mennonite Church began in 2002, and Edmonton First Mennonite, Holyrood Mennonite and Foothills Mennonite all launched clubs in 2003. Rosemary Mennonite is the only congregation that has maintained a longstanding children's club program.

The new clubs reflect creativity in addressing the problem of overly busy children and volunteers. Both Lethbridge and Foothills started with a once-per-month format. Lethbridge meetings begin with a group supper.

Foothills divides boys and girls, each group meeting on a separate night. First Mennonite meets weekly, on choir night, for seven weeks before and after a Christmas break. Children have the option of staying to sing, and a few from outside the congregation have opted to join the children's choir.

Holyrood meets twice monthly and is currently considering moving the meeting to Sunday mornings, in order to revitalize Sunday school and allow for greater participation.

Material for unusually structured clubs is difficult to find, so leaders are coming up with their own activities and devotional ideas. First Mennonite and Holyrood are currently sharing copies of former Venture Club materials to use as a starting point. Rosemary leaders, who have used David C. Cook materials, discovered that they are out of print. They are searching for a replacement.

Club leaders expressed a similar rationale for beginning new clubs. All wanted to provide a venue for children to participate in the life of their congregations and build a sense of

belonging to a faith community.

"We felt that children in the public school system need some spiritual input. Club helps provide it," said Harold Bergman from Foothills. For many children, especially in urban areas, contact with friends from church is limited to Sunday mornings.

A regular club builds relationships within the congregation. Edmonton First Mennonite wanted its club to appeal to children who were not already overly committed to sports or music lessons, and looking for a way to connect with the congregation. The main purpose of Lethbridge clubs is to

build relationships among the children.

"Unlike when I was young, these kids are not all related, nor do they all attend the same public school," said organizer Annie Dyck.

Another strong impetus for clubs is community outreach. Clubs provide a natural opportunity for people to get to know the congregation. Holyrood Mennonite made a conscious decision to keep its small club in the community to be an outreach to local children. Alberta clubs all encourage children to bring their friends.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

Kitchener, Ont.

Youth day focuses on Jonah story

Why would almost 300 junior high students want to go to church for an entire day?

When "church" takes place at a high school, with lots of activities and plenty of pizza and pop, the Junior Youth Breakaway is the place to be.

For the past decade, MCEC has sponsored a day for junior youth to "breakaway" from their Sunday routines. Kids can hardly wait to attend and no one complains about the five

hours of spiritual formation they receive.

"Jonah and God's big love," held at Kitchener Collegiate Institute on November 23, drew over 280 youth and Sunday School teachers from 32 churches within Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

The day began with get-acquainted games led by grade 11 students from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. Alan Sapp, an actor from Theatre and



Sandi Hannigan (right) and a friend enjoy a conversation during the Junior Youth Breakaway.

Toronto, Ont.

Church dealing with fallout from sexuality study

Toronto United Mennonite Church (TUMC) has been involved in an intensive process of seeking God's will on one of the most difficult issues facing the church: same-sex relationships. This is an update.

The process began in 2002 when our associate pastor made the congregation aware of her same-sex orientation. In June 2003, after an extended time of listening, study and prayer, the congregation agreed on a document, "Towards a statement of beliefs on human sexuality."

The statement is on our web site: www.interlog.com/~tumc/index.htm,

Company in Kitchener, set the stage for the day in his dramatic retelling of Jonah and God's persistent love.

Next came the best part—five centres of activity, led by young adults from MC Eastern Canada. At the music centre, Nathan Lichti and Kathy Shantz invited youth to write a contemporary Jonah song. In the cooperative games centre, Darlene Hemingway and Sarah Pinnel led "Ninevah or bust." At the art centre, led by Tamara Awad Lobe and Danielle Courtemanche, "Trash or treasure" turned recycled materials into beautiful murals telling the Jonah story.

Dramatically inclined youth enjoyed "Acting fishy," with Heather Mann and Geoff Gladwell. At "Sink or swim," the popular games centre led by Melissa Gingerich and Rose Kuepfer, hard work was rewarded with gummy worms and fishy crackers.

"Each centre connected so well with the biblical story," commented one Sunday School teacher. "The leaders did an awesome job of making the story of Jonah come alive for my kids...I never once heard the "B" [boring] word."

Junior Youth Breakaway is a great tradition. Youth are at an age when they are eager to be with peers, and the day helps them recognize that the Mennonite church is much bigger than their congregation. They get a taste of what is to come in Mennonite Youth Fellowship.

The day was organized by Heather Gallian, MC Eastern Canada interim youth minister, and Sandi Hannigan, interim Christian education minister. —From release

under "Church information."

In short, TUMC decided that sexual orientation would not be a criterion for membership. All are welcome, and all members and active adherents are invited to use their gifts in the church.

The congregation was unable to agree, however, on having a homosexual person as pastor, and its covenant with its lesbian pastor was brought to a close.

The divisions opened up during the process were deep and painful, but our dialogue is not over.

The congregation said: "We covenant to live and learn together as an integrated community under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to work at the issues that remain before us, in conversation with MCEC, confident that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide us on our journey."

This past fall, a Healing and Reconciliation Team (HaRT) was set up. It has been assisting us in coming to terms with our continuing dilemma.

"No one was not upset by the process," said a recent HaRT report to the congregation. "Many have been hurt." Members of HaRT had to work through their own differences in order to be able to lead the congregation.

"We hope that through our experience on this team, we can lead by example."

The goal of HaRT's one-year mandate is not to get everyone to agree on what they believe, but enable people to accept different convictions while remaining a community of faith.

"People have given thought, prayer and study to the issue and have come to a position that they believe is the correct Christian view," said their report. "We ask you to suspend your judgment on others.... And, since there is little openness to changing positions right now, it is time to forbear each other on this issue, and make peace.... We want people to remember that, as Christians, we do have much common ground with one another.

"Also, we want people to consider how their behaviour or ways of

expressing themselves in public, or in congregational meetings, can be hurtful and exacerbate a situation."

HaRT has not yet determined "concrete actions" for the congregation. For some, one-on-one reconciliation may be required; for others, discussing the process may be helpful to clear the air. Some may want to continue the discussion on sexuality.

The team "welcomes your ideas on healing our community," concluded the report. In preparing for a communion service during Advent, the team encouraged congregational members "to reach out, build a bridge to someone of a different opinion, to help heal the rift."

The congregation asks for prayer as it struggles to discern God's will. —From a report by **Dennis Giesbrecht**

The writer is chair of the Toronto United Mennonite Church.

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Waldheim, Sask.

Craft weekend an inspirational getaway

On a crisp Friday evening in late November, 21 women arrived at the Shekinah Retreat Centre here for a quilting and scrapbooking retreat. Hostess Lil Friesen showed the women to comfortable rooms complete with everything needed to spend a relaxing few days.

Two experts shared their skills and passion for their crafts, offering instruction and inspiration for beginners and experienced crafters alike. Barb Froese, pastor of nearby Laird Mennonite Church, led the women in three devotionals. She spoke of the gift of creativity we share with God, the master Creator, and with other

crafters through the ages. Crafters are even mentioned in the Bible, she said.

She helped us contemplate the inevitable flaws in our crafts and in our lives—not as spoiling the design, but as an integral part of the unique final product. She also spoke of the gifts we give. Sometimes we give what we create but we also give of ourselves. Each of her mediations was delightfully illustrated by quilts created by her mother, Mary Roth.

The tasty meals and snacks were deeply appreciated by women who frequently fit their craft activities around the realities of running a household and a career. Several young

mothers particularly enjoyed time away from the demands of young families. One quilter came from as far away as Edmonton.

The beauty of the Shekinah landscape added to the experience. Some women took time to walk or run the trails. For some, it was their first time at camp, for others, a return to a favourite spot.

This craft weekend was a first for Shekinah. Participants were unanimous in suggesting that there be more in the future.—From report by **Renata Klassen**

Saskatoon, Sask.

Remarkable woman celebrates 106 years

On December 22, Anna Willms marked her 106th birthday. From her wheelchair in the Luther Towers seniors home where she lives, she watches the birthday celebration. Carefully arranged curls frame her lined face.

“Sehr gut, sehr gut,” she murmurs, after guests sing an old German favourite.

When asked the secret of her long life, Willms quotes an old friend: “Die young, but do it as late as possible.” What does she think of the party held in her honour?

“It’s nice,” she says thoughtfully, “but I wish there would be more children.”

There are, in fact, a few. A young girl shyly steps up with a pint-sized violin to play “We three kings.” Willms listens keenly.

Until a few years ago, this frail centenarian led a busy life. Stories about her interesting accomplishments abound—like the one about her university days.

When Willms was 99 years old, she took a senior class in Russian history at the University of Saskatchewan. One day, the professor was teaching the Russian revolution. Willms, sitting at the back of the room, held up her hand.

“That’s not how it was,” she argued. “I lived through it.” He asked: “How did it happen then?” In response, Willms told stories for the rest of the class.

Her long life includes a vast collection of experiences. “She has been through many difficult times,” affirms her granddaughter, Margot Hordern.

Born in Russia, Willms and her family lived through typhus and anarchy, but

were fortunate enough to leave before Stalin came to power. On their way to Canada, they were quarantined in England.

After landing in Newfoundland in 1933, Willms and her sister, then both in their 20s, roamed the area taking pictures, certain they would never have the means to return. On arriving in Saskatoon, the family hired itself out for domestic work.

In 1929, Willms got her nursing degree, after learning English. She was 32 years old. She then married and raised two daughters.

“A huge milestone for her was when both her daughters graduated from university,” said Hordern. A few months after her 25th wedding anniversary, Willms’ husband was diagnosed with cancer. She was widowed in 1956, at the age of 59.

Willms began taking in boarders to make ends meet. Her love of people shone in her busy household, with people coming and going.

“I remember her pace of life,” says Hordern. “She kept a wide circle of acquaintances. She could see value in everyone.”

Willms, who has outlived her two children, still takes a keen interest in all who come to see her. Although her body is frail, her mind is quick. She keeps up with the news and enjoys visiting with others in the home.—**Karin Fehderau**



Photo by Karin Fehderau

Anna Willms claps after a violin solo at her birthday party.

YAWN deals with inclusive language

One sign of the increased sophistication of our denomination is the number of conferences we sponsor. With several retreat centres operating year-round, it's almost impossible to keep up with all the seminars, workshops, conventions and all-expenses-paid junkets that we get to attend.

One such event was the recent Yearly Appraisal of Worship Needs (YAWN) conference held in Hamilton. It's a time for people to get together and argue about what it means to "worship."

This year, the big topic of discussion was inclusive language in hymns.

While it may seem easy to change our hymns so that the words reflect that the world also includes women, there has been a surprising amount of resistance to such an idea. Here are some of the objections raised at the conference:

1. "Inclusive language is not traditional. It would be better to stick to the old words because we are more familiar with them." This was a favourite excuse at YAWN. It implies that "I am progressive, but I'm worried about my weaker brother (sister?)." Of course, this overlooks the mistake of seeing "traditional" as "acceptable." After all, slavery was "traditional" until the mid-19th century.

2. "Inclusive language ruins the rhyming scheme of a hymn." For example, "man" rhymes with "pan," "ban" and even "jam" (if you slur the ending a bit). So, you could have a hymn lyric: "You show your wondrous love to man/By daily giving bread and jam."

On the other hand, "person" doesn't rhyme with anything. Thus, how

would you complete the line, "You show your wondrous love to persons...?"

3. "We all know that the word 'man' includes both women and men." This is a sticky one, because then there is no word that refers to males alone.

However, such usage does have precedents. For example, we speak of "a church's vision" when we really mean "a pastor's vision," or we talk about "sharing" when we really mean "babbling on endlessly about ourselves."

4. "We'll lose part of the traditional Christian culture if we neutralize the male language."

There is some truth to this. After all, if you strip religion of patriarchy, then what sources of authority are left to guide us? Progressive revelation? Community decision-making? You can't elect moderators using those strategies.

There were other arguments. One elderly gentleman asked, "If we allow people to change the gender of hymn lyrics, what's next? Conference support for sex-change operations?"

The biggest controversy arose when a working group tried to revise an old hymn. The lyric was: "And every man who heeds the call/Shall find a source of unity with all." The revisionists wanted the first line to read "And every one who heeds the call." But the traditionalists rejected the proposal, mumbling something about the "thin edge of the wedge."

The revisionists countered with "Is our music meant to speak to the present or just reproduce the inequalities of the past?" Whereupon two traditionalists threatened to resign. Fortunately, the dinner bell rang, and the issue was postponed until next year.

One conference delegate concluded, "I'm just glad they're not demanding theological accountability from the songs we sing in our churches. We'd never agree on a hymnal if that happened!"—May 15, 1989

Emke Retro

Ivan Emke



Faith groups called to respect environment

Faith and the Common Good is a new group calling people of faith to respect the environment. "It's about time people of faith—whether they're Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or Buddhist—make a personal commitment to care for nature," said Aiden Enns, who represents the organization in the Winnipeg area.

Enns is promoting the program, "Renewing the sacred balance," with groups and churches. He also invites people to take the David Suzuki "Nature challenge" which includes 10 steps to reduce one's ecological impact. For more information, check the web site at www.faith-commongood.net or contact Enns at (204) 789-1406, e-mail: sacredbalance@uwinnipeg.ca.

—From release

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Correction

The painted Christmas window shown in the December 22 issue (page 24) was in the lobby of Menonite Church Canada offices, not the Canadian Menonite University lobby.

People & Events

Toronto, Ont.—Jane MacKay Wright from Manitoulin Island, Ontario, left for Iraq on January 10 for a three-month mission in Baghdad with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Wright, a retired media arts instructor at Sheridan College, is a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers). She served for two years with CPT in Burnt Church, New Brunswick, monitoring the dispute between lobster fishers and the government. The team in Iraq has been following the cases of 72 Iraqis from among the 10,000 prisoners detained by U.S. forces. Persistent patterns have been documented of mistaken identity, excessive force during raids, confiscation of money and property, mistreatment and torture during detention, and lack of information and access for families and lawyers. CPT believes this abusive behaviour is inflaming an already volatile situation.—CPT release

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Brubacher—to Marie and Dennis, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Emma Victoria, Dec. 9.

Campbell-Enns—adopted by Heather and Phil, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., a daughter, Ava Rose Feiyan, July 28 (born in China, Sept. 5, 2002).

DeBruyn—to Jen and Ed, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., a son, Joel Edward, Aug. 7.

Garrett—to Anna and Karl, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., a son, Alistair Michael Bernhard, Oct. 24.

Heide—to Heather and Matt, Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man., a son, Andrew Jackson, Dec. 27.

Holdnick—to Cyndee and Shawn, Arnaud Mennonite, Man., a son, Connor Nicholas, Dec. 25.

Jantzi—to Jane and Danny, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a daughter, Emily Danielle, Nov. 29.

Jantzi—to Sheila and Wayne, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Megan Elizabeth, Nov. 28.

Loewen—to Phyllis and Mark, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., a son, Noah William Alexander, Dec. 24.

Norton—to Michelle and Rich, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta., a son, Cole Turner, Jan. 5.

Rogers—to Tracey and Mark, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., a daughter, Chloe Elizabeth, Dec. 2.

Sonnenberg—to Trish and Gary, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., a son, Noah William, Dec. 1.

Vanden Berg—to Julie and Joel, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Madison Faith, Nov. 26.

Wagler—to Julie and Marcus, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., a son, Caleb Marcus, Dec. 28.

Wiebe—to Fonda and Steve, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., a daughter, Kianna Carol, Dec. 26.

Marriages

Bauman-Martin—Randy and Jaclyn, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 1.

Bigelow-Penner—Richard and Cheryl, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Jan. 3.

Klassen-Metzger—Sheldon and Stephanie, Crosshill

Mennonite, Ont., at Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Dec. 27.

Larson-Bock—Andrew and Faith, First Mennonite, Burns Lake, B.C., July 19.

Ratcliffe-Bauman—Mike and Megan, Floradale Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 27.

Deaths

Bartel—Herbert, 82, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Jan. 3.

Bergen—Margaret, 95, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta., Nov. 16.

Cressman—Mary, 86, Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Dec. 15.

Dyck—Jacob, 94, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Dec. 25.

Enns—George W., 87, Winkler Berghaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 22.

Janzen—Jacob H., 71, Arnaud Mennonite, Man., Dec. 9.

Kreutzer—Anne, 89, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., Nov. 24.

Martens—Wilhelm (Bill), 92, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Jan. 5.

Peters—Anna, 87, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Nov. 14.

Rempel—Ben, 87, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., Dec. 17.

Vogt—Art, 73, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., Oct. 18.

Zehr—Clara, 87, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 3.

Zehr—Emanuel, 93, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 8.

Baptisms

Floradale Mennonite, Ont.—Nichelle Bauman, Tamara Buehler, Casey Cressman, Nicole Martin, Hannah Redekop, Elizabeth Weber, Dec. 7.

Rosemary Mennonite, Alta.—Christina Baerg, Rita Braun, Corey Pakarno, Dec. 28.



Warden Woods photo

Jake Hildebrand (left) and Mark Kehler from Warden Woods Mennonite Church youth group sew MCC school kits for Iraq. One Saturday last fall, the 10 members of the youth group set up six work stations, rotating through them to complete 49 school kits. The congregation supplied the funds for the project. Warden Woods is in Scarborough, Ontario.

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests for workers

Pray for Helen and Rudy Baergen, Witness workers in Bogota, Colombia, as they conclude their three-year assignment. Pray for the Colombian Mennonite Church as it faces ongoing economic crisis and other challenges to its leadership. Pray especially for pastors and churches working with people who have turned in their weapons and want to resume ordinary lives. Pray for seminary director Alix Lozano as she seeks new staff to succeed the Baergens.

Lynell Bergen and Brian Dyck, Witness workers in Umtata, South Africa, give thanks for God's faithfulness, including the provision of a good friend for their son Samuel. Pray for their Bible teaching ministry and growing AIDS ministry that is developing community-based home care. Lynell continues to be involved in a women's theology group, and regularly visits the Bethany Children's Home. Brian is beginning to administer the Mennonite work in Lesotho.—MC Canada

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Calling and formation of pastors

"We are trying to create a culture that ministry is a worthwhile and high calling," says Laurence Martin, director of the Pastoral Leadership Training Commission (PLTC). Muriel Bechtel, Minister of Pastoral Services, adds: "And it requires mature and gifted people."

The Leadership Commission and PLTC work closely together in calling and training pastors in Mennonite

Church Eastern Canada. They are in regular contact with institutions such as Conrad Grebel University College, where chaplain Ed Janzen is encouraging students to consider ministry.

For many, the call to ministry comes through pastors. The Samuel Project report by Michael D. Wiese (General Conference and Mennonite Church, 1999) indicates that primary relationships, especially parents, are the most effective in encouraging young people in careers.

"Unfortunately, the 'tap on the shoulder' tends to come from outside the church and is not directed towards the pastorate," says Wiese. "There is strong evidence that respondents who have been personally encouraged to consider the ministry are more likely to say that they have a 'calling.'"

Martin finds that a number of people test the call by taking a course or two. He would like to develop an early assessment tool. Bechtel notes that the Leadership Commission sometimes requires a psychological and career assessment before people enter the credentialing process towards ordination.

What is the profile of people entering a ministry stream of studies? Some have already been pastors and are now seeking training. Some come from other denominations. A number of people with undergraduate degrees are entering youth ministry, which often becomes an "entry level" pastorate. Churches are willing to invite young people to test their call to ministry in that role.

Slightly more women than men are entering seminary training. Some people are exploring ministry as a second career.

Second-career ministers often bring significant work

experience and skills that enhance their ministries. Bi-vocational and partially self-supported ministers may be an increasing trend.

There is also a risk that people who are unsettled in one area of work, or feel unsuccessful in it, might sense a "call" to ministry by default. It is important sometimes to slow down and test a call. Martin hesitates to have people quit jobs to prepare for ministry until they find some way to discern whether it is a good fit. Bechtel notes that we need to state clearly the requirements for being a Mennonite pastor.

Do people enter ministry as a "career" or a "call?"

Martin says: "The sense of being led to ministry as a career has to at some point become a 'call,' a compelling kind of thing."

"Some who only see it as a 'call' also need to see the career aspect," says Bechtel. "It is more than an urge. Ministry is getting more complex and challenging because of the diversity of congregations, so there are more expectations. There is a need for training, especially when we consider that pastors often minister to persons with great experience and knowledge."

What are emerging trends in ministry in MC Eastern Canada? Bi-vocational ministry may be the direction of the future. It may mean that people become cross-trained. Some congregations have developed "mixed team" ministries that consist of pastors and lay ministers, giving more people the opportunity to use their gifts in the church.

How do young people hear the call to ministry? Often apprenticeship experiences nudge them in that direction—doing things in the congregation, working on the Vacation Bible School troupe, participating in mission trips. In such

contexts someone may ask, "Have you thought of ministry?"

"There are some gifted and bright lights on the horizon," said Bechtel.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Manitoba considers native ministries

Several congregations in Mennonite Church Manitoba are strengthening their historic connections to northern native communities. When Mennonite Church Canada made cuts to its Native Ministries program, financial and personnel resources to these northern communities were cut significantly.

MC Manitoba is in conversation with these congregations and with MC Canada to begin "sorting out who does what," said Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service for MC Manitoba.

Some congregations have relationships with a northern community that go back to the days of Mennonite Pioneer Mission, said Voth. They have continued over the years to provide services such as Vacation Bible School teams each summer, even as responsibilities shifted to the Native Ministries program of MC Canada.

"These northern churches have not related to MC Manitoba and now we need to clarify who will give direction to the involvement," said Voth. "We want to encourage the partnering that has happened between these churches and find ways to strengthen and expand those relationships. We have met with representatives from the congregations."

"MC Manitoba has some resources it can offer the native communities, just as we work with other

congregational requests. For example, we have been involved in the licensing of pastors in Cross Lake.”

The youth group of Steinbach Mennonite Church has sent teams to Manigotagan Community Fellowship for many years to teach Vacation Bible School and there have been other exchanges between the two congregations. Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church has supported John and Pat Pankratz in their work in Pauingassi, Little Grand and Bloodvein. They have also provided teams to teach Bible school.

Morden Mennonite Church and Winkler are discussing ways of sharing in this involvement.

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church has been helping to support the work at Riverton Fellowship Circle. “Potluck,” a Sargent group, has adopted this project. Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg also relates to Neill and Edith Von Gunten, the pastoral team at Riverton. Springstein Mennonite Church supports Henry and Elna Neufeld in their trips to various northern communities.

Cross Lake Mennonite Church was served by a Vacation Bible School team from Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church for 10 years, but the Altona church will no longer be providing this service.

“We are working with some other arrangements and linkages between MC Manitoba congregations and northern congregations,” said Walter Franz of MC Canada. “We are sorting out how we can partner.”

“Many of these congregations are quite passionate about their northern relationships. Some have committed themselves to additional funding to help staff carry out their work,” said Voth. “MC Canada in the past has provided on-site field staff. We can’t take that over.

“One of my dreams is that we will work with, and give

and receive ministry with, the northern communities as brothers and sisters in the faith.”

MennoFolk in Winnipeg

Manitoba MennoFolk 2004, an all-day showcase of Mennonite art and music, will be held February 29 at the West End Cultural Centre in Winnipeg. This year’s events include clowns, poetry and art as well as folk music, bluegrass, indie-rock, pop and metal.

The MennoFolk committee is still scouting for musicians, bands and artists, especially new talent. E-mail: Mennofolk2004@hotmail.com or phone Brenda at (204) 284-6388. For more information, see www.mennofolk.bestmusicpages.com.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Safe churches

The Pastoral Leadership Commission of MC Saskatchewan held a workshop on “Making our churches safe for all” at Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon on January 24. The presentation centred on how to avoid abusive situations in the church.

“Insurers have begun demanding that congregations wishing liability coverage have abuse policies in place,” noted Ken Bechtel, conference minister, in a letter to churches. Resource people were Lynn Loewen, a lawyer; Pauline Steinmann, pastor of Wildwood Mennonite; and Audrey Mierau Bechtel.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Update on dialogue with Calgary church

Mennonite Church Alberta executive members have been in dialogue with Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church over the

past several years, after difficulties arose between the two bodies. John Schellenberg of Foothills Mennonite Church served as a liaison between the groups while he was moderator of MC Alberta.

Schellenberg has continued in that role since his term ended. After recent discussions, John summarized the situation in the following update sent to congregations of MC Alberta in late December.

“As most members of the conference are aware, Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church [CIM] is completing the third year of a voluntary five year ‘leave of absence from active participation in the activities of the Conference’ to provide a mutual time of reflection in the discussions about CIM’s full congregational acceptance of individuals involved in a homosexual relationship, and MC Alberta’s response to that position.

“Four meetings have been held since February 2003. These meetings have been frank, respectful, harmonious and useful in opening an avenue of communication and promoting a greater degree of understanding of the concerns of both the congregation and the conference. It would also be correct to say that deep divisions remain, that no clear outline of a relationship has been achieved that would satisfy the needs and concerns of both the congregation and the conference, and that the prospects for a mutually-acceptable model at this time appear to be dim.

“We pray for wisdom, discernment and courage for future meetings.”

New youth worker for Alberta

Mary-Ann Van Oeveren began as quarter-time Youth Worker for Mennonite Church Alberta on December 1. Her duties include working with the youth council to organize and lead province-wide youth events, and stay in touch with youth groups across the province.

The junior and senior high snow camps in January and February are the two main events of the youth year. The co-ordinator position had been vacant since Matt Love ended his term last June.

Mary-Ann and her husband Pim moved to British Columbia from Holland in 1994. In 2002, they moved to the Didsbury area to be near their young adult children

(Bas, 24, and Merel, 19), and for Mary-Ann to teach floral design at Olds College for a year. Both Mary-Ann and Pim are horticulturists, and operate a tree nursery on a 27-acre property between Didsbury and Olds.

“Mary-Ann describes herself as a hands-on person who loves working with youth.

“I’m excited about working in a job where my faith and work meet so directly,” she said. “I don’t see myself working strictly for the Alberta Mennonite conference. I see myself working in God’s kingdom, without human boundaries.”

She believes her main challenges are being able to do a good job in the small number of hours in a quarter-time position, and getting to know the people and structures with which she will be working.

When asked if there is anything she wished to say to the Alberta and Canadian Mennonite constituency, Mary-Ann replied: “Let’s use our time wisely, and work together to nurture and educate our youth, inside and outside our churches. If we respect that everybody is unique, but different, we are acknowledging that God has created us this way, and that we are supposed to work with our different talents as we strive towards the same goal—learning and living with God.”



Van Oeveren

Employment opportunities

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Winkler Grace Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of Associate Pastor. We are a congregation of 400 members located in a rapidly growing rural community in southern Manitoba. Primary responsibilities include visitation, care-group coordination and "Inreach/Outreach" ministry.

Please send letter of application, resume, and three references to:

Steve Zacharias, c/o Grace Mennonite Church
Box 1616 Winkler, MB R6W 4B5
Phone: (204) 325-7428; Fax: (204) 325-0091
E-mail: szacharias@rocketmail.com

Nithview Home and Seniors' Village requires a Part-Time

PASTORAL CARE COORDINATOR

Reporting to the Administrator, the Pastoral Care Coordinator is responsible for the spiritual care program in our Seniors' Community which includes a continuum of accommodation from Independent Living to Long Term Care. Duties will include preaching, visitation, and administration.

Candidates should have formal training in theology / religious studies. Relevant experience is a definite asset. Applicants need to be self-motivated individuals capable of working both independently and in a team environment.

Fax or mail your application by February 6th to:

Brent Martin, Administrator
Nithview Home and Seniors' Village
200 Bouleee Street
New Hamburg, ON N3A 2K4
Fax: (519) 662-1090
E-mail: bmartin@nithview.com

Only applicants selected for interview will be contacted.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a

LIBRARY PROJECT MANAGER

to coordinate construction of a new library. This person will work with seminary administrators and architects and building contractors throughout the design and construction phases. The Project Manager, supervised by the AMBS president, will collaborate with the AMBS Librarian, facilitate the work of the Library Building Committee, and manage internal communication regarding the building project.

Qualifications include commitment to the values and vision of AMBS, experience in project management and building construction, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, and commitment to sustainable and fiscally responsible construction. The seminary seeks at least a two-year part-time commitment and is prepared to negotiate salary. Qualified volunteers are encouraged to apply.

Send resume and letter of application to

Nelson Kraybill, AMBS President
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517
E-mail: nkraybill@ambs.edu

For more information, see the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu
 Select Welcome, then News, Events, Jobs.

Christian Press, an agency of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Winnipeg, MB is seeking enthusiastic, professional, self motivated individuals for the following positions in a fast paced, deadline sensitive environment.

PRE PRESS

Previous exp. with Mac/PC platforms (Quark/Pagemaker), Apogee digital workflow, imagesetters, CTP, negative assembly, platemaking and possess design capabilities. Supervisory or CSR experience an asset.

PRESS OPERATOR

Minimum 4 years experience with multi-unit presses Komori, Heidelberg, Hamada. Must be able to produce top quality colour work.

BINDERY OPERATOR

Minimum 3 years experience with multi-unit folders, cutters, pocket collator, stitcher trimmer. Must have understanding and experience with complex bindery situations. Experience with international shipping an asset.

Please send resume to:

Manager
Christian Press
159 Henderson Hwy.
Winnipeg, MB R2L 1L4



The Peace and Conflict Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite church-affiliated college at the University of Waterloo, seeks to fill a full-time continuing faculty position at the

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

level, to begin July 2004. Peace and Conflict Studies is an interdisciplinary, undergraduate program at the University of Waterloo. Candidates should possess a PhD in a field related to peace and conflict studies and have teaching and research expertise in one or more of the following areas: theories of peace and conflict; theories and practice of conflict resolution; international studies; global development; human rights. The candidate's ability to teach in another area of the humanities or social sciences is desirable.

Applications should contain a cover letter detailing teaching and research expertise, a curriculum vitae, names of three referees, and other evidence of the candidate's suitability for the position. Applicants should be sympathetic to the traditions and beliefs of the Mennonite church. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first of all to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Conrad Grebel University College is committed to principles of employment equity. The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications on February 27, 2004.

Please direct all inquiries and applications to:

Marlene Epp, Academic Dean,
Conrad Grebel University College
University of Waterloo
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6
E-mail: mgepp@uwaterloo.ca
Phone: (519) 885-0220 ext.257

For more information about the College and its programs, visit the website at grebel.uwaterloo.ca

Employment opportunities

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is accepting applications for the position of

MCC CENTRAL STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills, and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact:

Charmayne Brubaker
Phone: (717) 859-1151
E-mail: cdb@mcc.org

Or contact your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins February 2004. Position available at that time.

Mennonite Church Canada is accepting nominations and applications for an

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, CHRISTIAN FORMATION

This is a full-time position, located in Winnipeg Manitoba, beginning September 1, 2004 (negotiable).

As the Executive Secretary, you will give leadership to the Christian Formation staff and Council in fulfilling their mandate to nurture congregations, foster commitment to the larger church, grow disciples, and promote unity through Anabaptist identity formation.

Serving as a member of the Executive Staff team, you will:

- Shape, implement and promote the vision for Christian Formation
- Be an advocate and spokesperson for Christian Formation vision and agenda
- Oversee the Christian Formation department's staff, programs and budget
- Give special attention to education issues in MC Canada

Qualifications:

- The Executive Secretary of Christian Formation is expected to:
- Be a person of vision and a flexible, creative problem solver who is responsive to change;
 - Demonstrate strong leadership qualities, including supervisory skills and the capacity for complex administrative and organizational duties;
 - Demonstrate excellent communication skills;
 - Hold or be qualified for ministerial credentials;
 - Possess basic computer skills, such as word processing, spreadsheets, and email;
 - Possess a master's degree in a related field with work experience at a senior level of management, preferably in education and church leadership. A suitable combination of education and experience will be considered.

Mennonite Church Canada expects all staff to exhibit a commitment to a personal faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord, to uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and be committed to the vision of MC Canada as a missional church.

This position requires considerable travel, mostly within Canada.

For a job profile and more detailed information, visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/index.htm

Closing date: Feb 6, 2004.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks

TWO EVENT PASTORS (one male and one female)

for **!Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth**, full-time from July 8 to August 4, 2004. These pastors will accompany the 15 high school !Explore participants for their intensive 18-day group experience.

Qualifications include several years experience as a congregational pastor and working with youth; ability to nurture youth through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith; and an undergraduate degree with additional seminary education preferred.

Responsibilities include assisting in preparations for the youth's group experience, leading and directing worship and discussions, and being physically, emotionally and mentally present with youth during this experience.

To apply, send resume and letter of application by March 1, 2004 to

Andy Brubacher Kaethler,
!Explore Director, AMBS
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517
E-mail: andybk@ambs.edu

A complete job description is available on the AMBS website: www.ambs.edu/!Explore



DIRECTOR OF CARE

Due to the retirement of the incumbent, Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Homes Inc. has a rewarding and challenging permanent full-time position for a Director of Care.

Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Home is a 68 bed, level 3 & 4 long term care facility. Attached are 36 units of enriched housing for seniors. The mission of the facility is to provide the best emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual care in a secure stimulating Christian atmosphere. The home is located approximately 70 kilometers north of Saskatoon, SK.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor Degree or Diploma in Nursing. Degree is preferred.
- Must be eligible for registration with SRNA.
- Previous long term care experience.
- Minimum two years management experience.
- Must demonstrate strong leadership, written and verbal communication skills.
- Must have a strong commitment to the ideals expressed in the mission statement and a strong desire to work closely with the sponsoring body – Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Applications are to be received no later than February 6, 2004 to:

Steering Committee
Mennonite Nursing Home
Box 370 Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0
Phone: (306) 232-4861
Fax: (306) 232-5611
E-mail: fergusont.gshd@shin.sk.ca

Employment opportunities

Willowgrove is inviting applicants for:

CAMP DIRECTOR-FRASER LAKE CAMP

Willowgrove is an independent provider of Christian camping & educational programs; namely Glenbrook Day Camp, Fraser Lake Camp, Willowgrove Outdoor Education, & Willowgrove Primary School. We are seeking a full-time Director who has a vision for and an understanding of residential Christian camping. The successful candidate must have a keen interest in child & youth development and post secondary education in an associated field.

The position requires the incumbent to live at camp during the summer months (near Bancroft, ON) and to work from the Willowgrove offices (Stouffville, ON) for the remainder of the time.

Please submit resumes by March 1, 2004. Position begins in late August 2004.

To apply for this position or for more information please:

E-mail: kyle@fraserlakecamp.com
Kyle Barber
Executive Director – Willowgrove
11737 McCowan Rd.
Stouffville, ON, L4A 7X5
Phone/Fax: (905) 640-5263

Trinity Mennonite Church is inviting applications for a full-time

LEAD PASTOR or CO-PASTOR TEAM

We are part of a rapidly growing community in southwest Calgary and have a congregation of approximately 100 with diverse ages and occupations.

We seek a pastor(s) who will provide strong leadership and focus on the vision, mission, and values defined by our congregation, working together with our members and participants to foster a faith community that is open and welcoming to new participants and is founded upon the Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.

Please send resume or inquiries to:

Pamela Fast
234 Everglade Way SW
Calgary, AB T2Y 4N2
E-mail: pamelafast@hotmail.com

Western Mennonite School Board of Directors has announced a search for applicants for the position of

PRINCIPAL

to begin July 2004. Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students both local and at a distance. Located on 45 acres in the Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith building experience with a comprehensive vision for expanding enrollment, program and facilities.

Request for information can be addressed to:

Search Committee
Western Mennonite School
9045 Wallace Rd. NW
Salem, OR 97304
wmsoffice@teleport.com

Mars explorer has Saskatchewan input

Larry Matthies, grandson of Mennonite immigrants to Canada, is the brains behind the computerized vision system that is guiding the robot explorer on Mars. Matthies, 45, who grew up in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, supervises the group that built the vision system at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena, California. When contacted by Walter Unger of Toronto recently, Matthies responded, "Yes, I'm Russian Mennonite and my dad's dad came from southern Russia/Ukraine in the 1920s." Matthies graduated from the University of Waterloo in 1981 in computer graphics, and has a doctorate in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania. Two rovers using Matthies' vision system were launched last June. Spirit landed on January 3 for its three-month mission on Mars. —From reports

YOUNG ADULTS: Do you enjoy nurturing the spirituality of kids? Consider applying for the MCEC VBS Troupe 04. You'll join a 5 member team providing VBS in churches, July and August. Remuneration: \$2250 plus lots of great experience! Contact: sandi@mcec.on.ca for an application. Deadline: March 9/04.

Announcements

Dutch retired Mennonite couple would like to get in touch with elderly Mennonite people near Kitchener, ON for temporary country-house exchange in May-June 2004 (4 weeks) on non-profit basis. Car exchange is open to discussion. For information please contact: Mr and Mrs Pete Schut, Veenhout 32, 9269 VL Veenwouden (Friesland), The Netherlands. Phone: +31 511 475812.

REACH LOST SOULS OVER CHRISTIAN RADIO. MINISTERS AND LAY PERSONS CONTACT: DAVID or LINDA AT (705) 235-3072 E-mail: cksofm@vianet.ca www.cksofm@netfirms.com

Canadian Mennonite

Advertising deadlines

Feb. 23 issue: Feb. 10
Mar. 8 issue : Feb. 24
Mar. 22 : Mar. 9

1-800-316-4052

For rent

New Zealand House to rent in hot end of NZ, to Christian couple, from April to Sept 2004. Situated in beautiful park-like acreage and includes car. Contact RJB, 115 Fairburn Court, Saskatoon, SK S7M 5P7 or Phone: (306) 384-6300.

Seniors' condo: For rent, one bedroom condo at EASTWOOD, Kitchener. Call (519)748-2379 for info.

Light-housekeeping, full basement suite available in Wpg. For one or two compatible persons. Beautiful location, within walking distance of CMU. Contact (204)453-1657

MCC, VNCS and EMM Vietnam alumni are invited to celebrate **Mennonite Central Committee's 50 years of work in Vietnam on July 9-11, 2004** in Hanoi, Vietnam.

For more information or to register, contact Diane Gehman:

E-mail: deg@mcc.org
MCC, Box 500
Akron, PA 17501

Training institute for church leaders

Waterloo, Ont.—A training session on “Transforming leadership: Leadership development rooted in spiritual practice” will be held at Conrad Grebel University College June 15-18. The trainer will be Chuck Olsen from the Alban Institute.

Olsen is founder of Worshipful-Work: Center for Transforming Religious Leadership, a ministry to integrate spirituality and administration. The event is sponsored by Conciliation Services Canada.

For more information, contact Nan Cressman, director of Conciliation Services Canada, e-mail: cressman@soonet.ca, phone toll-free: 1-866-782-0287.—From release

MDS all-unit meetings in B.C.

Winnipeg, Man.—Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) will hold its annual all-unit meetings in Abbotsford, British Columbia on February 13-14. The theme is “Responding, rebuilding and restoring.” Kevin King, new executive coordinator, will be installed.

The meetings will include reports, local music groups (including the Abbotsford Male Choir, Columbia Bible College Choir, Younge Street

Mailing glitch

Your January 12 issue may have been late, or gone to an outdated address. It seems that an outdated mailing list was used by our printer. With this issue things should be back to normal. If you are missing the January 12 issue, let us know and we'll send you one.

Vocal Band and Pacific Mennonite Children's Choir), and input from local pastors. Ken Peters will deliver the address, “Lord, change us,” at the Friday evening banquet.

For registration information, call (604) 308-1298, or e-mail: mds2004@telus.net.—From MDS release

Jamboree to support native ministry

Winnipeg, Man.—A group from Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church here is planning a Celebration Jamboree to support the native ministry work of Neil and Edith Von Gunten in Riverton, Manitoba. The event, which will feature music, children's entertainment, food and a silent auction, will be held March 13 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Douglas Mennonite Church.

The jamboree grew out of a congregational partnership between Sargent and the Riverton Fellowship Circle. Although their funding from Mennonite Church Canada has been eliminated, the Von Guntens hope to have enough support to remain in Riverton until after the North American Native Assembly there in July.—From Sargent release

Heifer sale planned for February

Kitchener, Ont.—Brubacher Sales in Guelph will host Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale's 23rd annual Heifer Relief Sale on February 20, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

With Canadian borders closed to the export of cattle, prices are expected to be down, but the committee is relying on local breeders.

Last year, 88 heifers were sold for \$172,385. For more information, call Clarence Diefenbacher at (519) 669-2164.—Relief Sale release

Calendar

British Columbia

February 7: B.C. Women in Mission business meeting at Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove, 2:00 p.m.

February 13-14: Mennonite Disaster Service All-Unit Meeting in Abbotsford. Phone (604) 308-1389, e-mail: mds2004@telus.net.

February 21: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. lecture on “Umsiedler” by Heinrich Loewen at Garden Park Tower, 7:00 p.m.

February 27, 28: MCC Relief Sale banquets: Broadway Mennonite Brethren Church, Chilliwack (27); Fraserview MB Church, Richmond (28).

February 28: Church music workshop with Mary Oyer and Angela Neufeld at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. More information at

www.emmanuelmennonite.com.

March 5: MCC Relief Sale Dessert Evening at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

March 6: MCC Relief Sale lunch at Garden Park Towers, Abbotsford. Banquet at Bethel Mennonite, Aldergrove.

March 12-13: Youth workers conference at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford on worship and discipleship, with Tom and Christine Sine. Phone (604) 853-3567, ext. 323.

March 13: MC B.C. delegate meeting at Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove.

April 3, 4: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Evangelical Free Church, Abbotsford (3), and Knox United, Vancouver (4). Benefit for Menno Simons Centre.

Alberta

February 14-15: Mennonite Men's Curling Bonspiel in Didsbury. Contact Herman Epp at (780) 335-3894.

February 20-22: Senior Snow

Camp at Camp Valaqua.

February 21: “Cowboy church” at Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, 7:00 p.m.

February 27-28: Mennonite Church Alberta delegate sessions at Rosemary Mennonite Church.

March 19-20: Missional Church training at Camp Valaqua.

June 18-19: MCC Alberta Relief Sale in Coaldale.

Saskatchewan

February 6-7: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan 30th anniversary meeting, Bethany Manor, Saskatoon. Public session with speaker Ted Regehr, Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m. Annual meeting Feb. 7, 8:30 a.m.

February 13-14, 21-22, 27-28,

March 5-6: “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” by Superb Mennonite Church. Call church for locations.

February 14-15: Shekinah Fun Days.

February 27-28: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual sessions in Rosetown.

March 3: MEDA breakfast at Grainfields Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

March 5-6: Songfest at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, with Henry Engbrecht and Joanne Wiens.

March 27: Shekinah fundraising banquet and silent auction at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

April 19-23: Seminary class on “Becoming a missional church.”

May 16: Rosthern Junior College spring concert.

June 6: Shekinah Bike-a-thon.

June 24-27: Rosthern Junior College musical and graduation (27).

July 2-4: Shekinah 25th anniversary celebrations.

September 10-12: Junior high retreat.

September 30-October 2: Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly at Shekinah.

Manitoba

February 7: Canadian Mennonite annual meeting and banquet at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg. Meeting 4:00 p.m. Banquet 6:00 p.m. Speaker: Ken Reddig. Contact Ron Loeppky at (204) 261-4949.

February 8: Alumni recital at Canadian Mennonite University, 7:30 p.m. with Rennie and Jenny Regehr.

February 9: Open house at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

February 13-15: Junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

February 20-21: Annual session of MC Manitoba at Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain.

February 26-28: Drama, "The Zeal of Thy House" by Dorothy Sayers, at Canadian Mennonite University, 8:00 p.m. (Feb. 29, 3:00 p.m.).

February 29: MennoFolk at West End Cultural Centre, Winnipeg, 2:00-10:00 p.m.

March 5, 7: Benefit concert by Mel Braun and Laura Loewen for mental health programs of Eden Health Care Services, at First Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg (5) 7:30 p.m.; Winkler Bergthaler church (7), 3:00 p.m.

March 5-7: Retreat for families with mentally handicapped members at Camp Assiniboia.

March 7: Choral Connections concert at Canadian Mennonite University, 7:30 p.m.

March 8: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate board banquet. Phone (204) 775-7111 for details.

March 12-14: Junior high retreats at Camps Koinonia and Moose Lake.

March 12-14: Peace-It-Together for high schoolers at Canadian Mennonite University. Speaker: Dave Worth on "Food as a peace issue." Call 1-877-231-4570, e-mail: bgrunau@cmu.ca.

March 13: Celebration Jamboree at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, for Native Ministries work in Riverton, 3:00 p.m.

March 31: Open house at Canadian Mennonite University.

April 2-4: Marriage Encounter weekend in Winnipeg. Contact Peter and Rose Dick at (204) 757-4705.

April 15-17: Senior high drama at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg.

Ontario

February 20-22, 27-28: Alumni operetta at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

February 28: Tenth dessert and auction at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

February 29: Menno Singers concert of Canadian composers at St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener, 3:00 p.m.

March 4-5: Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College with Nancy Heisey.

March 6: Concert with House of Doc and Five-on-the-Floor at King Street Theatre, Kitchener, 8:00 p.m. Phone (519) 741-8224, e-mail: harder@sentex.net.

March 10: Family night at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, 6:30 p.m.

March 18: MEDA Breakfast at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Steve Rannekleiv.

March 26-27: Engaged Workshop at Hawkesville Mennonite Church. Call (519) 656-2256.

March 30: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union 40th annual meeting at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. Speaker Henry Paetkau; music by Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir, 7:30 p.m.

April 19-23, 26-30: MCC meat canning in Leamington (19-23) and Guelph (26-30).

April 23, 24: Menno Singers and Pax Christi Chorale perform Vaughan Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem" and Durufle's "Requiem" at Benton St. Baptist, Kitchener (23), and Yorkminster Park Baptist, Toronto (24), 8:00 p.m.

April 30: MEDA spring banquet at Conrad Grebel

University College with speaker John Fast.

April 30-May 1: Engaged Workshop at Living Water Mennonite Fellowship, New Hamburg. Call (519) 656-2256.

May 16: Spring concert at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, 7:30 p.m.

May 20: Spring concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

May 28-30: "Sound in the land" music festival/conference at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

June 15-18: Summer Training Institute for church leaders by Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Conciliation Services, at

Conrad Grebel University College. Contact Nan Cressman, phone 1-866-782-0287.

August 13-15: Ontario Mennonite Bible School reunion at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

United States

March 22-25: Mennonite Camping Association convention at Drift Creek Camp, Lincoln City, Oregon.

March 25-28: Mennonite Health Assembly in San Francisco. Phone: (219) 534-9689, e-mail: info@mhsonline.org.

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