



N A D I A N Mennonite

May 31, 2004
Volume 8, Number 11

**Being stuck with
our parents**
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'Slow debate' as a witness

This summer, Mennonite Church Canada delegates will consider full membership in the Canadian Council of Churches, as well as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. So it was with considerable interest that I listened to a panel recently discussing the topic, "Overcoming obstacles in ecumenical dialogue."

Panel members focused particularly on a major change in the way the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) goes about its ecumenical task. Formerly a democratic body that voted on issues, the council has moved to a "forum" model that works by consensus. This is a brand new approach to ecumenism, said panelists, one that is being adopted by other ecumenical bodies around the world.

In a society that worships efficiency and speed, 'slow debate can be a witness. It can be a gift we bring as a Christian community.'

In this new model, members start with who they are and listen to each other's witness, explained Richard Schneider, current CCC chair. Gone is the old practice of trying to minimize differences or of giving up one's own authority for the sake of the group. (The new model allows the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops, for example, to be a full member which it couldn't be under the democratic model.)

Doesn't this new model slow down the process of speaking on issues? asked someone.

In a society that worships efficiency and speed, "slow debate can be a witness," answered Schneider, who is a member of the Orthodox Church. "It can be a gift we bring as a Christian community."

Several panelists referred to the same-sex marriage debate as a high point in recent CCC discussions. Even though everyone knew that there would never be agreement, each member church was given time to explain its position and the basis of its convictions about marriage.

"God entered the room in the midst of our discussion," said a United Church participant. "We recognized the profound integrity of each church and our joint yearning to do what God wants. It was like nothing I have ever experienced."

The discussion did not aim at achieving unanimity; rather, it sought to broaden understanding and respect. That surely is a valuable Christian witness for our time.

Focus on seniors

You will notice that the Faith and Life feature that begins on page 6 has a rather startling title: "Being stuck with our parents." In this article, writer Harry Huebner explores the idea of "stuckness" as it relates to family ties, but even more as it relates to our own mortality, our "creatureliness."

The article emerges out of the writer's experience with an aging parent who has lost her memory and identity. Who is she now? Where is the meaning in her life to be found? How does faith apply in such a situation?

The answers can be found in the Christian understanding of human suffering and mortality, says Huebner. Especially compelling is Huebner's reflection on "remembering as God remembers."

This article ties in with the Focus on Seniors section on pages 16-19 of this issue. The June 14 issue will explore the practice of communion or the Lord's Supper in our churches.—Margaret Loewen Reimer

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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 June 14 issue by June 10.

Cover: Aero Margaret lives in a camp for displaced people in northern Uganda because it is safer than being at home. See article, page 15. MCC photo by Dave Klassen



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Mission, B.C.

Mayor enjoys best job in town

Abe Neufeld says that being mayor of Mission is “the best job in town.” For someone who loves people as much as he does, that’s probably true. There’s no such thing as quickly running to the store because inevitably someone will stop you to talk about something.

One of his goals as mayor is to be accessible.

“Everyone wants to be valued and understood,” he says. “You’ve got to have an open door. It’s tremendously affirming to be sought out.”

Neufeld has been in politics for about 16 years. He first got involved because of a local issue that was important to him. He ran for the Liberal party at the provincial level, but was not elected. In retrospect, he is glad because he enjoys municipal politics much more. He was elected to council and when he and his wife, Anne, moved to Mission, he ran for mayor and was elected three years ago.

Before his career in politics, Neufeld was the regional director for Fraser Valley Corrections, a job he says prepared him well for being mayor.

There are many transferable skills, he says, “particularly the management of people and good communications skills.”

Neufeld feels it is very important for Christians to be involved in the political arena.

“It’s important for churches to be involved in their communities,” he says. “I get concerned when I see churches run their own programs and just invite people to come. We really need to get to know our community and find out what the issues are.”

Neufeld’s church, Cedar Valley Mennonite, seems to take this seriously—two others are city council members. Neufeld is often overwhelmed by the number of Christians who say they are praying for him.

“When you know that people are praying for you,” he says emotionally,



Neufeld’s office is always open to people.

“you seek the face of God more diligently to know how to direct your community.”

One of the most difficult issues he faced involved cuts to health care. The maternity ward and coronary unit at the local hospital were closed and the city lost many good doctors.

“It’s gut wrenching when you stop for gas or at the grocery store and someone stops you to tell you their difficult story.”

To respond to the cuts, Neufeld formed the Mayor’s Health Care Task Force which has been working with Fraser Valley Regional Health Care. The operating room has re-opened two days a week. The task force has recruited doctors from Britain and had more than 200 applicants.

The mayor’s days are full. Neufeld frequently has breakfast meetings and is in his office by 8:30 a.m.

“I have to sign a ton of documents,” he chuckles. “And you have to understand what you’re signing so there’s a lot of reading too.”

He is invited to many functions and

never declines, feeling that it is an honour to be invited. He’ll attend five or six events on a weekend and he’s busy nearly every evening. Because his children are grown, they are not as affected by lack of family time as is his wife, Anne.

“She’s the perfect partner for this,” Neufeld says. “She is very giving and comes with me to many events. She worked in pre-school for 23 years and often children will see her and say, ‘Wow, you live with the mayor!’”

Neufeld thought that he’d have to deal with more angry constituents than he has. He approaches the angry few like all others; he listens and shows respect for their views.

His favourite part of the job is meeting children. He recently had two boys in his office who came to discuss a skate park with him.

“Kids are so sincere,” he says. “And they often ask far better questions than adults!”

For now, Neufeld is thoroughly enjoying “the best job in town.”

—**Angelika Dawson**

Winnipeg, Man.

Assistant moderator enjoyed the challenges

When she agreed to serve on the General Board of Mennonite Church Canada six years ago, Joy Kroeger had little idea of what was in store for her. The church was in the middle of a major transition, which would involve a lot of work and some severe tests of leadership.

In spite of unanticipated busyness and challenges, Kroeger feels “truly blessed” by the experience, and will miss both the people and the work when she steps down as assistant moderator at the MC Canada assembly this summer.



Kroeger

She reflected on her experience during a recent telephone conversation.

“I never envisioned myself as part of the national church at this level,” said Kroeger, who is a member of Hanley Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. But when Helmut Harder, the general secretary and her former teacher at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, invited her to consider nomination, “something struck a chord.”

“I’d always been interested in contributing back to the community and had volunteered on numerous boards locally, including Rosthern Junior College for eight years. I was looking for a broader focus....”

So she “jumped in with both feet” at the Stratford assembly and then meetings of the Joint Executive Committee (with Mennonite Church USA) a month later. That was her first exposure to the former Mennonite Church, which had just merged with the General Conference.

“A prairie girl through and through,” Kroeger was born in Alberta, and educated in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (a commerce degree and chartered accountant designation). She lives on a cattle ranch with her husband, Steve, and commutes to Saskatoon to work as a financial

management advisor for the Saskatoon Health Region.

Kroeger delighted in the challenge of participating in the MC Canada transition process. Although it was “a lot of work,” it was exciting “to try to make something new at the conference level that would bring new life to the churches.”

Other highlights of her six years include friendships she made all over Canada and the USA, and being able to participate in an organization that had such breadth and diversity. She also met Mennonite World Conference leaders and learned how much can be done from the congregational level and beyond.

The “lowlight” was definitely the financial crisis that occurred last year, along with staff cutbacks made at Leadership Assembly last March.

“That hurt terribly,” said Kroeger. “To let go of important programs and valued staff...that week was the most difficult time. What really was important to me was that the process had integrity, so that in the end we could say we had done the best job possible. I felt we achieved that.”

Although she had some sleepless nights, she felt strong support. It was extremely humbling to hear staff say that “they were praying for us, not knowing if they’d have a job the next week.” She added, “You really have to try to separate yourself from the emotions in such a situation. Otherwise you couldn’t handle it.”

Her husband, Steve, “continually encouraged me...and was a willing listener whenever needed.”

Her vision for the future: “I dream of a church that is vibrant, growing, even more excited than we are now, financially stable, flexible and able to provide efficient and effective programs which make the most sense—not holding onto things...if change is necessary, concentrating on the main thing—which is to further God’s mission in the world.”

She also dreams of a church where partnerships at all levels (with area conferences, Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite World Conference, etc.) are

truly valued.

“I feel passionate about our partnership with MC USA and would really like to see that strengthened,” she said. “We have much to say to the world and when we speak as a larger voice, we are stronger.”

Personally, Kroeger is looking forward to a “volunteer sabbatical” when she’ll have time to rekindle hobbies such as travelling, camping, watching the beautiful sunsets in Saskatchewan, and learning how “to be” instead of always doing.

Also, she plans to attend future assemblies where she can be “participating fully without worrying about the details!”—From report by **Leona Dueck Penner**

Tributes from co-workers

I have never seen Joy come to a meeting without having read every item in the docket and marked it up with questions and editorial corrections. I have been inspired by her passion for the church...and I have enjoyed her enthusiasm for having fun when the work is done.—**Dan Nighswander**, general secretary

I particularly appreciated her understanding of the complex processes of MC USA and MC Canada formation. I admire the courage of Joy and all who undertook this huge task. In other areas, she was always helpful in clarifying financial statements to those of us who were new on the board. Thanks, Joy.—**Esther Peters**, nominee for assistant moderator

I have especially valued her ability to work carefully and intelligently through financial reports and to ask the right questions. She is able to keep an eye on the details as well as the larger picture. Joy’s faith and love for the church have been important as we have made some difficult decisions as a General Board. Finally, her habit of making sure there is diet Pepsi available has been greatly appreciated! She will be missed around our board table.—**Henry Krause**, moderator

Being stuck with our parents

Living with an aging parent who has lost her memory can teach us something about the Christian faith, says Harry Huebner in this meditation. The lesson has to do with remembering as God remembers.

The suggestion that we are stuck with our parents may offend some readers. One of the reasons may be that our culture teaches us that the only things worth having are those we freely choose. Our parents are precisely the people we do not choose. *Stuckness* is an apt label not only for family ties. We are

stuck with our co-workers, neighbours, the other inhabitants of the planet. We are also stuck with ourselves—our bodies and minds, our aptitudes and deficiencies. Above all, we are stuck with our finitude, our creatureliness.

For Christians, this is to state the obvious: we are created beings. We are beholden to another; we are stuck with God. As Christians, we are called to imagine both life and death under God. In Jesus Christ, we see a life that can be made visible in our own bodies (2 Corinthians 4:10). And we hear an invitation to become like him in death (Philippians 3:10). To discover the meaning of these words is the challenge before us.

Memory and identity

Listen to me...[you] who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn grey I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save (Isaiah 46:3-4).

My 91-year-old mother-in-law is physically alive, but has lost all her powers of memory. Reflecting on the slow process of her dying can teach us something about how to live with our own imperfect bodies. It can even teach us something about the Christian faith.

Mother was a conscientious Christian. She had an active prayer life, read the Bible faithfully, attended church with almost fanatic regularity, chided her children when they needed it, and rarely got angry. She was hospitable, loving, forgiving and dignified. She had this character because she knew whose she was. She lived under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

With the onset of her dementia her

Photo by Marilyn Nolt



character began to change. In the course of our Sunday dinner one day she discovered (she had forgotten) that Father had stayed home from church. She exclaimed, "I will never forgive you for that as long as I live!" We were shocked at her uncharacteristic words.

I said, "But Mom, you're a Christian, and Christians always forgive."

"Oh yes," she said, "I forgot."

With the loss of her memory, Mother has lost her old identity. It is hard to know who she is. Her identity confusion results in behaviour that makes no sense to us or to her. Her worlds keep shifting.

What remained longest in her memory were the poems and songs she had learned by heart. During the five years she lived with Agnes and me, we often sang and recited poetry in the evenings. Here we still shared an intact world.

Now Mother is not able to communicate at all. I doubt that she thinks in any meaningful way. But she still has strong feelings and fears; she just doesn't have a consistent place to think and feel from.

Memory names an important ability to make one's desires one's own. When one forgets who one is, strange things happen. Mother's children became her siblings, her husband became an uncle. Once she went to our large dining room mirror and pled with the person she met there, "Please take these pills and throw them away. These people...want to poison me."

Why is it so hard to live with a mother whom we know is behaving as she does because of a biological dysfunction? When our granddaughter cries from being disoriented by something, we consider it normal. Why does the disorientation of elderly people bother us while that of a baby does not?

I suspect it has something to do with the relationship between dependency and future. The future of a child is wide open, while the future of an elderly mother is death. Both dependencies beg for a coherent imagination in which actions and thoughts have places that are shared by a community of friends.

Whose speech? Which metaphors?

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones (Psalm 116:15).

Mother's dementia is not pretty, but I believe that she can teach us about the love of God. You and I are not simply what we remember. We are also remembered by others.

Because Mother no longer knows herself, we must be her memory. We have the power to shape her identity because we provide the speech and the metaphors. But which metaphors will do?

Michael Ignatieff and David Keck have written moving accounts of their mothers' struggles with Alzheimer's disease. The two accounts differ markedly because the imaginations in which these men hold their dying mothers differ; their speech is different.

Ignatieff struggles to understand the disease itself (*Scar Tissue*, Viking Press, 1993). He writes, "Diseases whose cures have been found become mere diseases; those we do not yet understand become metaphorical carriers of everything we fear and loathe."

He cites Susan Sontag's proposal that cancer should be regarded "as if it were just a disease...without 'meaning.'" Ignatieff labels this a "non-metaphorical" understanding of disease. One can live this way only if one has an irrational trust in the medical profession to win the biological wars with scientific counterattacks. He wants to go further.

"What is needed is a shared stoicism, in which patient and doctor reach an understanding of what medicine can and cannot do." In other words, submitting to our biological destiny is not something we have a choice about. The challenge is to accept what we cannot change and to change what we can.

Yet this difficulty remains: in the struggle of life, everyone loses. Death is frightening and painful because it is seen as defeat.

David Keck calls Alzheimer's "the theological disease" (*Forgetting Whose We Are: Alzheimer's Disease and the Love of God*, Abingdon Press, 1996). Why? Because it forces us to re-examine our notions of Christian faith—faith reduced to self-fulfilment or personal experience, for example.

How can the church offer salvation to one who can no longer pray or read the Bible or accept communion? What is salvation for one who is robbed of memory, thought and even identity? These questions are related to how the church can

Alzheimer's may help us become more aware that faithfulness in exile—in a place of homelessness, strangeness, speechlessness—is possible. It may help us see that our salvation lies not in our control over life but in our life in Christ.

Continued on page 8

Stuck *From page 7*

offer salvation to a violent and unjust world when our nonviolent efforts fail to make it better.

In other words, how can we understand a Christian life that is not grounded in what we can do but in how our efforts fit into the fabric of what God is doing?

Alzheimer's may help us become more aware that faithfulness in exile—in a place of homelessness, strangeness, speechlessness—is possible. It may help us see that our salvation lies not in our control over life but in our life in Christ—in the drama of God's grace and mercy into which we are invited.

The church is often tempted to see salvation as synonymous with overcoming suffering, with liberation. Memory loss teaches us otherwise!

"When one beholds an Alzheimer's patient as she loses control of her body, one

may see more clearly the obvious fact that when you are nailed to the cross, you can no longer control your body's motions," says Keck. Our ability to imagine salvation for such a person requires understanding that our wellbeing rests in the hands of one who can change what we cannot.

The suffering Christ tells us that despite our suffering and loss of control, God is in charge. The metaphor that stands as an alternative to biological destiny is that of the transforming power of God. Our speech about death's coming must therefore focus on how God remembers.

Remembering as God remembers

Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you (Isaiah 49:15).

Some will say that Mother should be remembered as she was before the disease took hold. Although continuity with the past is important to our understanding of identity, to remember Mother as she was carries no distinct Christian meaning. Moreover, it seems arbitrary that we should choose the time at which we define our lives.

In biblical terms, we all—the living, the dying, the dead—are best remembered as God remembers us. For to die in Christ is to die being remembered by God. The thief on the cross knew this when he cried, "Jesus, remember me when

you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

It is not important to die remembering. But to die being remembered by others makes dying bearable, and to die being remembered by God is what saves us from the sting of death. To be remembered by God is to have one's deepest fears allayed.

God's remembering is not principally mental recall. When God remembers, God acts in character: God redeems, creates, forgives, judges. And when God sets people free, as in the case of the exodus, God expects people to respond with similar redemptive activity—remembering the poor, the widows, the strangers. God's remembering is an invitation that seeks a response.

Yet despite human forgetting, God's remembering knows no end. As M. Therese Lysaught puts it, "God remembers us to the point of assuming human flesh and living among us, suffering our forgetfulness in his very body, and in rising, forgiving—or remembering our sins no more. Through God's act of remembering in Jesus we are given life anew; our enslavement to the tyranny of existential forgottenness—death—is vanquished. Our task is then very simple: 'Do this in remembrance of me'" (in *Growing Old in Christ*, Eerdmans, 2003).

If we remember as God remembers, we will need to reorient our understanding of the relationship between remembering and identity. When we live in remembrance of Jesus Christ, we open ourselves to the transforming power of God and become able to mediate God's remembering to others. In this way we participate in God's healing ministry.

When we remember as God remembers, we become the kind of people who are empowered to help others die in Christ, placing them in God's memory where death loses its power.

Lysaught points out that this learning occurs in the church. "We learn how to remember the living...where we learn to remember

the dead—through that remarkable Christian practice of remembering, the practice of funerals.”

To remember as God remembers is to live with the dying as we live with the living; that is, to hold before each other the reminder of who we are in Christ. We are loved, we are accepted, we are gifted with grace, we are being healed, we are not forgotten.

The promise of presence

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me (Psalm 23).

God promises to be with us always. Remembering as God remembers means being present to others. Helping others die in Christ is not merely, or even primarily, a family matter. We learn to befriend those with whom we are “stuck” by learning from the Christian community what it means to give our lives for another.

It is the church—the body of Christ—that teaches the model of divine friendship, how to live in remembrance of Christ. The most basic of all promises is the promise of presence, of fidelity. In this promise lies our hope, for in the consoling presence of another, our fears of abandonment, alienation, and death are lessened.

And what do the elderly, the dying, fear more than abandonment?

Presence often produces nothing we can measure. Instead it flows out of an identity given to us in Christ—we remain present because we are driven by passion, the passion God expresses in the incarnation. We are present and give care to the elderly because we want to.

In ancient times, a good death was one where the gift of time provided opportunity to make things right with friends and to say good-bye. Today, we fear time spent in dying—in part because we do not wish to be a burden, in part because we fear suffering.

But perhaps our biggest fear is of being forsaken (even Jesus expressed this fear), and we cannot imagine our friends wanting to be present if our death comes slowly. We find it hard to imagine that to be stuck with anyone can be a good thing.

How sad. To remember as God remembers, to be present as God is

present, is to promise that we will not forsake our friends even when they become burdens to us. Stuckness, it turns out, has Christian names: promise and commitment.

We can offer no greater promise than to remain present to one another, redemptively reflecting the face of God’s healing love! To help another die—or live—in Christ is to help that person remain who she is in Christ, in spite of her loss of mobility, thinking capacity, and even identity, for in Christ our identity can only be found, not lost.

—Harry Huebner

The writer is academic dean and teaches theology at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. The above is a shortened version of his article in Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology (Spring 2004). Vision is published by CMU and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

It is not important to die remembering. But to die being remembered by others makes dying bearable, and to die being remembered by God is what saves us from the sting of death.

Turnaround

Churches Bus Tour

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Film documents Russian Mennonite heritage

An overflow crowd came to the premiere showing of *Remembering our Mennonite Heritage*, a 45-minute film produced by Otto Klassen. The May 2 event at Douglas Mennonite Church took place in a worship context, assisted by a male choir and narration by Charlotte Klassen DeFehr.

Many were familiar with the story of Mennonites moving from Holland to Prussia nearly 475 years ago, and then on to New Russia. A faith story, many would call it, but also a family record, reviewed at least in part to learn something for today.

New footage showed building of dykes in northern Poland, trying to make a desolate area into land for farms and communities. This reflected what Mennonites did in West Prussia for several centuries, until World War II put an end to it.

The film traces the 125-year Russian Mennonite experience that has defined the self-understanding of Mennonites in many ways. The film gives space to the results that come from hard work, faith, and protection from a government that sought to sustain a people which was contributing to the well-being of a total nation. Mennonites did not disappoint their host country, suggests the film.

This film is a sampler of what it was possible to do in the Russian context. Mennonites were prosperous, this film points out, though there were needy sectors in Mennonite communities. More regrettable facets of Mennonite life will have to be found in other sources.

As the showing proved, an interest in this story remains.—From report by **Lawrence Klippenstein**

Winnipeg, Man.

New radio programs for Low German colonists

The Family Life Network, the Mennonite Brethren media agency here, launched two new radio programs in the Low German language in April. The programs are in response to a plea from Trans World Radio in Bolivia.

A program for children that offers songs and a dramatized story is called *Komm Kjikje!* (Come, Look!). A cooking show for women is called *Met Helen en de Käakj* (With Helen in the Kitchen).

Jake and Dorothy Fehr of Trans World Radio in Bolivia report, “Our radio station is flooded with callers from the Low German-speaking colonies. Many are poor, addicted to alcohol and drugs, sexually broken.... Suicide is rampant.”

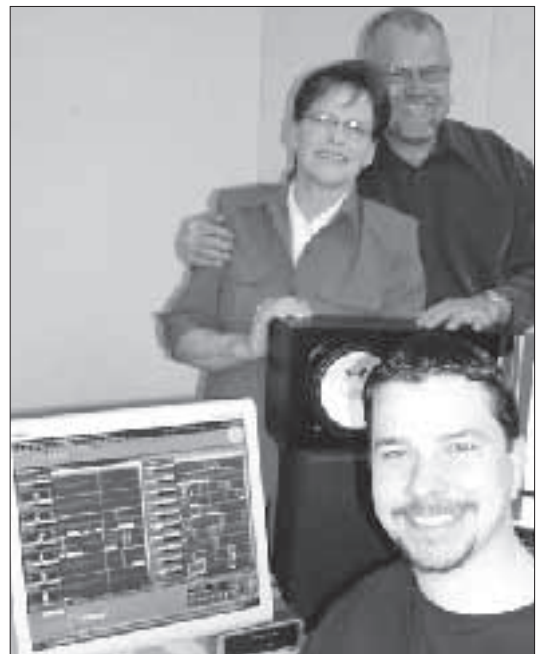
They add, “Mennonites aren’t supposed to own radios but many have one.... We urgently need programs for children and for women.”

Both radio programs are produced by Helen and Jacob Funk (Jacob is Family Life Network’s German producer), with the help of recording engineer, Dan Klaue, who holds a degree in linguistics and speaks Low German.

Helen, a long-time professional cook, hosts both programs. “My heart just went out to those kids and women!” she said. “I’m excited yet overwhelmed. I’ve been fasting and praying.”

There’s no fasting, though, on the program itself! Recorded in the kitchen of Funk’s Winnipeg home, the program offers a new recipe each week along with spiritual reflection.

HCJB Radio in Ecuador was enthusiastic about the children’s pilot program. “This is exactly what we need for our listeners!”



Helen and Jacob Funk (standing) work with Dan Klaue to produce the Low German radio programs.

A Low German station in Aylmer, Ontario, wrote, “We aired the new cooking program *Met Helen en de Käakj* for the first time and that same day 10 people called us to say they loved the program and asked us to play it again!”—Family Life Network release by **Dorothy Siebert**

Low German-speaking peoples

200,000	Germany
100,000	Russia and Kazakhstan
90,000	Canada
50,000	Mexico
50,000	Bolivia
38,000	Paraguay
10,000	USA
6,000	Belize
6,000	Brazil

(These estimates are compiled from Family Life Network data and Ethnologue.com.)

Faith and the farm crisis

Recently I attended a church service held to encourage producers struggling with the BSE (mad cow) crisis.

One farmer shared his struggle with shame and fear as he faced foreclosure of his farm. It was honest and helpful, but it reminded me that churches must be aware of the power of religious ideas as they respond to the farm crisis.

The relationship between faith and suffering in our rural communities can be ambivalent. Sometimes religion helps; other times it can really hurt. That tension was highlighted for me during a recent trip to India.

In one village, which I reached on the back of a bicycle cart, bouncing along a cobbled path, I listened to villagers' struggles with hunger and illness. For decades they had lived with virtually no food three months of the year. Their children had chronic dysentery and diarrhea. There was a high rate of miscarriage. Women, lonely and illiterate, were confined to their homes.

Last year, however, with the help of Lutheran World Service, they took some enormous strides towards healthy living. They formed a village grain bank, contributing after harvests and borrowing when food ran out. They drilled a well.

The women formed a self-help group, sharing ideas about childcare and driving away the liquor vendor who kept many of their men chronically drunk. In a short period, they made amazing gains.

I asked them, "How does your village priest feel about the improvements in your life?"

One woman said, "He used to tell us that our children were sick because of bad karma. He said it was the gods' punishment for past failures. But now we know that it was just bad hygiene. We think he told us that so we would pay him to help us please the gods."

In this case, coping with their crisis meant discarding religious ideas that kept them in bondage to shame.

The second encounter happened in the foothills of the Himalayas. A farmer invited me to greet the day from his open-walled hut. As the first rays of the sun struck the floor, he lit a bowl filled with dried cow dung and hummed a Hindu mantra. Later he scattered the ashes on his fields.

He said he no longer uses chemical fertilizers—just a rich compost of cow manure and weeds. Land that had been damaged by the heavy use of chemicals is regaining its fertility.

He was the only organic farmer in the region, so I asked him how he had come to this new way of farming.

"A yogi gave me a copy of the *Vedas* [Hindu scriptures] and I read that the land is the body of God. He taught me that I must treat the land with more respect...." The farmer found in his religion a resource for farming.

The ambivalent role religion plays in the life of these people mirrors my own experience with Christian farmers. I've heard insolvent farmers speak of having been "abandoned by God." A woman beside me on a plane told me about watching her parents attempt suicide when they couldn't make a go of their farm. She cried, "What did we do to deserve this?"

Others, doing well, say modestly, "We've been blessed by God."

Both responses imply that there is a direct connection between peoples' financial success and God's attitude towards them. This thinking is oppressive. It locks those suffering into a prison of silent shame.

"The wolf's at the door, the walls are closing in and I couldn't talk to anyone," said one farmer. Paralyzed by fear and embarrassment, rural people in financial trouble are often unable to ask for help. Whole communities disintegrate under a weight of silence.

This shame-based thinking flies in the face of Christian teaching. Jesus, the righteous one, was homeless, unemployed and executed for blasphemy and treason. Divine approval was not dependent on social or financial status.

I told the woman on the plane: "God loves you and is proud of you, just the way you love your own daughter. That love doesn't depend on how well you manage the farm, or how well markets and weather cooperate. You can't lose that love.... It's yours."

She began to cry and said, "I've gone to church all my life and have never heard that." I suspect she's heard it, but not addressed to her specific struggle.

Farmers across Canada are struggling with fear, shame and self-doubt. Poultry producers are watching their livelihood slaughtered wholesale. Cattle-producers are selling at a loss or watching their profits eaten up by cattle that should have gone to market long ago. Crop producers in Saskatchewan have watched their incomes devoured by drought and grasshoppers.

There is no magic solution. What solutions there are will be found only in open conversation among farmers and creditors, town and country folk, farmers and families, church members, communities and elected officials.

Churches can foster that conversation. They can set up forums where producers, farm workers, healthcare workers, bankers and young people tell their stories. They can bring struggling families together to share coping strategies. They can go as witnesses with farmers to meetings with creditors to ensure respectful treatment. They can gather people to talk about the future of their communities.

Even when church people aren't sure what to say, encouragement is always better than avoidance. They can treat those who are in difficulty with honour, acknowledging that they are people of worth.

Above all, the church can make it clear, in singing, preaching, conversation and practice, that "Your farm, your job, does not define you. You are a good person, beloved of God, respected by us....we will stand with you. We need you in our community."

—Cameron Harder

The writer teaches theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon.

Letters

Plan cross-border workshops for joint assembly

Now that it appears that Mennonite Church USA and Canada will be holding a joint assembly in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2005, I would make a suggestion to those planning the program.

Please plan cross-border workshops or seminars for the North American regions arbitrarily divided by the 49th parallel.

As a pastor who has served churches in the Great Plains of the United States and Canada (Iowa, Illinois, Saskatchewan and South Dakota), I have long observed that Mennonites in rural communities on both sides of the border have more in common with each other, despite perceived rivalries, than we do with fellow Mennonites in our respective countries on either coast.

I suspect the same is true of other regions of the continent—West Coast,

Rocky Mountain, Great Lakes and East Coast. A shared ecology also implies shared economic challenges and interests. If we want to contextualize the gospel appropriately, that involves not only national contextualization, but also economic and ecological.

For the Great Lakes region I would like to see seminars on the challenges rural communities face on both sides of the 49th parallel. Though we

sometimes see one another as rivals, we face the same pressures from corporate, technical and political forces.

We need to seek understanding of, and from, one another across the border, so that we can get on with the primary missional task of rural Mennonite churches in our time—the recreation of sustainable rural communities.—**S. Roy Kaufman, Freeman, South Dakota**

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Matthew 18: Relentless commitment (3)

What else does Matthew 18 have to say to us about our relationships? After instructing us to talk directly to the one who has offended us, and then to bring one or two others along into the conversation, Jesus' teaching continues: talk about the problem to the whole church, treat the one who has offended as a Gentile, and forgive seventy times seven. Much to mull over.

Perhaps our approach is not to proceed in a literal step-by-step manner but, as one theologian proposed, to glean the theme that threads through Jesus' wisdom: relentless commitment. Keep trying. Don't give up. Even when you're thinking of the other as a tax collector, remember how Jesus treated tax collectors—with respect and dignity as people who were on the outside being invited into the inside of God's joyful feast.

This is hard work. Sometimes the person who has offended me makes it very difficult to practise relentless commitment. He storms away cursing and refuses to return my phone calls. She details my offences in a long letter and won't permit me to have any conversation with her about it. He's always had more power than me and continues to wield it with a heavy hand. She chews over the past like a

dog with a precious bone.

The power of Matthew 18 keeps pushing us forward. When Tom's wife left after 30 some years of marriage, the prospects for reconciliation didn't look good. There had been too much damage—alcohol abuse, cruel words, emotional damage. The children, by then young adults, stepped into the fray.

One daughter believed her dad was



desperately frightened of losing relationships with his kids. She called him regularly to tell him of her love and prayers. The eldest son confronted his dad.

"I can't trust you; you haven't acted like a father. You've lied and you've mistreated mom," he said. Hard words, yet they opened the door to new possibilities.

Tom pursued his wife, carefully and respectfully. He attended counselling with

her, and together they patched their marriage back together, working hard to put the damaging behaviour behind them. Today the lively play of their grandchildren blesses their home.

In Mary's case, her daughter stepped out of the relationship, and demanded that Mary leave her alone. After a time of separation, the daughter agreed to attend mediation with Mary, and the two of them painstakingly set terms for a new relationship. Now they celebrate Mother's Day with flowers and mutually supportive conversation.

You may find that you are in the agony of such conflicts. The distance created by estrangement can be overwhelmingly painful. It is natural to want to give up and turn away. A season (a month, a year, a decade) of separation may be necessary and even beneficial. Sometimes we run out of time.

Jesus offers supernatural resources. When you practise the relentless commitment of Matthew 18, you will be rewarded, for "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

The writer is a counsellor and author who operates Family Ties in Winnipeg. She is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church.

Waterloo, Ont.

New Sunday school curriculum gets a name

The new Sunday school curriculum for Mennonites and Church of the Brethren will be called "Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News." An advisory group that met April 14-17 chose the name.

"I really like how the name conjures up images of gathering around the campfire, with family in the kitchen, or around coffee time at church," said Elsie Rempel, director of Christian Education and Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada, a representative on the team.

"I am most excited about how Gather 'Round will tie together learning and worship, and the home life and congregational life," she said. "The lessons are designed to include a parent's class that follows the same biblical texts, and provides tools for parents to engage their children in faith discussions and life application."

The group discussed goals for the curriculum as well as theological and educational foundations, Bible outlines, electronic media and marketing. The curriculum is a cooperative venture of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, through Brethren Press and Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN). Plans call for Gather 'Round to be available in the fall 2006.

It is a successor to the Jubilee: God's Good News curriculum put out by Mennonites and Brethren in the early 1990s. (The Church of the Brethren, from the Anabaptist and Pietist traditions, was founded in Germany in 1708. The U.S.-based group numbers about 135,000 members.)

The 15-member advisory group for the new curriculum is headed by the Curriculum Planning Committee of Eleanor Snyder, director of MPN's Faith & Life Resources; Ron Rempel, MPN executive director; Wendy McFadden, executive director of Brethren Press; and Anna Speicher, director of the curriculum project.

According to Snyder, there is strength in the partnership of the two publishing bodies.

"Both denominations feel strongly about creating solidly Anabaptist resources for our children," said Snyder. "For the last decade, Jubilee has served us well in shaping Christian faith in our children. However, with a growing interest in family spirituality, church-home connections, and up-to-date teaching methods, the time has come to create a new curriculum that instills our Anabaptist values and theology in the next generation of children."

Speicher emphasized that Gather 'Round will build on Jubilee's strong points. Foundational to both is "respect for children as people already in

relationship with God," she said. New elements will include strengthening the partnership between church and home and embedding more teacher training in lesson plans.

Also new is the way all age groups study the same Bible texts each week., including a class for parents and others who care for children. The class will provide tips for talking about faith and scripture with children and opportunities for parents to grow spiritually.

Speicher is recruiting Brethren and Mennonite scholars to write biblical backgrounds for the lessons. Canadian writers, educational consultants and scholars are invited to call Speicher at (847) 742-5100 or e-mail: aspeicher_gb@brethren.org.—From MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

St. Catharines, Ont.

A life of generosity

Generosity has always been a source of joy and an expression of faith for Dave and Hilda Regier. So began a tribute to the Regiers in the May newsletter of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada.

"We give in gratitude for what God has done. Giving because we have too much is a lousy reason," Dave was quoted as saying.

The tribute came at a poignant time. Dave died of lung cancer on May 8 at the age of 70. A memorial service for him was held on May 15 at Grace Mennonite Church here.

The couple has given generously in time and money over the years. In the last 15 years of retirement, they gave away over \$400,000, much of it through Mennonite Foundation.

"While most of their giving has been to the church, they have regularly donated to 20 or 30 other charities," said the article, noting that except for the first five years of marriage, they were a one-income household.

Dave worked in special education in the public school system for 29 years. He was involved in many church causes, including Silver Lake



Hilda and Dave Regier

Mennonite Camp and on the board of Mennonite Publishing Service (*Canadian Mennonite*).

"I found him a compassionate person with a deep faith, a love for his church, and a strong supporter of many excellent causes," noted Henry Neufeld, current *Canadian Mennonite* chair. Dave often brought fresh fruit from Niagara to the meetings, and also his famous peppernuts, which he distributed to people all over Canada.

A favourite project of Dave's in recent years was "Friends of the Mennonite Centre Ukraine." Dave Regier is survived by his wife Hilda and three children, as well as eight siblings.—Compiled by **Margaret Loewen Reimer**

Winnipeg, Man.

Mennonite Foundation to open office in Calgary

Mennonite Foundation of Canada plans to open a new office in Calgary, and a satellite office in Saskatoon, adding to its presence in western Canada. The decision was approved by the board of directors on May 12.

The move comes in response to a growing constituency and increased interest in the services the Foundation offers. Two new western offices will give Mennonite Foundation, the stewardship education and service arm of seven conferences, a physical presence in five provinces.

The proposal to open a Calgary office was prompted by the recent acceptance of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC) as a participating conference. This conference, with headquarters in Calgary, is the result of a 1993 merger between the Evangelical Church in Canada and the Missionary Church of Canada. (The Missionary Church emerged from the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, which began in Ontario in the 1870s.)

The Evangelical Missionary Church serves 22,000 people in 134 congregations across Canada and is organized into two districts. The West District, with 57 churches from Manitoba to British Columbia, has a high concentration in Alberta. Mennonite Foundation's Alberta constituency now has 13,000 adherents in 76 churches.

The EMCC East District, which has 77 churches, primarily in Ontario, began a two-year interim partnership with Mennonite Foundation in 2002. During that trial period, Mennonite Foundation's two Ontario consultants provided services. That laid the groundwork for the decision by the national body to join Mennonite Foundation.

Don Adolf, acting superintendent of EMCC's West District, said of the new partnership: "As a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ, stewardship in all of life is a key issue.... MFC is a resource that I think meets specific needs that we have at this time."

The new Calgary office, in the expanded MCC Alberta building at 2946-32 Street NE, is expected to open this fall. The search for a new consult-

ant to serve Alberta is underway. Dave Kroeker, current consultant for Alberta and British Columbia, will continue to serve B.C. churches from the Abbotsford office.

The Mennonite Foundation board also approved an offer from MCC Saskatchewan of space in its newly renovated building in Saskatoon. Although Foundation consultants serve Saskatchewan constituents from the Winnipeg office, an office in Saskatoon

will serve as home base when consultants are working in the province.

Mennonite Foundation provides preaching and teaching in Christian stewardship, estate planning and charitable gift counselling. It also administers charitable assets for conferences, churches, related charities and individuals. It employs 11 staff at offices in Winnipeg, Abbotsford, Kitchener and St.

Catharines. It currently administers \$64 million in assets.—From Mennonite Foundation release



Vancouver, B.C.

Galloping Gourmet examines abundance

Graham Kerr, known as the Galloping Gourmet, entertained more than 100 people with inspiring and humorous stories from his life at a banquet here May 15. The event, at the Westin Bayshore Hotel, was a benefit for MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) and Assets Vancouver.

"The Mennonite way to do something is find out how much it's going to cost and then don't do it," he said, after explaining that he had to wait to get baptized because his Mennonite church in Maryland wouldn't heat the water in the baptismal tank until there were 12 candidates.

He said he realized he wasn't truly a Mennonite until he was given a recipe for Ukrainian borscht.

The emphasis of speech was on what he called "outdulgence," a new way of looking at abundance. He focused on 2 Corinthians 8, where Christians gave "out of their abundance," even though they were poor.

Citing statistics from the World Health Organization that say there are now more obese people in the world than malnourished, Kerr said we are making ourselves sick because we misuse the abundance God has given us.

"Abundance is granted so that we

might share it, not do ourselves harm by it," he said. He used the words "treat" and "threat" as a further example. "God is not in the business of preventing. He loves treating you but not until it becomes a threat to you."

The idea behind "outdulgence" is simple: find out what you are over-consuming, reduce it and use the money you save to help someone in need. He gave each guest a compass as a reminder. The eight 45-degree segments on the compass point to those in need: the hungry, thirsty, sick, naked, imprisoned, strangers, widows and orphans.

Moved by God's compassion (he noted the word "compass" within the word "compassion"), we must ask God to show us someone we can help by turning our harmful habits into resources for others.

The evening was hosted by comedian Leland Klassen and benefited Assets Vancouver, founded by Mennonite Central Committee B.C.'s employment development program, and MEDA. Assets offers a 12-week business development program for low-income, underemployed or disabled people. For more information, visit www.assetsvancouver.org.—**Angelika Dawson**

Amuria, Uganda

Ugandan widow receives tools to rebuild

Widow Aero Margaret was one of the displaced people in northern Uganda who recently received a Mennonite Central Committee package of seeds and hoes (see cover).

"I now have hope for my children and for our lives," she said. In early May, 5,828 packages, including two hoes and seeds of sorghum, peanuts and cow peas, were given to families at Amuria Camp. Another 498 packages were distributed at Serere Camp.

Uganda has been torn by violence for the past 18 years, with the rebel Lord's Resistance Army launching attacks on villagers and kidnapping children. The United Nations estimates more than 1.5 million people have been displaced by the violence and insecurity. About 80 percent of those live in camps.

A group of rebels came through the door of Aero Margaret's hut and killed her husband in 2003. She fled with her six children and now lives in Amuria Camp. She has land nearby but has remained in the camp because it is safer and she has no food back home.

The World Food Program has provided sporadic rations. But Aero Margaret, like other camp residents, is often forced to forage to feed her family, searching in the countryside for greens, cassava and white ants.

With the new tools she can move forward, planting the land she once shared with her husband, rebuilding her family's livelihood.

In the struggle to survive, she says, it only makes sense to forgive those who took her husband's life.

"I have no reason to think about revenge because there would be no point—it won't bring him back."

The MCC distribution, worth \$164,950, was funded by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and MCC donations.—MCC release by **Dave Klassen** and **Marla Pierson Lester**

Melitopol, Ukraine

Disaster in Ukraine

Mennonite organizations are exploring how to respond after explosions at a munitions depot near here on May 6. The explosions and fires led to the evacuation of more than 7,000 people in surrounding villages, including Molochansk (formerly Halbstadt), site of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine.

The arms dump was said to have contained mines, shells and rockets. The Defence Ministry has not confirmed the death toll. Several huge explosions destroyed buildings within a three-kilometre radius, including a railway station. According to witnesses, explosions could be heard every few seconds for hours after the fire began.

People were allowed to return on May 12, but there were rumours that there might be further danger. A nuclear power station is only 20 km away.

According to sources connected to the Mennonite Centre, numerous people in Molochansk left the area to live with relatives. Roofs and windows were damaged by the explosions and heavy rains added to the damage. Al and Peggy Hiebert, centre directors, are monitoring needs.

The government is repairing such things as gas lines and some home repair, according to Mennonite Central Committee worker Steve Hochstetler Shirk. MCC is exploring a potential joint response together with Mennonite Disaster Service, Friends of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine and others.

The Mennonite Centre is hosting bicentennial celebrations of Molochna, a former Mennonite colony, on June 2-8. According to planners, the disaster is not affecting the celebrations.—
From reports

Genetic Researchers Need Your Help

Do you or anyone in your family have dystonia? People with dystonia have muscle movements they cannot control. These movements force parts of the body into unusual movements or postures. Dystonia can affect any part of the body including the arms and legs, trunk, neck, eyelids, face, or vocal cords. (Some names that doctors give to these different kinds of dystonia are blepharospasm, torticollis, Meige syndrome, spasmodic dysphonia). Please help us learn more about the causes of different types of dystonia.

Please call, write, or e-mail us anytime! Thanks in advance for your help!

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Kristina Habermann, MS
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Beth Israel Medical Center
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FOCUS

Seniors.....

Tours connect people with their roots

Many people are searching for their roots. Seniors have more time for genealogies and family trees. Sometimes they contact TourMagination in the hope that we may be able to assist them in filling in the missing pieces. TourMagination's mission statement is "building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians around the world through custom-designed travel."

On a recent tour to Mexico, Jay and Mary Hubert from California brought their laptop with their family tree. Jay is actively involved in his local Mennonite historical society. He, along with Roy and Alma Regier from Meade, Kansas, were in constant dialogue with Mennonites we met. Whether we stopped at a church or a restaurant, Alma was always talking with others to find connections with her past and with Mennonites in the Meade area.

TourMagination has discovered that interest in history and being rooted is more than filling in the blanks on a family tree. It has to do with our spiritual journeys. Seniors and others who travel on our tours are often on a pilgrimage. It's often more than being a tourist.

As one tour member from Alberta recently said, "It is coming to terms with many of the attitudes and beliefs that I grew up with in my conservative Mennonite church. This tour has made a

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tremendous impact on me.” On our tours, we encourage people to take a spirit of inquiry, recognizing that our bodies travel more easily than our minds and until we’ve limbered up our imaginations, we continue to think as though we had stayed home. When you are on a pilgrimage, you keep your eyes open, your mind inquisitive and you are filled with wonder at what you learn from local people who are also on a journey.

TourMagination is celebrating its 35th season. Our very first tour took people to Europe to discover their roots. All of our tours have seniors and non-seniors participating.

This past March, Nick Kampen, who has lived in Pennsylvania for over 50 years, joined our tour to Paraguay. His parents came as refugees from Russia to Paraguay, where he was born. One of his goals was to visit his mother’s grave in Asuncion. TourMagination assisted

Continued on page 18



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Tours From page 17

Nick in fulfilling that desire.

I am grateful for the way in which tour members, particularly senior citizens, willingly assist one another, whether in Europe, South America or Africa. Our Mennonite family now stretches around the globe and we continue to search for roots to complete our family trees.

Call TourMagination at 1-800-565-0451 to join one of our tours. You will enjoy discovery and fellowship as you travel.—Wilmer Martin

The writer is president of TourMagination, a travel agency based in Waterloo, Ontario. Its upcoming tour to England and Scotland, June 23 to July 5, is especially for grandparents and their grandchildren.

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LANDS of the BIBLE (September 17-30)
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Along with branch and online service, MSCU offers personal services onsite at four homes for seniors: Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge, Greenwood Court in Stratford, Nithview Home and Seniors Village in New Hamburg, and Leamington Mennonite Home. For more information about on-site services, contact your nearest MSCU branch or call 1-888-672-6728.

Financial planners and advisors from all six MSCU branches provide advice on retirement and estate planning, account management and wealth management.—From MSCU release

Senior Sports Classic

The Mennonite Association of Retired Persons (MARP) will hold its fourth Senior Sports Classic June 17-19, hosted by Eastern Mennonite University and Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The event celebrates fitness, friends and fun with competitions for those age 50 and older. A wide variety of sports events, including basketball, golf, horseshoes, running and swimming, are held for different age divisions. The date coincides with EMU's Bach Festival and participants can enjoy the sports challenge as well as the festival. For more information call (866) 721-7730.

To learn about MARP, visit its web site at <http://marp.mennonite.net>. The site also has a link to Service Opportunities for Older People (SOOP).—From MARP newsletter

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St. Jacobs, Ont.

Feeling safe in an insecure world

We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll....”

Speaking at the annual meeting of Shalom Counselling Services (Waterloo), Margaret Janzen drew on her own life to make sense of the turbulent world in which we live.

As an Assistant Crown Attorney, Janzen “has been caught between the demands of communal justice and God’s grace,” as Waldemar Regier stated in his introduction.

“In my role, I see some pretty awful stuff—a battered child, abused or raped women,” said Janzen. “What do we learn from these examples of human depravity? Does God simply stand by to allow things to happen to innocent victims? Does punishment of the guilty take away the pain?”

We live in a world in which violence is met with violence. Janzen cited

Counselling creates a space to disentangle, redefine an authentic life, without duty, the ensnarement of rules, guilt or fears.

Romeo Dellaire, the Canadian general who wrote about Rwanda in the book, *Shake Hands With the Devil*: “My story is not strictly a military story. This book is a cry from the heart for the thousands who were hacked apart by machetes.... We watched as the devil took control of a paradise on earth and fed on the blood of the people we were supposed to protect.”

In such a world, said Janzen, paraphrasing the gospel song: “Will we find an anchor that will hold us secure? Or will we drift and become shipwrecked before we reach the harbour?”

Janzen was three years old when her father died, leaving her mother with 10 children. Still, her home seemed a secure haven. The children learned to be grateful for the assistance of others; they were taught to work and become self-reliant; they

were taught to turn the other cheek.

In the community of her childhood, there was no need for police officers or courts. You were in and safe, or out and lost. “Come what may, we would



Janzen

trust God’s promise to find the way through a difficult passage.”

When she married at age 18 and moved to Ontario as the wife of a college professor, she felt that this safe world was left behind. In her legal role, the pain she witnessed did not leave her unscathed. She recounted stories of victims who keep on feeling victimized, who are forever changed.

“The lonely fear of victimization ripples through the community,” she said. Despair and “what if” questions keep lurking. Several years ago, Janzen felt that her own ship was nearly destroyed in the storm of life. She took a leave from

her job and sought counselling.

Janzen realized that the fear of drowning can be overcome only by

stepping into the water. Her time with the counsellor was spent mostly sobbing, believing that evil had overcome good. (The pain was still visible as she paused from time to time.)

Janzen noted that western emphases on logic and rational thought had stunted the expression of emotion in her life. She felt a pervading sense of disconnection, emptiness, rootlessness, utter vulnerability. She expressed profound gratitude for the counselling that groups such as Shalom Counselling can offer.

“However, I went to another counsellor,” she quipped. “I didn’t want to expose myself in front of my fellow Mennonites!”

Counselling, said Janzen, creates a space to disentangle, redefine an authentic life, without duty, the ensnarement of rules, guilt or fears. Counselling helps one to face painful truths.

“It helped to ground me, prepare me to survive storms and future bad weather.” The question we often ask is “Why me?” Could the question not also be “Why not me?” Self-pitying anger gets you nowhere. An empowering anger leads to doing what needs to be done in order to survive.

Janzen cited Psalm 139: “Whither shall I go from your spirit?” Ships are meant to sail the open seas, she concluded. “Storms are inevitable, but the anchor may hold until we can set sail again, until we reach the other shore.”—From report by **Maurice Martin**

Shalom Counselling reports on year

Over 150 people gathered at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church on May 1 for the annual breakfast meeting of Shalom Counselling Services (Waterloo). The highlight of the meeting was speaker Margaret Janzen, Assistant Crown Attorney (see related article).

Wanda Wagler-Martin, clinical director, reported that over 600 people received counselling during the past year. Shalom also provides education, resources, and consultation with pastors. It offers a spiritual component in its counselling (but does not proselytize).

Wagler-Martin defines counselling as: “A place away from the rest of your life, to reflect, problem solve, then take that wisdom back into your daily life.”

Nelson Scheifele, treasurer, reported that though Shalom receives support from United Way and municipalities, it is greatly dependent on donations (88 percent of clients were not able to cover the full cost; 49 percent have incomes below the poverty line).

Because a large part of the client base is not from the Mennonite constituency, Shalom is asking United Way for an increase. With revenues of \$189,632 last year, Shalom realized a surplus of \$3,000.

Ed Nowak and Paul Wideman reported on work to develop an endowment fund in conjunction with Mennonite Foundation. Chair of Shalom is Sandra Schiedel.—**Maurice Martin**

Calgary, Alta.

As long as we both shall live

On April 18, worship at Foothills Mennonite Church here included a wedding celebration. Lina Martinez and Diego Enciso, recent refugees from Colombia, exchanged their vows, first in Spanish and then in English, before an enthusiastic congregation.

As they concluded with “as long as we both shall live,” many in the congregation could not help but reflect on the uncertainty of this couple’s lives up to this point.

Diego and Lina met five years ago in San Vicente, Colombia. Lina was doing an obligatory year as a dentist in the hospital where Diego worked. Part of Lina’s work involved medical missions to remote regions around the city.

Although it was Lina’s professional obligation to provide dental care to all, the government said that because of political conflict she should deny services to armed groups. This was not easy because many of the regions were under the control of those groups.

In 2001, Lina finished her work with the hospital. She moved because threats were being made against her life because of her work. After six months she and Diego moved again because of threats. In May 2003, an attempt was made on their lives.

By the grace of God, Diego and Lina met Alfredo Torres, who works with Justapaz, the Mennonite Justice and Peace organization. They spoke with him about their fears. With the help of Justapaz, they came to Bogota and sought out the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church, with pastor Peter Stucky.

“We were welcomed into the fellowship and we began attending courses preparing us for baptism,” said Lina. “We attended worship services regularly, as well as the meetings to study our case.”

They planned a wedding ceremony, but Lina’s brother and nephew were killed in a car accident the day of the wedding and it didn’t take place. Because threats against their lives

continued in Bogota—even to the door of the Mennonite church—they left the country in December 2003.

They had requested to come to Canada under a church sponsorship, but there was none available. Colombian church leaders advised them to find a Mennonite church when they arrived. They had heard about Foothills

Mennonite Church from a friend, and when they arrived in Calgary they sought it out.

“The moment we arrived, this church welcomed us like members of a great family,” they said. “You helped us get established in this city. You gave us Christian community. You gave us a testimony of true faith.”

On their long-awaited wedding day, the Foothills congregation did its best to help bring some Colombian flavour to the celebration. A highlight of the service was a music group singing the Spanish song, *Estare* (I will be).

Doug Klassen spoke of the way God identified himself to Moses as “I am who I am,” or, more precisely in the Hebrew, “I will be who I will be.”

“And we know from that day forward, God began to reveal himself in a new way,” said Klassen. “He would be their saviour, redeemer, liberator.” God has led you through an exodus, said Klassen. “Through many difficult circumstances, God has been faithful to you. And now God has brought you here, to a place where people love you and care about you.”

Since the wedding, the couple, along with a Colombian friend, have re-



Photo by Rose Klassen

Lina Martinez and Diego Enciso, on their wedding day at Foothills Mennonite Church.

quested baptism and membership.

In their testimony on May 9 they said, “We have walked a difficult journey.... We have experienced loneliness, economic crisis, uprooting our lives, unemployment and the psychological trauma that the armed conflict in Colombia has generated.... Thanks to the Lord Jesus who presented on our road pastor Alfredo Torres, then pastor Peter Stucky and the Teusaquillo Mennonite Church in Bogota, and then pastor Doug Klassen and the Foothills Mennonite Church of Calgary.”—From Foothills report

Correction

A May 3 story on the licensing of Kara Carter at Poole Mennonite Church should have read: “Schultz drew an analogy between the message God gave to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the call to ministry that he [God] gave to Carter.” The sentence said, incorrectly, that Schultz gave the call of ministry to Carter.

Vancouver, B.C.

No retirement for B.C. women

Sixty-five years might seem like a good age to retire, but B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission is still in the working world, having narrowly escaped being retired for good.

The women who met at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church on April 25 for the 65th annual inspirational day reminisced about the past and planned how to continue. The most difficult part of the day came when president Veronica Thiessen reported that the organization might have to dissolve due to waning interest. The reasons include changes in society and women choosing to serve locally rather than on wider church committees.

Thiessen reluctantly recommended that if there was no one to fill the secretary position and two openings on the program committee, the group should dissolve. If this happens, she said, "We will not be in a cluster anymore, but individual grapes."

After discussion, a volunteer stepped forward for the secretary position, and it was suggested that two program committee members be named from the host church of next year's meeting. Happily, the motion to dissolve was defeated. Many agreed this was an answer to prayer.

With the theme, "Telling the next generation," Charlotte Siemens gave a history of the organization since its birth on February 28, 1939. At that first meeting there were 125 women and the collection totalled \$6.20. This year's attendance was 212, with an offering of \$3,636.17.

Louise Bergen Price of Abbotsford, a member of Langley Mennonite Fellowship, was the first speaker. She has been journeying with her ancestors for the past 15 years, studying the diaries of her grandmother and weaving them into a written history. Through the firsthand accounts of war, famine, bandit raids and death in Russia and hardships in Canada, Price has been inspired by those before her and hopes in turn to inspire others.

Kendra Loewen of Surrey, a member of the Peace Mennonite Church, also shared stories of her grandmothers'



Veronica Thiessen (behind podium) introduces past presidents of B.C. Women in Mission, from left: Helga Rempel (2000-2002), Marie Rehler (1996-2000), Sue Kehler (1994-1996), Mary Bergen (1980-1984), and Martha Rempel (1974-1980).

hardships.

"Our histories may have darkness, shadows and unpleasantness," she said, "but they are part of us. Faith cannot save you from bad things, but it does let you bear things with God's help." She concluded, "Don't be afraid to share your stories. And don't be afraid to listen."

In the concluding memorial service, roses were placed at the front in memory of women who had passed away. The storytelling and sharing continued around the supper table with a meal prepared by the Sherbrooke church food committee.

—Amy Dueckman

Water Valley, Alta.

Women explore the sound of music

The hills around Camp Valaqua were certainly alive with the sound of music at the Alberta Women in Mission spring retreat, April 30-May 2. Using the theme from Psalm 98, "O sing to the Lord a new song," presenters Margie Koop of Sherwood Park and her sister Evelyn Roden of Saskatoon spoke about music as therapy.

The 44 participants began Saturday morning with worship and singing. Evelyn had us remember music from our earliest times (comforting lullabies), and our darkest times (prayerful hymns). She emphasized that we experience music on many levels—heart, body and soul.

Using "The Sound of Music" as a

theme, Evelyn took us into the words of "The hills are alive" to see how nature inspires our music. When invited to share how this movie touched our lives, Helen Neudorf of Springridge Mennonite Church said, "The Sound of Music was the first movie that my husband, John, and I saw while we were dating, and it was actually the first movie that he had ever seen." John was raised in Mexico among the Old Colony Mennonites.

"We were madly in love and will have been married for 37 years this June."

Music evokes an emotional response and we often hear and feel words more clearly if they are put to music.

The business session included the

Transitions

Births

Bartlett—to Lisa and Brett, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a daughter, Makenna Kailyn, Apr. 30.

Beech—to Cindy Lebold and Scott, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a son, Thomas Joel, Mar. 22.

Bergen—to Nettie and Henry, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Kaley Amanda, May 4.

Dyck—to Val Martens and Darryl Dyck, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Matthaeus Darryl, Mar. 28.

Fehr—to Carleen and Darcy, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a son, Cameron Matthew, Apr. 6.

Giesbrecht—to Robin and Don, Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask., a son, Tyson, Apr. 17.

Hamm—to Teresa (Kehler) and Larry, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Erin Joanne, Apr. 29.

Harder—to Karen and Quentin, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a daughter, Emma Raye, Jan. 18.

Klassen—to Angela and Dallas, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a son, Reid Tanner, Mar. 2.

Larson—to Christina and Allan, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., a son, Evan

Jacob, May 12.

Leis—to Diane and Paul, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., a son, Sheldon David, Apr. 23.

Moyano—to Yiriam, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., a son, David Alexander, Jan. 16.

Niessen—to Gisela and Arnold, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Ryan Jonathan, Apr. 29.

Schroeder—to Deborah (Reimer) and Elmer, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Leah Johannah Kay, Apr. 29.

Wall—to Tammy and Warren, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Teagan Elyse, Apr. 28.

Wall—to Tracey and Dan, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Alexandra Dawn, Apr. 29.

Wiebe—to Becky and Marv, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Nicholas Quinn, May 1.

Wiebe—to Karen (Wiens) and Corey, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Karlana Tristan, Apr. 28.

Marriages

Arney-Bentley—Nathanael, (Wellspring Christian Fellowship, Abbotsford, B.C.), and Rachel (from Australia), in Hong Kong, Feb. 14.

Bentivogli-Hoke—Michael (New Jersey) and Jennifer, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., in Waterloo,

Ont., Apr. 24.

Bergen-Harder—Mark and Janice, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 8.

Eldridge-Harms—Pat and Julie, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., May 1.

Froese-Unger—Friedolin, (Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg), and Anna, at Elmwood Mennonite Brethren, Winnipeg, May 1.

Marshall-Enns—Christopher and Jennifer, at North Leamington United Mennonite, May 15.

O'Brien-Wiebe—Sean and Jamie, at Morden Mennonite, Man., May 15.

Penner-Brandenberg—Andrew and Erin, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 15.

Tiessen-McIntyre—Brian and Lisa, North Leamington United Mennonite, May 15.

Deaths

Brunk—Ivan, 91, Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., Apr. 15.

Buckingham—94, Blanche, Hagerman Mennonite, Markham, Ont., Mar. 15.

Cameron—Raymond, 78, Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask., May 6.

Durksen—Anne, 67, Morden Mennonite, Man., May 13.

Dyck—Abram, 80, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 12.

Dyck—John H., 92, Morden Mennonite, Man., Feb. 2.

Ens—Gerhard, 76, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., Apr. 25.

Fast—Helen, 76, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man. May 8.

Funk—Walter Harold, 81, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., Apr. 17.

Gingerich—Alvin, 77, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Apr. 30.

Konrad—George, 93, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Apr. 5.

Krause—Donna (Andres), 49, Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Apr. 3.

Kroeker—Susan, 93, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 3.

Kuepfer—Elwood, 59, Hanover Mennonite, Ont., Apr. 29.

Martens—Jake, 67, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Apr. 28.

Smith—Hannah, 99, Hagerman Mennonite, Markham, Ont., Apr. 13.

Snider—Harold, 79, Listowel Mennonite, Ont., Apr. 2.

Baptisms

Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.—Dennis John Neufeldt, Marie (Derksen) Leclair, Apr. 18.

installation of two new members of the executive, Ev Buhr of Edmonton as president-elect, and Ellie Janz of Calgary as secretary-treasurer, succeeding Carol Sawatsky. Next spring's Women in Mission conference will be held at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

Evelyn and Margie created some Saturday night fun by leading a session of silly songs designed to bring back carefree feelings of childhood. The evening concluded with an entertainment extravaganza of music and poems from each of the women's groups.

After Sunday's worship, Margie shared stories about music and the gift of ageless hymns. In her work with elderly people, especially those suffering with Alzheimer's, a hymn from child-

hood, such as "Jesus loves me," can bring calmness, eye contact and tears.

Margie reminded us that we may forget words that we have heard, but when the words are set to music, we can easily remember a favourite hymn. The morning concluded with a communion service led by Doreen Neufeldt.—**Evelyn Buhr**



Margie Koop leads singing at the Alberta women's retreat, accompanied by her sister, Evelyn Roden.

Photo by Evelyn Buhr

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Didsbury, Alta.

Alberta donation of hay runs into B.C. roadblocks

Compassion wasn't just a state of mind for farmers, truckers and business people in Alberta who watched British Columbia forests and pasturelands go up in flames last summer.

Joseph Niessen, whose livelihood involves baling and transporting hay, organized 20 semi-trailer loads of hay for stricken ranchers in Kamloops and Barriere. He drew together people from his home church (Church of God) as well as other churches and community people in the area.

Alberta farmers had received hay from eastern Canada farm folk the previous year. With better weather conditions this year, the supply of hay improved and a drive to aid people in B.C. was possible.

"Alberta hay to B.C. Now it's our turn" was the sign fastened to the load

of each truck. They were made by Ben Penner. Corporate and private donations came in. Mennonite Disaster Service received \$648 for expenses, two hay plants gave support and Petro Canada donated about 200 gallons of fuel per truck. Trailer companies offered drop bed trailers and politicians helped process legal requirements.

About 20 donors gave hay and straw, and 10 provided loading equipment. In total, 75 people were involved. The project was valued at between \$40,000 and \$50,000.

The euphoria was broken when a snowstorm on October 29 delayed the convoy by a day. Then, on its arrival in Golden, B.C., the convoy was stopped at the weigh scales for unsafe loading. The truckers were told they could not proceed without a total restrapping of the loads, with added equipment.

Other trucks, strapped in the same way, got through.

Niessen had sought clarification on safety rules for B.C. and had obtained concessions for a charitable feed drive. Scale officials did not recognize these arrangements.

Newspaper accounts used words like "adversarial attitude" of enforcement personnel, "hijacking" and "harassment." The mayor of Golden apologized to the truckers and residents offered food and lodging.

Once in Kamloops, things went smoothly. Eight more loads were sent in the new year, but enthusiasm for the project had dwindled after the treatment of the first convoy. The 20 loads represented only 20 percent of the need, but it was greatly appreciated by the B.C. ranchers.—From report by **Henry D. Goerzen**

Mennonite Church Canada

Benders bound for China

A fondness for connecting with congregations and a fervour for the missional church are only two reasons that Phil and Julie Bender are preparing to serve with Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Chengdu, China.



Phil and Julie Bender

As a pastor, teacher and former mission worker, Phil has built many relationships with congregations in Ontario and Manitoba. He taught at Elim Bible Institute in Altona, Manitoba, from 1976 to 1988. He and Julie served a term as missionaries in Ghana. The couple then co-pastored in Ontario, first at Zurich Mennonite Church and most recently at Hamilton Mennonite.

Phil says that returning to Ghana for a visit in 2002 rekindled his appetite for another international adventure. In taking an assignment in Chendu, he will return to his love of teaching by helping students learn English. He will also follow his passion for experiencing other cultures.

But Phil is quick to point out the core attraction of this assignment: "To work at embodying the gospel through a presence ministry—which we'll need to do in China since we can't go in there overtly as missionaries—is appealing."

Julie adds, "The missional concept of the church is very

important to me and if I can help to communicate some of that back to North American churches, that will be a joy."

Julie, with a master's degree in social work and gifts in counselling, mentoring and spiritual direction, will provide pastoral care for teachers in the China Educational Exchange program.

"I was aware of this position even when we lived in Ghana, and I had thought sometimes, 'That would be a very interesting job to have.'"

Recently the couple hosted a university student from Chengdu in their Hamilton home. The relationship they built with her has resulted in a ready-made set of connections in Chengdu.

The couple knows that talking about God in a culture that has almost no biblical foundation or Christian language will be a challenge. Knowing they are remembered and prayed for by friends and congregations back home will be important for them. They also want to give something of their experience back to the church.

"We're grateful for the opportunity to represent Mennonite Church Canada in China, and are looking forward to helping the Canadian Mennonite [church] learn a little bit more about how the Spirit is working in China," said Phil.—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Ministry milestones in Ontario

Congregations of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada are celebrating ministry milestones, in partnership with the Leadership Commission.

Catherine Hunsberger was ordained at Rainham Mennonite Church on May 2, where she has been pastor for eight years. Before that, she

worked for five years as administrative secretary for Ralph Lebold in conference-based pastoral leadership education.

Hunsberger was ordained at the end of her current ministry assignment in anticipation that she will continue to serve the church.

Sandi Hannigan was licensed towards ordination at Erb Street Mennonite Church on April 25. She has been coordinator of Christian education there since 1995, and as interim minister of education for MCEC for one year. She is a graduate of the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program at Conrad Grebel University College.

David Friesen Waldner will be ordained on June 13 at Nairn Mennonite Church where he has served for three years. A native of Saskatoon, he has studied at the Mennonite Brethren seminary in California, and at Luther Theological Seminary in Saskatoon.

He was a member at Nutana Mennonite Church in Saskatoon where he served as worship deacon for several years. He also serves part-time as chaplain at Craigwiel Gardens in Nairn.

On June 20, Pat Murphy will be licensed at Calvary church in Ayr, where he has been pastor for a year. He had experience in lay ministry in the Plymouth Brethren church and has studied in the MTS program at Conrad Grebel.

Marilyn Zehr will be licensed at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto on May 30 for her role as chaplain at St. Clair O'Connor Community. She is a recent graduate of the Toronto School of Theology.

Licensing for specific ministry

Mike Strathdee was licensed for specific ministry at Breslau

Mennonite Church on May 9 for his stewardship ministry with Mennonite Foundation of Canada. Darren Pries-Klassen was similarly licensed at First Mennonite Church in Vineland on May 23.

Leroy Shantz, chair of the MCEC Leadership Commission, received the request for credentialing Mennonite Foundation personnel about a year ago. The rationale is that these stewardship representatives provide a ministry of stewardship education (teaching and preaching) in congregations, as well as stewardship counselling and promotion.

Shantz notes that the candidates have gone through the normal process for licensing towards a specific ministry, which includes being co-sponsored by the agency and the congregation which they attend, and being interviewed by the Leadership Commission.

Shantz is aware that this could lead to requests for licensing for other specific ministries. The Leadership Commission will look at each request on its own merits. They consulted with MCEC's Executive Board as they took this new direction in credentialing for ministries of the church.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Lodging in Winnipeg for young adults

Mennonite Church Manitoba wants to bring together two kinds of people: those with space to share and young adults who seek housing in Winnipeg. MC Manitoba, in cooperation with Canadian Mennonite University, is compiling a list of prospective landlords.

Young people looking for lodging may contact MC Manitoba or CMU for a list. Those who wish to offer

their home or a room for rent can register with MC Manitoba, phone (204) 896-1616, e-mail: office@mennochurch.mb.ca; or CMU, phone (204) 487-3300, e-mail: cu@cmu.ca. Rental rates and expectations will be negotiated between landlord and renter.

Service opportunities at Camp Assiniboia

For many years, Camp Assiniboia has accepted young people for a one-year term of Voluntary Service (VS). VSers serve from September to August of the following year. They play an important role on the camp's team, serving as either kitchen helper or assistant wrangler. They are supervised by experienced staff.

New in 2004-05 is an apprenticeship program that will provide training and "Camp Assiniboia certification" to VSers. There are plans to include learning trips and other experiences in the program. VSers receive \$400 per month, plus room and board.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Workshops on being effective church

Two Mennonite Church Saskatchewan commissions

have joined to organize workshops on "Being a church that makes a difference."

The first workshop will be held May 28-29 at Camp Elim. It will be repeated October 28-29 at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

"Would your community even notice if your congregation shut down?" asks a promotional brochure sent to congregations. Other questions invite discussion on how to be an effective, community-minded church.

Seven participants from the missional leadership training course held in Winnipeg last year will lead discussion during the workshops.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Valaqua cleans up after strong winds

Strong winds on April 23 resulted in extensive damage to Jackpine Lodge at Camp Valaqua. A large spruce tree snapped off and fell on the west end of the building, demolishing the porch.

The lodge was the original camp building, constructed in 1961 as a combination kitchen, dining hall, chapel and indoor recreation area. Currently it is used as a crafts shelter and recreation area, and occasionally as a chapel. Although insurance will pay for general repairs, the camp committee is

evaluating the building to determine future use.

A work crew of students from Rosthern Junior College made a timely visit on April 29 to help with initial cleanup around the Jackpine. The students also cleared deadfall and brush from around other buildings, improving the appearance of the camp and reducing fire hazard.

Approximately 15 volunteers came to a workday on May 8. Although the turnout was small, important tasks got done. A supply of wood was cut and stacked. The fallen tree was cut up and moved, and some indoor spring-cleaning completed.

Don Dyck Steinman, director of Valaqua, is pleased about how summer staffing and program is shaping up. The camp is still seeking an out-trip director and some volunteers.

Pastor resigns at Holyrood

On April 18, Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton accepted the resignation of its pastor, Keith Funk-Froese. After much discernment, it was agreed that the fit between pastor and congregation was not right at this time.

The congregation thanks Jim Shantz, conference minister, for his guidance

through this process, and expresses thanks for Funk-Froese's service over the past two years.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Committee still seeks candidates

With annual sessions of Mennonite Church British Columbia coming up in June, the Nominations Committee still has some key positions to fill. Volunteers are being sought for secretary, and representative for Columbia Bible College.

In addition, the following committees require people: finance, evangelism and church development, nominations, camp and program.

The finance committee reports that it has been a challenging year for MC British Columbia. Expenses were curtailed by reducing office space and staff. There is some good news, however: donations from individuals towards the evangelism and church development budget allowed programs in that area to continue.

Nonetheless, difficult decisions will have to be made for the coming fiscal year. The committee asks for prayer as its members discern how best to use the limited funds.

What does love look like?

At a recent prayer meeting we focused on John 13: 34-35: "A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

This command spoke directly to me. What does "loving one another" look like for me, my church, the wider church? According to Scottish theologian William Barclay (1907-1978), for Jesus it meant loving his disciples "selflessly, sacrificially, understandingly and forgivingly."

We know that Jesus' love knew no limits. He sacrificed himself for us, yet we want our love to be painless. We want happiness. We may consider loving

selflessly, but rarely do we think of loving sacrificially. Do we continue to love even in our pain and disagreements? What limits do we place on our love?

Both as individuals and congregations, we have limits. We find it difficult to extend our love to the sinners, tax collectors and lepers of our time. Occasionally we express our limits by walking away from difficulty or resisting generosity.

In the end, Jesus' disciples forsake him. Peter denies him and leaves Jesus alone with his accusers. In love, Jesus forgives them. William Barclay says it well in *The Gospel of John*: "The love which has not learned to forgive cannot do anything but shrivel and die."

We have all been there, or met people

who are unable to forgive others. It is a painful, lonely existence. Forgiveness and love are hard work, but not optional for Christians.

We are approaching Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in July. Together we are the church. It will be an opportunity to see how love looks in the context of assembly. Do you suppose the community of Winkler will be able to tell "we are Christians by our love"? I think so.

Esther Peters, General Board member, Mennonite Church Canada



From our leaders

Employment opportunities

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time

PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT/HEBREW BIBLE

beginning July 1, 2005, to teach in the areas of Hebrew language and exegesis of Old Testament literature, and to advise graduate students. Qualifications include a Ph.D. or equivalent in Old Testament or Ancient Near Eastern studies, teaching experience, and strong communication and relational skills. Commitment to AMBS's mission and support of its Anabaptist, evangelical, and ecumenical vision is important. Mennonites, United Methodists, women, and members of underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply.

To apply, send a resume, three references and a letter of application by Oct. 1, 2004, to

Dr. Loren Johns, Academic Dean
AMBS, 3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517
E-mail: ljohns@ambs.edu

Visit www.ambs.edu/php/welcome/wel_job_OT_prof.php for a full job description.

FULL-TIME PASTOR

Living Water Community Christian Fellowship is a dynamic 23 year old congregation in New Hamburg, Ontario. New Hamburg is a growing community twenty minutes from Kitchener-Waterloo. We are looking for a full time pastor sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, seeking to build relationships in our community. We have a contemporary style of worship, a vibrant small group program, an active outreach into our community. Starting date is January of 2005. Living Water is part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Closing Date June 30, 2004

For further information contact:

Muriel Bechtel, MCEC, Kitchener, ON
Phone: (519) 650-3806; Fax: (519) 650-3947
or Living Water Fellowship at (519) 662-3300

Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg is seeking a

HALF-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

The Associate Pastor will serve in a leadership team under the direction of the senior pastor to help facilitate Junior and Senior Youth programs. Ministries include fostering intergenerational/family relationships and events, equipping and guiding sponsors, coordinating program planning, working with worship teams to involve junior and senior youth in worship services, outreach, and some preaching and worship leading. Experience required.

Home Street Mennonite Church is a vibrant urban congregation with a typical Sunday attendance of 250. Anabaptist convictions are important to the congregation. Home Street is a member of Mennonite Church Canada.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit a covering letter and resume by June 21st to:

Pastoral Search Team
Home Street Mennonite Church
318 Home Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1X4
E-mail: hsmc@mts.net
Fax: (204) 783-1721

TWO-THIRDS TIME PASTOR

Erie View United Mennonite Church, Port Rowan, Ontario is in search of a two-thirds time pastor to commence in November, 2004. We are a rural congregation located on the north shore of Lake Erie in southwestern Ontario. Average Sunday attendance is 50 people. General duties would include worship planning, preaching, pastoral care, and working with the youth and young adults.

For further information or to submit an application, please contact:

W. Michael Wiebe
21 Norfolk Street North
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1
Phone: (519) 426-5840; Fax: (519) 426-5572
E-mail: wmwiebe@brimage.com
or RR 3 Langton, ON N0E 1G0
Phone: (519) 875-1377



Applications invited for

DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICES

Menno Home is a 196-bed complex care facility, part of a growing, multi-level care and housing campus operated by the Mennonite Benevolent Society in Abbotsford, BC.

Position requirements:

- Eligibility for membership in the Canadian Society of Nutrition Management
- Proven experience in healthcare food services, implementing audits and meeting nutritional standards
- Ability to provide leadership to a kitchen staff of 33, including hiring, scheduling and evaluations
- Additional experience in Support Services management preferred

Successful candidate will combine proven experience with potential for assuming increased responsibility in a dynamic, Christian healthcare organization.

Applications received until July 8, 2004. Position to commence in September. Please direct inquires and applications to

Chief Operating Officer
Menno Home, 32910 Brundige Ave.
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1N2
Phone: (604) 853-2411; E-mail: a.enns@mennohome.org

Christian Alliance International School in Hong Kong has the following vacancies effective August, 2004:

PRINCIPAL (Secondary)
SECONDARY ENGLISH TEACHER
HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER
TEACHER LIBRARIAN

Minimum requirements are a B.Ed. (or equivalent) with a relevant major. Previous experience in an international school setting is desirable. For details about the positions, required qualifications, closing dates and the application process, please visit the web site at www.cais.edu.hk. Inquiries may be directed to Mr. Art Enns, Headmaster at:

Christian Alliance International School
2 Fu Ning Street, Kowloon City, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Phone: (852) 2713-3733 Fax: (852) 2760-4324
E-mail: aenns@cais.edu.hk

Personal data will be used for recruitment purposes only.



Stewardship Consultant

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) is a charitable foundation serving seven Anabaptist church conferences across Canada. MFC is seeking a full-time stewardship consultant to manage its new Calgary office. This person will be responsible to promote MFC's Biblical stewardship message and provide charitable gift and estate planning services to the Alberta constituency.

Candidates for this position should:

- Be able to communicate effectively in group settings and with individuals
- Possess an understanding of charitable gift and estate planning
- Be creative, organized, and self-motivated
- Support MFC's stewardship mission
- Be a contributing part of the staff team

Each candidate must be a member of one of MFC's seven participating conferences.

Submit applications by June 30, 2004 to:

Robert Veitch, General Manager
12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986
e-mail: rveitch@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca

KITCHEN ASSISTANT and WRANGLER

required at Camp Assiniboia, a Mennonite camp near Headingley. Gain Christian ministry experience, develop employment skills, enjoy recreation. \$400/mth plus free room and board. One year term beginning September. Contact:

Phone: (204) 896-1616
E-mail: camps@mennochurch.mb.ca

St Jacobs Mennonite Church invites applications for

FULL TIME PASTOR

to join our pastoral team, working alongside two ongoing pastors. An interest in team ministry and a spirit of flexibility will be definite assets. Specific areas of responsibility include coordination of pastoral care, an understanding and ability to work creatively in the areas of stewardship and outreach, as well as regular preaching, teaching and worship participation. Experience in crisis ministry and ministry to seniors are also important qualities for this position. We are a congregation of 270 located in a village setting, just minutes from the City of Waterloo, Ontario.

For further information, or to send a resume, contact:

Muriel Bechtel
MCEC (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)
4489 King St. E. Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone: (519) 650 3806; Fax: (519) 650 3947
E-mail: muriel@mcec.on.ca

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is seeking to fill full and part-time teaching positions for the 2004-2005 school year in:

LANGUAGE ARTS
(Grade 10, 11, 12 Language Arts, and ESL)

FRENCH
(Junior and Senior High French)

Qualified applicants should forward resumes to:

c/o Principal
Westgate Mennonite Collegiate
86 West Gate
Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1
Fax: (204) 786-1651

MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT

required at Camp Assiniboia, a Mennonite camp near Headingley. Term position from Summer to December 2004. Duties include custodial, grounds, maintenance. Lodging available on site. Contact:

Phone: (204) 896-1616
E-mail: camps@mennochurch.mb.ca

For rent

Cottage for Rent: \$700/week, 4 bedrooms, 3 hours north of Toronto. Great for young children. Shallow water with sandy bottom for 100 yards before dropping off. 150 feet of shoreline on Lake Bernard near Sundridge. Call John (519) 742-0538.

Camps with Meaning has openings for guest groups year round, including some dates in late summer, at Camps Assiniboia, Koinonia, and Moose Lake. Ideal for family gatherings. Contact 204-895-CAMP for more information.

For sale

Used Books: *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* in 4 volumes; *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*; *The Gospel According to John I-XII, XIII-XXI (The Anchor Bible Series, 2 volumes)* Please phone (519) 655-2981.

Wanted

Wanted: Complete Mennonite Encyclopedia. (250) 721-9271.

A scholarship, the **Dwight Moody Wiebe Endowment Fund**, is available to former Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers who are enrolled in graduate programs. The scholarship was established by Margot Wiebe of Dallas, Texas, in memory of her husband, Dwight Moody Wiebe, who died in January 2000. Dwight Wiebe served with MCC during the 1950s, including four years as Europe director of MCC's Pax program for alternative military service.

A minimum of \$390 Cdn./\$250 U.S. is available to candidates who fulfill each of the following requirements:

- 1) applicant has completed an assignment with MCC of at least two years;
- 2) applicant is actively enrolled in an accredited graduate school;
- 3) applicant completed his/her term with MCC no more than three years before enrolling in graduate school.

Contact Carol Eby-Good by September 30, 2004 for 2004-2005 academic year.

MCC Akron - Human Resources
PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500
Fax: (717) 859-2171; E-mail: ceg@mcc.org

Conference on peace theology

Akron, Pa.—Registration closes June 30 for the conference, "Seeking the welfare of the city: Public peace, justice and order," August 1 to 4 in Akron, Pennsylvania, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee.

The event will explore how traditional Anabaptist peace theology applies today, and will include a range of Anabaptist voices, from theologians and pastors to social workers and lawyers. International visitors such as Paulus Widjaja from Indonesia (Mennonite World Conference Peace Council secretary), and Alix Lozano, director of the Mennonite seminary in Colombia, will discuss approaches to peace in their regions.

To register or learn more, see www.mcc.org/peaceology or call (717) 859-1151, ext. 210.—From MCC release

Conference to focus on 'boat people'

Winnipeg, Man.—A conference in October 2005 is inviting presenters and storytellers involved in the settlement of Asian "boat people" in Canada. In 1979, a crisis in Vietnam set in motion a massive migration of refugees that transformed Mennonite churches in Canada.

The conference will address

the legacy of that time. Congregational representatives, individuals and academics are encouraged to participate. The event, supported by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada, will be hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

For further information, contact Royden Loewen, e-mail: r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca or Ken Reddig at MCC Canada.—From release

Schreyer to speak at fundraiser

Winkler, Man.—Eden Foundation's spring fundraiser on June 22 at Winkler Berghaler Mennonite Church will feature guest speaker Edward Schreyer, former Governor General of Canada.

The musical family, "Barta," will share stories of struggle and recovery from mental illness. Chris Summerville, a minister and director of the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, will host the evening. The event begins at 7:00 p.m. Call (204) 325-5355 for complimentary tickets.—From Eden release.

Winnipeg event to focus on AIDS

Winnipeg, Man.—Allen Ronald, an infectious disease expert at the University of Manitoba, is helping to organize a conference,

"Christians responding to HIV/AIDS in Africa," here this fall.

Many church agencies have been working for years at preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, said Ronald. The goal of the conference, to be held November 12-13 at Calvary Temple, is to inform Manitoba congregations and encourage them to help people in Africa deal with the disease. For more information, call Ronald at (204) 452-1374.—From MCC Canada release

Centre closed for two weeks

The Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives and Gallery in Winnipeg will be closed for renovations from June 11-26, says director Alf Redekopp. Although staff will be available by telephone or e-mail, services will be limited.—From release

Calendar

British Columbia

July 14-18: MCC Family Camping Trip to Vancouver Island. Contact Darryl Klassen or Elsie Wiebe Klingler at (604) 850-6639.

August 20-22: 50th Anniversary Homecoming at First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake. Contact Rob Wiebe, e-mail: rwiebe@futurenet.bc.ca, fax: (250) 698-7363.

August 23-30: MCC Quilt Show at Clearbrook Public Library. Call (604) 850-6639 or visit www.mcc.org/bc.

September 17-18: MCC Festival at the Tradex, Abbotsford. Call (604) 850-6639 or visit www.mcc.org/bc.

September 19: MCC Festival of Praise at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, 2:30 p.m.

September 25: MCC Fall Fair at Civic Centre, Prince George.

October 4-6: Pastor/spouse retreat.

October 15-17: Women's retreat on "Prayer," with speaker Karen Heidebrecht-Thiessen.

Alberta

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

Saskatchewan

June 11-12: MCC Relief Sale in Saskatoon.

June 11: Open house at MCC building, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

June 11-13: Heifer International Conference at Shekinah. Call Gordon Enns at (306) 239-4601.

June 12: Ride-a-thon for Youth Farm Bible Camp, 9:00 a.m. See www.yfbc.ca.

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

June 29: MC Saskatchewan Camping Commission comedy and dessert night at Youth Farm Bible Camp, Rosthern.

July 2-4: Shekinah 25th anniversary celebrations.

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

August 4: MEDA breakfast at Grainfields Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

August 7-8: 75th anniversary of Carrot River Mennonite Church at Carrot River Community Hall.

Pontius' Puddle



September 10-12: Junior high retreat.

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

October 15-16: Saskatchewan Women in Mission retreat.

October 20-23: Christian Peacemaker Team meeting at Shekinah.

October 28-29: Missional church workshop for lay leaders at Camp Elim.

Manitoba

June 7-9: 55 Plus Retreat at Camp Koinonia with Jake Harms and Jake Neufeld.

June 13: Saengerfest at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, worship 10:30 a.m.; choir performances 2:00 p.m.

June 13: Charity golf tournament for Eden Foundation at Winkler Golf Course, 1:30 p.m. Call (204) 325-5355.

June 17: Eden Health Care Services annual meeting at Winkler Bergthaler church.

June 18: MCC Festival and Relief Sale at Canadian Mennonite University.

June 22: Eden Foundation fundraiser with speaker Edward Schreyer and music by "Barta," at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m. Phone (204) 325-5355.

June 22: Canadian Mennonite University President's Golf Tournament at Kingswood, Winnipeg. Phone (204) 487-3300 or e-mail: cwarrentin@cmu.ca.

June 26: Camp Koinonia Golf Tournament at Winkler Golf Course.

June 26-27: MCC Bike the Whiteshell cyclathon.

June 27: Mennonite Collegiate Institute graduation at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 2:30 p.m.

June 27: Celebration of 50 years in ministry for Jake F. Pauls at Morden Mennonite Church, 3:00 p.m.

June 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate graduation at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

July 3: MCC Cycle Clear Lake cyclathon (formerly Spruce Woods).

July 7-11: Mennonite Church Canada annual delegate assembly in Winkler.

July 7: Mennonite Disaster Service alumni gathering, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, after evening session of assembly.

July 15: Ironman golf marathon for Eden Foundation at Winkler Golf Course, 1:30 p.m. Call (204) 325-5355.

July 17-18: 75th anniversary celebration at Schoenfelder Mennonite Church, Pigeon Lake. Call (204) 864-2285, e-mail: schoenfelder75@hotmail.com.

July 19-23: Course on worship with John Bell of Iona Community, Scotland, at Canadian Mennonite University.

September 11: Cyclathon in Pembina Hills for Eden Health Care Services. Phone (204) 325-5355, e-mail: edenfdn@valleycable.com.

October 2: MC Manitoba Equipping Conference at Canadian Mennonite University.

October 15-16: 24-hour women's retreat at Camp Assiniboia, with speaker Kathy Koop on "Faithful women: then and now."

October 23: Manitoba Women for MCC conference at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 10:00 a.m. Bring bag lunch and bar of soap.

Ontario

June 4-5: MennoFolk at Hidden Acres Camp, 7:00 p.m. Friday, 3:00 p.m. on Saturday. Phone Mark Diller Harder at (519) 650-3806, e-mail: markdh@mceec.on.ca.

June 5: Leamington Community Sale, at UMEI, 8:00 a.m., see www.leamington.net/mennonitesale

June 5: HAC Attack, Hidden Acres Camp basketball tournament. Phone (519) 625-8602, e-mail: info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 6: Choir spring concert at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.

June 8: Chicken barbecue at Hidden Acres Camp, 5:00 p.m. Call (519) 625-8602 to reserve.

June 11: Book launch/

barbecue at The Bookshop at Pandora Press, 33 Kent Ave., Kitchener, 4:00-6:00 p.m., featuring Julie Ellison White's *Tent of Meeting*.

June 12: Menn. Historical Society of Ont. annual meeting at Detweiler meeting house, 2:00 p.m.

June 15-18: Summer Training Institute for church leaders by Conciliation Services Canada, at Conrad Grebel University College. Contact Nan Cressman, phone 1-866-782-0287.

June 19: Graduation at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

June 20: United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) graduation, Leamington,

2:30 p.m.

June 25-27: Family Camping at Hidden Acres Camp. Details at (519) 625-8602, e-mail: info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 26: Aylmer Auction for Relief.

July 11: UMEI Pancake Breakfast, 8:00 a.m. Service 10:00 a.m.

July 19: UMEI Watermelon Open.

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

August 19: Peach social at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington.

September 18: Relief sale at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

Subscriber services CANADIAN Mennonite

How to subscribe:

- Individuals who are part of Mennonite Church Canada or one of its five area conferences can ask to be placed on their congregation's group subscription list. The subscription is paid by the conferences.
- Others who wish to order a subscription can use this form. See contact information below.
Rates: \$32.50 for one year (includes \$2.13 GST); \$52.50 (Can.) to U.S.; \$73.00 (Can.) for overseas.

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- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)
- Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.**

Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7
Phone: (519) 884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext.221
Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org



This former Mennonite girls' school in Molochansk, Ukraine, has been beautifully restored and now houses The Mennonite Centre in Ukraine. (Molochansk was formerly the village of Halbstadt.) The centre is operated by Friends of the Mennonite Centre of Ukraine, comprising about 400 North American members. The centre is at the hub of bicentennial celebrations of the former Molochna Mennonite Colony (see page 15).

Photo supplied by Walter Unger.