

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

June 28, 2004
Volume 8, Number 13



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Assembly preview

This issue will be arriving at your home just as the Mennonite Church Canada assembly gets underway in Winkler, Manitoba. Delegates this year will be tackling some critical issues, including a statement of purpose and priorities for the church.

A large portion of delegate interaction will take place around tables, allowing people to get to know each other and to discuss issues in small groups before addressing them on the conference floor.

Delegates will be asked to give direction to the General Board on how to lead the church in matters of theology, ethics, polity and practice. They will talk about joining two ecumenical bodies, and about the frequency of assemblies.

One topic that is sure to be highly divisive is homosexuality. "The obligation of the church is to discern God's will and God's activity in the world in every circumstance and issue that is present in the church and in its context," says the assembly workbook.

"The more difficult an issue is, the more important that we discern together both God's word and God's way.... Although the General Board believes this is not a time to debate new resolutions, we affirm that it is important for us to listen to what is happening in various parts of our church...."

Mennonite Church Canada is not alone in trying to understand God's message for gays and lesbians today.

"I think every faith community in North America is looking at this question," said Lutheran bishop Michael Pryse in a recent article. "This is solidly on the table in general society and then the church—Baptists, Mennonites, everybody.... It's certainly an issue that ignites passions" (*The Record*, Kitchener-Waterloo, June 19).

In the article, entitled "Shall we gather at the chasm," the writer noted that the Baptist Convention of Ontario and

Quebec has just passed a resolution to "continue to oppose all efforts by any court or legislative body to validate or legalize same-sex marriages."

The Anglican Church of Canada, which brought a proposal on blessing same-sex unions to its General Synod in early June, deferred the decision for another three years (see page 29). Delegates voted instead to ask the denomination's theological commission to determine whether the blessing of same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine (faith) or a matter of pastoral practice.

The original resolution would have given each diocese, or regional conference, the authority to determine whether it would bless same-sex unions. If this is a theological or doctrinal issue, then the authority should lie with the denomination, not the diocese.

The Anglican discussion is informative for our Mennonite debate. Is our discussion on homosexuality about theology or pastoral practice, or both? Should our stance on same-sex couples be determined by each congregation, by area conference or by the whole denomination? How long are we willing to continue the dialogue?

At the Anglican synod meeting, a minister from Newfoundland noted that 90 percent of his parishioners have never met an openly gay or lesbian person, and that three more years of dialogue will not make them any more in favour of same-sex unions. How many MC Canada delegates would identify with that comment?

Watch for coverage of the MC Canada assembly in the next issues. Note that after the July 12 issue, *Canadian Mennonite* will be published every three weeks (August 2 and 23) before resuming our two-week schedule.

This issue includes the last in the Emke Retro series. Thanks again, Ivan, for helping us to laugh at ourselves. Any more writers out there itching to take on the job?—

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 July 12 issue by July 8.

Cover: Church slow-pitch season has begun.
Photo by Tammy Sawatzky.



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Calgary, Alta.

Life holds many joys for Alberta church leader

Marguerite Jack enjoys many things: the llamas on her farm, her job with a land development company, and her church leadership roles. Currently she is vice-chair of Mennonite Church Alberta and Alberta representative on the Mennonite Church Canada General Board.

The firstborn child of David and Margaret Goerzen, Marguerite and her three brothers grew up on a farm near Crossfield, Alberta. She enjoyed the freedom farm life brought—exploring the rocks and hills, enjoying the wildflowers and wildlife, puddling in the creek. She also shared in farm chores.

She still likes that freedom. She and her husband Dan live just outside the city limits where they enjoy their garden, their pets and llamas. Marguerite's parents live next door and their daughter, Bronwynne, drops by each morning to help her dad in his office.

Another daughter, Charis, is married and lives in Edmonton, but the three grandchildren love to visit “Gramma-Llama.”

When I commented on the lovely names Marguerite chose for her daughters, she replied: “Charis is Greek, meaning ‘gift of grace,’ and Bronwynne is Welsh, and has a lovely sound.”

After finishing high school (including one year at Rosthern Junior College), Marguerite attended business college. For the past number of years she has worked on the twelfth floor of a downtown office in Calgary, doing land planning and marketing for an international land development company.

She can appreciate the beauty at both ends of the spectrum—seeing a piece of land in its natural state, and watching the land being developed into homes for people. She can visualize the end in a beginning and anticipate problems. She understands the strength of stepping out in faith but

can foresee possible failure if one takes unnecessary risks.

Although Marguerite grew up Mennonite, she and Dan belonged to another denomination for many years. So she brings a fresh vision to her role

She can appreciate the beauty at both ends of the spectrum—seeing a piece of land in its natural state, and watching the land being developed into homes for people.

as vice-chair of MC Alberta and MC Canada. It is important to her that Mennonites maintain their Mennonite identity. It is also important to her to share her faith with her neighbours and promote a more inclusive sense of neighbourhood.

“By our lives we must reflect our faith,” she says. That conviction is crucial to her involvement on the board of the Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, which works with people from all nations and religions.

Marguerite’s conference positions involve considerable travel but she doesn’t mind that. Much of her holiday time is taken up by meetings. In her spare time Marguerite is learning to weave with a loom that she bought.

“It’s sort of symbolic of our lives—weaving threads of varying strengths and textures into a whole fabric,” she says. Now she wants to learn to spin the threads.

Although Marguerite conducts meetings and makes presentations capably, she is taking a Toastmaster course. “Always something new to learn,” she says.

To relax, she plays the piano and reads. Another hobby is making fancy soaps, using various herbs and spices. Her gift for hospitality is evident in the guests who keep coming back.—
From report by **Irene Klassen**

Coaldale, Alta.

Neufeld made most of every minute

How do you capture a whirlwind in just a few minutes? asked the daughters of Anne Neufeld at her funeral on May 12. How did she ever manage to do all that she did—jobs, church commitments, watching soccer games, making special cards, volunteering?

Neufeld, a member of Coaldale Mennonite Church and a zealous supporter of wider church activities, died on May 7 at the age of 73. She was first diagnosed with cancer 24 years ago. The last four years were difficult but few were aware of her suffering, said a



Neufeld

friend.

“She always made the most of every day and every waking minute,” said her daughters, Cheryl O’Donnell and Sylvia Klassen. She was a passionate supporter of MCC, the Canadian Cancer Society and a host of other organizations which benefitted from her talents and secretarial skills.

She served on the board of *Mennonite Reporter* from 1991-97, when it became *Canadian Mennonite*.

“Anne’s faith in Jesus and her spirit of selfless service, perseverance and optimism are an inspiration and legacy for her children and grandchildren,” stated the funeral tribute.

Anne is survived by her husband, Vern, and her two daughters and their families, as well as five siblings.—From reports

Calgary, Alta.

Engineer shares gifts with church

Marlene Janzen, secretary of Mennonite Church Canada's General Board, brings remarkable gifts to her task. A chemical engineer by profession, she runs her own consulting company. She loves the challenge of setting up a project, and then finding the right resources and people to do the job.

Having her own company also allows her the flexibility to be able to serve the wider church.

"I wish we could somehow inspire young people to become more active in the conference and to realize that much more can be accomplished in a larger body," she says.

As an MC Canada board member, she attends about six to eight meetings a year, in Canada and the United States (as part of the Joint Executive Committee of MC Canada and USA).

"Meeting people from the different districts widens my horizon and teaches me to respect other opinions and values," she says. Working together is better than working against one other. In a decision-making situation Janzen would rather come to consensus than have winners and losers.

Janzen was born in Pincher Creek, Alberta. Growing up on a farm in a family of two girls and six boys, she learned to fend for herself, becoming "quite a tomboy."

She graduated from high school at an early age and spent a semester at Swift Current Bible School before going to the University of Calgary. Having grown up with farm machinery, she enrolled in engineering, then decided to focus on chemical engineering.

After graduating she spent a few years as process designer for a major oil company. Then she turned to marketing and developing projects for the company. For the past five years she has had her own consulting company, with more flexibility in choosing projects she wants to undertake.



Janzen

During her first year at the University of Calgary, Janzen stayed with a family from Foothills Mennonite Church. This became her church away from home.

Although Foothills no longer has a full-time choir, Janzen enjoys singing in choirs for special occasions. She served as chair of church council and became active in Alberta's Mennonite youth organization. She has a knack for diplomacy, a gentle way of retaining or restoring harmony in sometimes volatile situations.

Janzen takes time for hobbies such as hiking and camping, and she plays on the church slowpitch team. She returns to Pincher Creek fairly often to see her mother and a brother who is trying to keep the home farm going during difficult times.

Janzen enjoys her work and shares her talents freely. The Mennonite church is fortunate to have leaders like her.—**Irene Klassen**

New volunteers

Akron, Pa.—Eight Canadians were among the eighteen volunteers beginning assignments with Mennonite Central Committee in May. Edwin Loeppky is a thrift shop manager in Kelowna, B.C., where he is a member of Willow Park South Church. Brenda Gail Klassen, a member of the Evangelical Free Church, is a thrift shop manager in Saskatoon. Don and Lois Collins, members of the The Meeting Place in Winnipeg, are registered victim companions in that city. Lois Reimer from Steinbach, Manitoba, is working as a sales clerk there. Connie Barkman from Ste. Anne, Manitoba, is a bookkeeper in Steinbach. Helen Fehr, member of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, is a volunteer coordinator with MCC in Aylmer, Ontario. Mary Peters, a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference church in Tilbury, Ontario, is a family support and activities coordinator in Chatham.—From MCC release

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Called to heal

What does Jesus' command to "heal the sick" mean for churches today? Should churches and individual Christians be more involved in health care? What might this involvement look like? Would it make a difference? These questions gave shape to a panel discussion at the Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly last fall.

The panelists framed their responses around seven core values that have shaped the Mennonite approach to health care. The following is a synopsis of the discussion.

1. The call to heal

Throughout Christian history, people suffering from illness have turned to the church for hope and healing. Churches have responded by establishing hospitals, clinics and care homes. Health care has been understood as a ministry of the church—an essential component of discipleship and a direct response to Jesus' instruction to "heal the sick."

In more recent years, however, as government funding and modern technology have reshaped health care, the church has begun to move away from understanding health care as a mission rooted in faith and love. We now view it as a profession grounded in specialized training. When professionals cannot "fix" everything, we feel helpless and blame our failing

healthcare system.

But maybe it isn't the healthcare system that is failing. (After all, we do enjoy longer lives than people of previous generations, and the number of "cures" continues to increase.) Perhaps the real failure is in our communities, particularly our faith communities, which no longer do all that they can to bring healing and restore wholeness when a cure isn't possible or when a cure isn't enough.

In isolation, the activity of healthcare professionals rarely brings about complete healing. They cannot provide the context for healthy living, nor can they address all spiritual and social issues that arise from health problems.

Holistic health care means care for the whole person. Such care must be provided by a team—a team that ought to include the church. If the church were to become more involved in the following ways, it could have a profound impact on the ways people experience illness and healing.

2. Spirituality and prayer

Spiritual health is an integral component of overall health. One of the roles of the church is to help people integrate their experiences of suffering into the rest of their lives, and to find hope and meaning in the face of suffering or death.

Each panelist stressed that intercessory prayer affects outcome. Panelists referred to the work of Larry Dossey and to other recent studies that document the impact of prayer on hospital patients, even when the patients are unaware of the prayer. Panelists attested to the impact of prayer that they have observed.

Peggy Martens, a nursing instructor



Artwork by Kathie Koltwitz

who has worked in acute care, long term care and health promotion, spoke about the calming effect of a prayerful presence. She once worked in a trauma room after an industrial accident claimed several victims.

“In the room I was in, things were not particularly hopeful for the accident victim. I recall looking...into the hallway where I saw several ministers praying. That was a tremendous boost that sustained the staff,” she said.

Some of the ministers wondered if they had contributed anything that day. She assured them that their presence had had an enormous impact. The church must never underestimate the value of prayers for those who are ill, and for their caregivers.

Kathleen Rempel Boschman, director of spiritual care at Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg, underscored the fact that a prayerful presence can bring healing. Providing such a presence isn't always easy. She encouraged churches to train deacons and other caregivers how to make good visits. She suggested that pastors and congregations might make use of the resources in programs such as *Healing Arts*, *A Friend in Hand* and Clinical Pastoral Education.

Marlin Roth, director of Rest Haven Care Services, emphasized the value of worship services that congregations bring to those in care homes. Does anyone get anything out of them? He assured participants of their value to residents and staff. Whether staff are present or not, the fact that people come in assures them that they are not alone.

Michael Dyck, a psychiatrist at Eden Mental Health Centre, reminded people that serious physical and mental illness can compromise spiritual health. People can lose their sense of meaning, feel disconnected from life and God. As a church we need to be aware of the spiritual distress that often accompanies illness.

Dyck emphasized that the church should not shy away from offering spiritual comfort, nor should it assume that psychological care and spiritual care are the same, or meet the same needs.

3. Community and service

Illness and infirmity, as well as the disabilities of old age, often isolate people from their communities. One of the central components of Jesus' healing ministry was the restoration of the sick person to community life.

Jesus' instruction to “heal the sick” included touching the “untouchables” and welcoming them home. The church brings healing when it seeks out those who are isolated by age and illness, and enables them to participate in the life of the community.

Panelists had numerous suggestions on how to include those who are ill. Rempel Boschman reminded people that community is about all the “little things” we do to show individuals that they matter. She talked about the impact of the “little things” people did for her family when her daughter was going through chemotherapy: other kids shaved their heads or wore hats in solidarity, people sent cards and e-mails and small gifts, the driveway was shovelled and meals arrived, coupons were given for pottery classes—all those things showed the community's love, and provided health and healing.

Community is not just the things we do for one other. It is about the ways we choose to be with one another. Panelists stressed that it is important to bring the church to those who cannot come to church: send choirs and share communion with the home-bound, ask Sunday school classes to offer their services. Above all, said panelists, visit.

Martens recalls an elderly woman in a care home who was unable to speak after suffering several strokes.

“A young mother from a church care group brought her newborn baby to the personal care home. She placed the baby in the arms of this woman in the wheelchair. Tears of joy flowed down the elderly woman's cheeks. Here was a part of the world that she loved but had lost connection to.”

Martens and Roth stressed that families with young children should be encouraged to share their healing presence.

We need to bring community to those who cannot seek it themselves. We need to welcome people back to our community if illness has kept them away for a time. Too often we are afraid of embarrassing people by calling attention to their absence, especially if that absence was the result of mental illness. This can leave people feeling isolated or ashamed. We may compound the problem by avoiding talk about less socially acceptable illnesses.

4. Human dignity and compassion

When Jesus restored health, he restored people to a place of worth within the community. Recognizing the dignity of each person as a bearer of God's image is an essential first step in healing. If we fail to recognize the dignity of another we cause injury and undermine the possibility of healing.

Maybe it isn't the healthcare system that is failing. Perhaps the real failure is in our communities, particularly our faith communities.

Continued on page 8

Heal *From page 7*

The church must help create an environment in which the dignity of each person is recognized, from conception to death. We are called to help people find alternatives to abortion, support those who have decided to give birth under difficult circumstances, include in our daily lives those who suffer from disabilities, make our churches accessible, create a place for the very old, the very young, the physically and mentally challenged.

Often it is not the illness or disability that leaves people feeling broken as much as the response of a community that would rather not be “inconvenienced.”

The church can help us not only respect the dignity of others, but respect our own dignity and have a healthy attitude towards our own bodies. Our attitudes and the choices we make have as much impact on health and healing as the actions of a doctor or nurse.

We are “temples of the Holy Spirit.” We are responsible to care for our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual selves. The community of faith can help people understand that caring for ourselves is part of a faithful response to our creator.

5. Stewardship

We believe that all we have belongs to God. It has been entrusted to us to use for the good of all God’s people. This includes not only our material possessions but also our talents and expertise. Each of us must consider what we can offer to those who need healing.

As church communities we can pool our talents and resources to address health needs. Churches might consider establishing or supporting parish nursing, counselling and wellness programs. Health professionals can be encouraged to donate time.

A massage therapist might offer one massage a week to someone in need. A physician or nurse might offer time to help people formulate the questions they need to ask their doctor. A counsellor might donate a few sessions per month. Others could help pay for additional time.

The church can encourage people to enter service professions and can play a role in supporting them when they become worn down. Panelists asked the church to pray for healthcare workers—those in administration and on the front lines. Reorganization seems to be a constant in today’s health environment; many healthcare employees work in an unsettled atmosphere.

6. Justice and reconciliation

True health is difficult or impossible when one lives in the shadow of injustice, violence or hatred. Many people are overwhelmed by the burdens of poverty, single parenting, lack of education and unemployment. They lurch from one crisis to the next and their health deteriorates.

Others struggle with long-term health concerns such as mental illness or chronic illness, either of which can lead to unemployment, underemployment and poverty. A vicious cycle of poverty and ill health can develop.

The church needs to stand with such people and act as their advocate. A “family support worker” to accompany a young mother who is applying for social assistance can make a

big difference in the way that mother is treated.

Just as Mennonite workers provide a presence in high risk areas and accompany people in their daily tasks, so there may be a role for “observers” to accompany people in our community who must make their way through a dehumanizing system.

7. Ethical rigour

The church is an ideal place for people to discuss healthcare choices in the context of faith. Congregations and individual members might look for ways to support people when they must make difficult choices.

Too often, in times of crisis, members of our faith community are forced to make decisions in isolation, with no advance preparation. People are left dissatisfied, broken or confused—second guessing themselves—not because they didn’t have enough information or because there were not adequate resources but because they didn’t have sufficient moral support.

Some issues churches should be discussing: end of life decisions (evaluating treatments that may prolong life but diminish its quality); perinatal and reproductive choices; fertility issues; taking over for parents; prioritizing medical needs; whether or not to use medication; and responding to those whose choices we may disagree with.

Members of the church community need to develop habits of helping one another work through complex ethical decisions in a context of faith.

Jesus calls us to “heal the sick.” Modern medicine has not made this call irrelevant. We can do much, as congregations and individuals, to bring healing.—**Pam Driedger**

The writer is executive director of Mennonite Health Services of Manitoba.

Lessons on caregiving and its limitations

All of us need care. In a culture where connections are fragile, the church offers a context where we can journey together through life's hardships and joys.

Ideally, the church is a group of people who are concerned about each other, bear one another's burdens, and offer inclusion and belonging, regardless of a person's ability to fit in with the rest of society. Sometimes, however, the severity of difficulties and the emotional depth of neediness are so great we don't know how to respond without becoming utterly depleted ourselves.

How do we as Christian caregivers respond compassionately and helpfully, yet retain our own emotional health?

These thoughts provided the stimulus for a pastoral care inservice offered by Eden Health Care Services in May. Over 140 lay caregivers and pastors participated. The day was divided into four sessions: Lessons from Jesus in caregiving and its limitations; Understanding confusing and counterproductive behaviour; Spirituality and emotional distress; and Being transformed through the caregiving process.

In trying to understand Jesus as healer we most often look at the stories where Jesus heals the blind, lepers, and those with other illnesses. The most long-term relationships Jesus has, however, are with his disciples. In reflecting on long-term healing, it makes sense to observe Jesus' interaction with the disciples, who were in need of healing and transformation themselves.

Jesus cared for the disciples by entering into a day-to-day relationship with them in which they could discuss everything from the mundane to the profound. They worshipped and prayed together. They practised the Jewish faith, observing tradition but also thinking critically about it.

The disciples received teaching, but at a pace and level they could understand. Jesus, "spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it" (Mark 4: 33). The disciples were encouraged to venture out on their own, giving them a chance to learn by doing.

Rather than seeing the disciples as empty receptacles for his teaching, Jesus was curious about their thoughts, inviting them to think about things without dictating what they should think. Mutuality defined their relationship, as Jesus depended on the disciples for strength and care as well.

Jesus also modelled restoration of the soul/mind: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). Restoration of relationship was paramount for Jesus, who welcomed Peter back even after Peter betrayed him.

Jesus' caregiving also had limits. He didn't coerce the disciples, but invited them. Jesus respected people's choices. He didn't do miracles of healing with the disciples—their healing was moment by moment growth and transformation. Jesus modelled acceptance of reality and didn't allay the disciples' fears about the future.

Jesus cared about the disciples, not for them—he didn't try to meet all their needs. He managed to stay centred when the disciples were panicking.

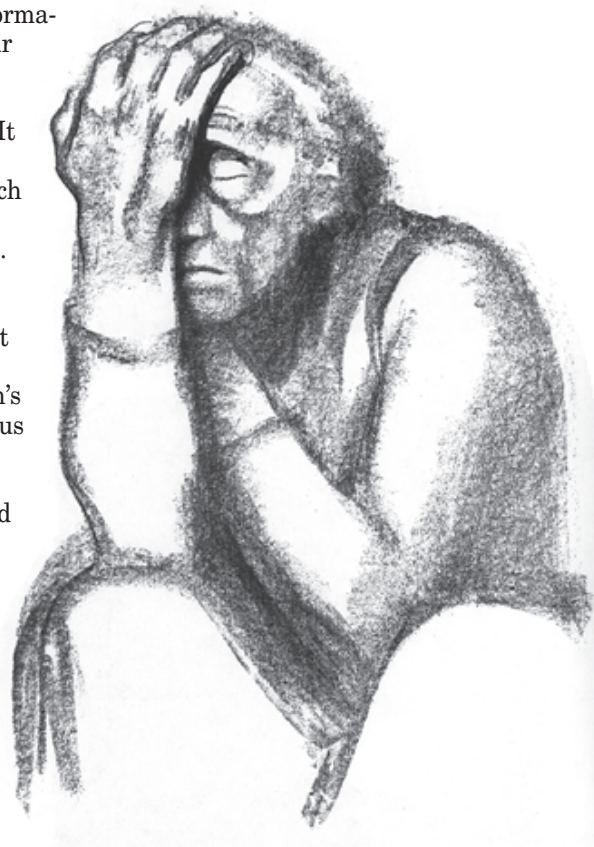
Jesus also modelled self care. He had friends outside of the tightly knit group of disciples (Mary and Martha, for example). Jesus also knew how to party, and enjoyed a good time! Taking time alone, in quiet, helped him re-energize himself. Jesus also exhibited his feelings—anger, fear, impatience, loneliness, as well as compassion and pleasure.

We too are disciples, and just as much in need of long-term care as anyone in our communities.

We also yearn for transformation of our inner lives, our relationships and our actions through our relationship with Jesus. It is vital that we as caregivers remain in touch with our own journey toward the abundant life.

As Jesus' disciples, we have opportunities to emulate him—his respect for each person, his awareness of each person's potential. He challenges us to care for others, to set limits and to care for ourselves. Let us give and receive encouragement and strength from our fellow travellers on the road to wholeness.—**Joanne Klassen**

The writer, who led the May inservice on caregiving, is director of the Recovery of Hope Counselling Centre in Winnipeg.



Artwork by Kathe Kollwitz

Mennonite mental health programs

Mental Health and Disabilities Program Mennonite Central Committee Canada

The mandate of this MCC Canada program is education, resourcing and networking. Irma Janzen is director of the program and coordinator of the MCC network across the provinces (see below). The MCC Canada Mental Health and Disabilities Network meets in conjunction with the Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly (this year on September 30-October 2 at Shekinah Retreat Centre in Saskatchewan). In the plans are an information session on what is happening in the mental health and disabilities fields within the Mennonite constituency across Canada. For more details, phone (204) 261-6381, e-mail: ikj@mennonitecc.ca or visit www.mcc.org/canada/health.html.

MCC Alberta

Linda Janzen of Calgary is the contact person for mental health issues in Alberta, phone (403) 282-9057, e-mail: lejanzen@hotmail.com.

MCC Saskatchewan

- Laura Kroeger of Saskatoon is the contact person for mental health issues in Saskatchewan, phone (306)955-7332, e-mail: laura.kroeger@sk.sympatico.ca.
- Menno Homes of Saskatchewan, located in Waldheim, is a housing and work program for people with developmental challenges.

Begun 41 years ago, it is supported by Mennonite churches, as well as government funding.

MCC Manitoba

- El Dad Ranch is a residential and work program for men with developmental disabilities who have been in trouble with the law. Director is Al Bleikin.

- A program focusing on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, coordinated by Jewel Reimer, phone (204) 783-0897, e-mail: jewelreimer@shaw.ca.

MCC Ontario

Glennis Yantzi of Kitchener is the Ontario representative on the national MCC mental health and disabilities network, phone (519) 578-3453, e-mail: glennismarie@yahoo.ca.

MCC Quebec

Isabelle Queval is the director of a counselling service in Montreal begun by MCC Quebec a few years ago. Phone (450) 962-4298, e-mail: iqueval@hotmail.com.

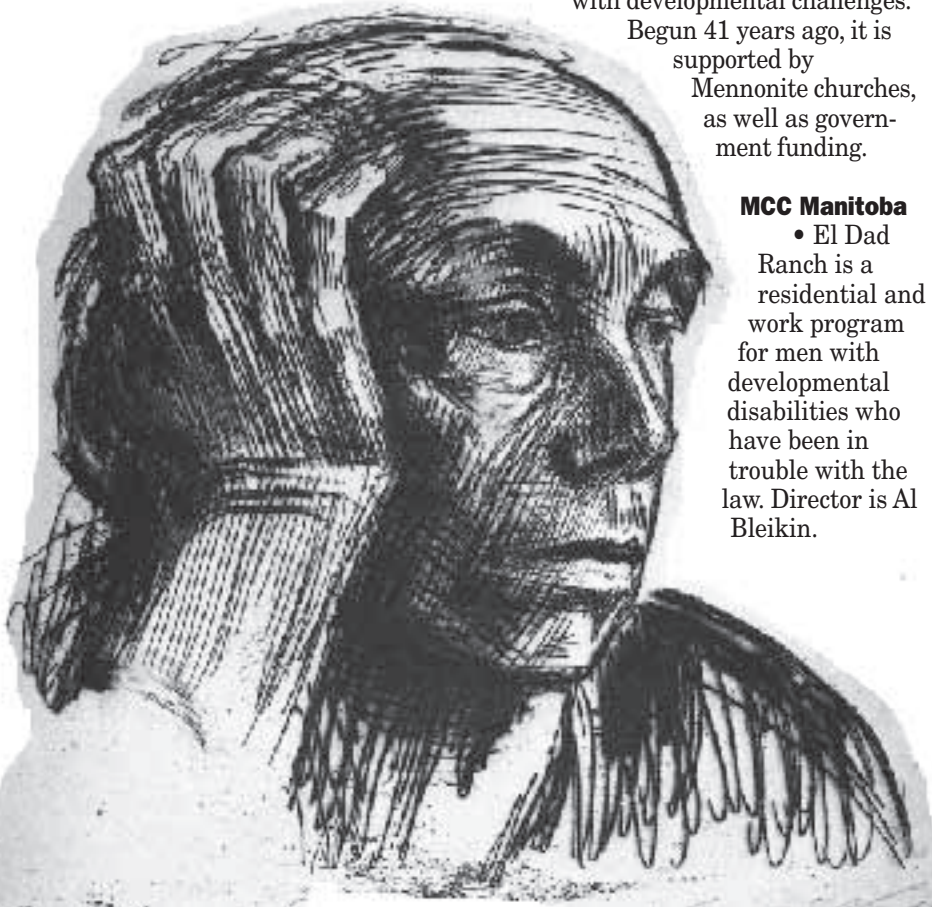
MCC Supportive Care Services Abbotsford, B.C.

Begun by Mennonite Central Committee in 1973, MCC Supportive Care Services is an agency of the Mennonite churches in British Columbia. It has more than 45 programs for people with mental disabilities or mental illness. These include residential and vocational programs, employment training, life skills training and counselling, and respite for families. The program also offers short-term housing for people who have a mental illness. Phone 1-800-622-5455.

Eden Health Care Services Winkler, Man.

Eden is a community, faith-based mental health and social services organization. It began in 1967 with a 40-bed mental health hospital, Eden Mental Health Centre, sponsored by nine Mennonite conferences. Manitoba Health is now the primary funder of the Acute Care Centre.

Linden Place began in 1981 as a residential program for individuals recovering from illness. Also in 1981, the Trainex Centre began to provide vocational training and rehabilitation. Products from its wood-finishing shop are widely sold. In 1992-94, Eden partnered with Manitoba Family Services and Housing to build the Enns Court Apartments for needy families and individuals.



Artwork by Kathie Kollwitz

Recovery of Hope is a counselling service based in Winnipeg, with offices in Steinbach, Altona, Winkler and Portage la Prairie. In 2002 Eden began developing a 20-unit supported housing apartment in Steinbach.

Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo and Leamington, Ont.

Shalom, begun in 1983, offers individual, family and group counselling to low-income people and others. Staffed by Christian professionals, counsellors can assist those who wish to integrate the faith dimension in their therapy. Shalom also provides education, resources and consultation with pastors. It receives grants from United Way and municipalities, but is greatly dependent on donations (88 percent of clients were subsidized last year). Wanda Wagler-Martin is the director.

Bethesda Services St. Catharines, Ont.

This organization, operated by the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches with government funding, provides a wide range of services, including counselling, behaviour management, music therapy, chaplaincy and education. Director is Brian Davis. Phone (905) 684-6918.

Keystone Counselling Associates Winnipeg, Man.

A Mennonite-related counselling service, funded by fees for service. Contact Jake Schmidt at (204) 338-3339.

Resources for the church

- *With All Your Heart and Soul and Mind*, a pamphlet by Carol Penner in the Second Mile curriculum. Faith & Life Resources, 2004.

The pamphlet includes stories of individuals and how the church has supported them, as well as suggestions for a worship service that focuses on God's presence with people who are suffering from mental illness.

- *Light for All: Worship resources for including people with mental illness and disabilities* by Irma Janzen. MCC Canada Publication, 2001. For further resources visit: www.mcc.org/canada/health/resources.html.

- *No Longer Alone: Mental Health and the Church* by John Toews. Herald Press, 1995.

- *Dancing with Disabilities: Opening the Church to All God's Children* by Brett Webb-Mitchell. United Church Press, 1996.



A prayer

Loving God, hear our prayer for those among us who suffer from mental illness.

We lift up people who live with anxiety disorders or depression.

We lift up people who live with obsessive compulsive or bipolar disorders.

We lift up people who live with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses.

Creator God, thank you for making us and loving us as we are.

We thank you for the strength and courage of all who live with mental illness.

Thank you that you never forsake us, even in our most difficult times.

You walk with people who are disoriented, confused and despairing.

You lie down with people who are too ill to get out of bed.

You pace with those who cannot sleep because of fear and dread.

Holy Spirit, Divine Comforter, pour out your comfort.

Jesus, Lord of life, you bring healing to those who ask.

In your mercy, heal people among us with mental illness.

Give wisdom to doctors and counsellors, and effectiveness to medication.

Give strength to those of us who are caregivers.

Give us love that is steadfast and constant.

Give us sensitivity to walk with people on their Good Friday road

Give us insight to see Easter moments in trying circumstances.

Jesus, crucified one, do not forsake us in our suffering.

Oh God, our Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer,

Empower our congregation to embrace people with mental illness,

Equip us to be supportive communities, inspired by your love.

We pray all this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

This prayer is by Carol Penner of Vineland, Ontario, who has worked as a chaplain in a psychiatric hospital.

Kitchener, Ont.

Anniversary quilt touring Canada

On June 6, Judy Gascho-Jutzi, an interior designer and fabric artist, shared the stage with Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. at the Canadian River Heritage Conference in Guelph.

Kennedy, an outspoken environmental lawyer in the United States, is president of Waterkeeper Alliance. He has prosecuted companies and governments for polluting the Hudson River and Long Island Sound.

Gascho-Jutzi had created an art quilt for the 20th anniversary of the Canadian Heritage River system. The quilt, "Ribbons of life," is currently touring the country and will return to this area for the Quiltfest next May.

"Ribbons of life," is close to five feet square. With the exception of the sky, it is appliquéd, not pieced.

Gascho-Jutzi, who attends First Mennonite Church here, began sewing as a girl. After obtaining training in art and interior design, she established a custom sewing room in her home-based interior design business. She began making art quilts and wall hangings for charity auctions and other events.

Most of her works are "storyboard quilts," designed with a particular story to tell. An avid gardener, she also calls her quilts "gardening in fabric."

Gascho-Jutzi was contacted last June about producing the anniversary quilt. She spent the autumn planning, researching and gathering fabric. Then she sewed for five months.

In her artist's statement for the Canadian River Heritage Conference, she said that "the book *Voyages* was a wonderful source of information, drawings and pictures." The stories conjure up "images of *coureur de bois* singing and paddling down swift-moving rivers, their canoes laden with furs and supplies." That image remained with her.

"There were many aspects to feature: historical, cultural, natural and recreational—all values of the



Judy Gascho-Jutzi and Robert Kennedy Jr. meet at the Canadian River Heritage Conference.

Canadian Heritage Rivers. The main focus was always *The River... a life force representative of the geographical diversity of Canada.*"

Gascho-Jutzi lives in Kitchener with her husband Calvin, a well-known

local auctioneer, and adult daughter, Catherine.

She has a large fabric collection and is always waiting, she says, for the next project to materialize.—**Betti Erb**

CD launched with words and music

A new CD called "Awakenings" was introduced at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery in Ontario on May 9 with an offering of words and music. Poet Di Brandt read from her latest work, *Now You Care*, during the first half of the presentation. The rest was performances from "Awakenings" by Rebecca Campbell and Carol Ann Weaver.

The uniqueness of the performance lay in the collaboration of the three artists in communicating the essence of Dorothy Livesay's long poem, *Awakening*. The songs are Brandt's dialogue interwoven with Livesay's original poem, and put to music by

Campbell and Weaver.

The music defied categorization, but was an amalgam of complementary styles and pleasing combinations of voice and piano. Weaver, a constant source of musical ideas, provided solid accompaniment and was masterful in her transitions and solo work. Both musical artists delivered a forceful, credible statement.

What made this performance work, beyond the blend of artistic talent and innovative composition, was the timing, spacing and change of pace that gave this body of word and music a sense of flow and cohesiveness.—
From report by **Robert McNair**

Vancouver, B.C.

Choir honours conductor

Watching Eric Hannan is like watching a dancer. His body moves with the music, not only arms but feet and knees. Most expressive are Eric's hands. Long, graceful fingers set the tempo, give direction, cut off and draw out. Watching him conduct is a joyful experience.

Singing with Hannan has been, for me, a sacred experience. It was with great sadness that I recently watched him conduct his final concert with Abendmusik Vesper Choir, a worship choir he began 13 years ago.

Conducting was not what he planned to do when he left high school. He studied agricultural science, but after a year at university he decided he "liked plants more than science." He quit and assembled a pop band.

Having studied piano and taught himself guitar, he was well suited to the venture. He joined a band playing southern rock, jazz and blues in clubs around Vancouver. But the clubs were horrible and tendonitis put an end to that. Back to school he went, this time in fine arts.

"I was going to go into architecture," he recalls, a decision he sometimes still regrets. Music continued to draw him.

"I always focused on instrumental music and composition," he said. "I was a harpsichord major in my first year." Eventually, choral music became his focus. He graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1986, and went on to do a master's degree in music in Michigan. He is a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois but sees no reason to complete the program.

"The credential itself is not important to me and there is really no financial reason for me to complete it," he said.

When Hannan returned home from his studies, he wanted to begin a worship choir. J. Evan Kreider, a friend and colleague, suggested that he form



Hannan

a choir to support the Menno Simons Centre, a university residence offering Christian community to students. Hannan attends Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, which meets at the centre.

The Abendmusik choir quickly developed a loyal following, performing three vesper services each year (at Thanksgiving, Advent and Lent) and, initially, a winter concert.

Despite his interest in a worship choir, Hannan says that music is not the way he experiences God.

"For me, music is an intensely personal and moving activity that doesn't really have anything to do with God while I'm experiencing it. I think of it as a gift to God."

Many might say that the choir's performances are worship and gift. Services are structured to resemble an Anglican Evensong, with unaccompa-

nied music interspersed with scripture and prayer. Rather than watching a performance, the congregation is invited to participate in reflection, responsive readings, and hymns.

The choir performs its concerts both in Vancouver and in Abbotsford, always to full churches. For many, the service is the highlight of the season, and fulfills a need within the church community for formal worship.

Now Hannan teaches full time at Douglas College, and he and his wife Erika have a family. Two years ago he became musical director of the Vancouver Cantata Singers. The workload became too much.

He is giving up the Abendmusik choir, despite the fact that "it's the one choir that is no stress...." Abendmusik services will continue in the fall under the direction of Andrea Siemens, a member of the choir since its inception and assistant director for several years.—**Angelika Dawson**

Qualicum Beach, B.C.

Island artist supports those in need

Sandra Martens has built a career painting the Canadian landscape—a landscape she describes as "sublime." What makes her unusual, however, is that 40 percent of every sale she makes goes to the charities listed on her web site, one of which is Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

"I wanted charities with a good reputation, that were recognizable [and] that sought to help in areas where the need is greatest," she says. "I am especially drawn to charities that seek the dignity of all people, whether its through pursuit of human rights, creating peace, educating, or providing health care and basic needs without regard to race, nationality, political affiliations, or social standing."

As a Christian, Martens believes that her work should do more than "adorn the homes of those who

can afford to buy." She and her husband moved from Alberta to Vancouver Island several years ago. The landscape here provides inspiration both for her art and for her faith.

Martens and three others will display their work at The Old School House Arts Centre here August 30 through September. Her work can be viewed and purchased on her website at www.sandramartens.com/.—From MCC B.C. release



A painting by Sandra Martens.

Waterloo, Ont.

‘Sound in the land’ joins many voices

Music this weekend has not just been in my mouth, but in my heart and my body,” said Cheryl Denise Miller, a creative writer originally from Elmira, Ontario, now living in West Virginia.

She was among the 100 musicians and writers and academics from British Columbia to Newfoundland to Hawaii who participated in Sound in the Land—a weekend of concerts, workshops, readings and presentations on Mennonites and their music making—held May 28-30 at Conrad Grebel University College.

A huge benefit of the weekend was networking, given the prominent people present, from church musicians and professors to popular music performers and writers.

Violinist Mark Hartman from Iowa noted that “the breadth of musical styles and the inclusion of people who exhibit a variety of types of spirituality and levels of connection to the current Mennonite church made this a conference relevant for the times in which we live.”

Praise choruses versus traditional

hymns was a hot topic in a number of presentations. Jonathan Dueck from the University of Alberta described a congregation that blends gospel, German and world music hymns with contemporary Christian music.

Keynote speaker Mary Oyer of Goshen, Indiana, gave a history of Mennonite hymns, from the *Ausbund* of 1564 to today’s hymnal. She spoke about hymns that have passed the test of time, hymns omitted because the text was dated, and those commissioned.

Oyer demonstrated the growing diversity within the Mennonite church, each group bringing its songs. She left the audience to ponder whether hymn books are on the way out. What do we learn from each generation? she asked. What are distinct Mennonite songs? How do we judge a good hymn?

The weekend also combined the talents of writers and musicians—poems of Di Brandt, Julia Kasdorf and Jeff Gundy were set to music and performed by Rebecca Campbell and Carol Ann Weaver.



Photos by Jennifer Konkle

Cynthia Yoder from New Jersey reads from her book, *Crazy Quilt: Pieces of a Mennonite life*.

“It was refreshing and delightful to be at an academic conference where so much of the content did not require words,” said Gundy, who teaches at Bluffton College in Ohio.

“There are no dead composers at this concert,” joked conductor and composer Leonard Enns in his introduction of the DaCapo Chamber Choir. All but two featured composers were present at the concert. Another major concert featured bluegrass and jazz.

Two pieces premiered during the weekend—Jane Ramseyer Miller’s “A dream deferred,” and Larry Nickel’s “To the Lord of time and space,” commissioned for the festival by Mennonite Foundation Canada’s Legacy Fund. JD Martin, American songwriter, also premiered a commissioned work.

“To think that the main components of North American Mennonite music were all basically represented at Sound in the Land is overwhelming,” said Carol Ann Weaver, music professor at Conrad Grebel and organizer of the event.—From Grebel release by Jennifer Konkle



Janet Peachey, music teacher in Washington, D.C., and Ben Bolt-Martin, cellist with the Stratford Festival Orchestra in Ontario, perform “Duo for cello and piano,” written by Peachey for the Sound in the Land event.

Promising future for Mennonite music-making

Sound in the Land celebrated “the wide array of Mennonite-connected music” with artistry and passion. I am reminded of Jeremiah 33, “Call to me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things that you do not know.”

These words, heard in Esther Wiebe’s “Song of promise,”

“Song of Love” and “Song of Hope”



(in *Choral*

Triptych), were a

recurring theme as I reflected on presentations and performances.

Cheryl Pauls’ presentation, “Revising our song?” drew on the discipline of music theory to explore various meanings in singing the cross-cultural chorus, “If you believe and I believe.” Pauls, who teaches at Canadian Mennonite University, presented innovative ideas about interpretation from intellectual and theological vantage points.

Ken Nafziger put “If you believe and I believe” into practice. After setting the context for the cross-cultural anthem, he encouraged us to sing with conviction—and we did. “If you believe and I believe/And we together pray, / The Holy Spirit must come down/And set God’s people free.” I have never been as moved in a body of worshippers as I was at that moment.

The theme of promise and hope also came through in original compositions. It was exciting to hear how Victor Davies’ *Mennonite Piano Concerto* and Joanne Bender’s *The tree of life* came about, and how Len Enns thoughtfully twins text and tune to make beautiful music.

JD Martin, composer of the familiar

song, “Unity,” presented a thoughtful workshop on his song-writing journey, “making music to open the heart and refresh the spirit.” Many composers are choosing texts of hope at a time when there seems to be little hope in our world.

Mary Oyer, a leader in Mennonite music-making for 60 years, challenged us to look beyond our tradition. In Sunday morning’s “Gospel tent,” we put Oyer’s challenge into action, singing hymns from many traditions. There was an aura of “promise” in the room for the future of Mennonite music-making.

The weekend instilled in me a passion to carry high the torch of Ben Horch, George Wiebe, Mary Oyer and others in my teaching profession. One concern was the absence of material on the musical culture of Mennonite youth. Workshops addressed music for children and adults, but there was nothing on youth and those who teach them.

I hope that Carol Ann Weaver’s vision for this conference will lead to more events like this.—From report by **Ann L. Schultz**



Mary Oyer leads the group in hymn-singing.

See back cover for more coverage.



Simon Neufeld and Judith Klassen, Manitobans now living in St. John’s, Newfoundland, do a “City mouse-Country mouse” set of original songs with guitar and viola.

Letters

Janzen was not well understood

David Janzen was my teacher at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (see April 19, page 4). My arguing with him in his philosophy class remains unforgettable. In one class he warned me not to fall into the same trap into which the clergy in Galileo's time fell when they disputed his claim that the earth rotated around the sun.

By the end of that class, Janzen had put me on a journey from my secure position in the fundamentalist/dispensationalist camp to a more Anabaptist understanding of faith. That new understanding only became more meaningful years later in my encounters with Paul and Alta Erb and Harold S. Bender.

Janzen's teaching at CMBC was not understood by most church leaders in Manitoba. He was considered too liberal. When it became apparent that he would not be reappointed, I wrote a letter to the CMBC board giving him my support.

Janzen was at times his own enemy. His critique of the Mennonite church came through too harshly. In a paper he presented at a Canadian conference assembly, he came across as a very angry person.

I asked him later, "Why were you so accusative in your presentation?" His answer was, "Do you think that issue had to be treated with silk gloves?"

A humorous side of Janzen was related to me by the late Newton Gingerich of the then Western Ontario Mennonite Conference. He had heard Janzen critique issues and thought that is what his conference needed. He invited Janzen to attend his conference sessions, but Janzen only praised the whole event. He kept his criticism for his own camp.

When Walter Brueggeman lectured at a seminary ministers' session, some ministers found the lectures too difficult. One of them said, "If our David Janzen were here he would be

able to answer Brueggeman." That same minister a decade ago had wanted Janzen removed from the CMBC faculty.

The last time I met Professor Janzen was at the 2003 homecoming at Canadian Mennonite University. The old fire was gone. An alumnus of Canadian Mennonite Brethren College, Janzen was representing his class. When Gerald Gerbrandt handed him the CMU cup, he said, "David Janzen had the unique ability of challenging people to think carefully and critically about their faith, the church and the world."

Janzen was not generally popular. Nor were Isaiah, Jeremiah and Paul. However, Janzen was a prophet and the Mennonite church did not recognize it. I trust that some day his writings will be made available to the church of today.—**Henry J. Gerbrandt, Winnipeg, Man.**

Two versions of faith causing church conflicts

The report from Mennonite Church B.C. (April 5, page 13) is an example of what is happening in many of our churches and conferences. There is evidence of two different camps and the growing gap between them, which in several cases has led to a separation.

How does one understand these two camps? I believe that Marcus Borg's recent book, *The Heart of Christianity*, clarifies the dilemma that we and many other denominations are facing. Borg speaks about the earlier version of Christianity and of an emerging version. He describes each version's understanding of God, Jesus and the Scriptures.

He brings clarity to the dynamics that unfold when a church or a conference has representatives of both groups. Borg and other leaders suggest that we are in the midst of another reformation. Reformations produce conflict and we as Anabaptists have experience with this.

Just a hint as to Borg's approach—the earlier version sees the Bible as a divine product. The Bible is true

because it comes from God. It is to be interpreted literally.

The emerging version sees the Bible as the historical product of two religious communities—the ancient Hebrews and the early Christian movement. The reader is not as concerned about the factuality of the stories as about their meanings. The Bible is a human rather than a divine product. This in no way denies the reality of God.

I encourage many to read this book. My prayer is that the understanding of these two versions of faith would lead to more empathy for one another. My hope would be that this emerging expression of faith will be seen to have integrity.

The real plea is for all of us to practise our faith with more humility as we talk about God and God's will and way.—**Ernie Hildebrand, Crystal City, Man.**

Don't change meaning of marriage

The letter from Garrett Epp asked, "Do we really believe Paul's words?" (April 19, page 14).

My reply is yes, but we must remember that the Scriptures are inspired by God, and that many of Paul's writings apply to a culture of 2000 years ago. Adjustments must be made for our culture. Adjustments to our culture need allowances.

Homosexual unions should not be called marriages. Marriage means the union of a female and a male. I maintain that this makes a lot of sense. I wouldn't say that meanings of words don't change but I question the wisdom of changing the meaning of the word "marriage."

A recent article in the *Free Press* was entitled, "How to grow gobbledygook," by reporter Val Werier. He says gobbledygook has remained rampant since the word was coined more than a half a century ago.

He says, "There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns;

that is to say, there are some things we do not know, but there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know."

I belong to the ones that know there are known unknowns. Therefore I think the effect of using "marriage" for same-sex unions will have a long-lasting, negative effect on our culture that may be very difficult to correct, should we find it "wanting." Then new dictionary explanations will not be an answer.

Therefore I feel we should leave the meaning of marriage to be one female and one male.—**John F. Wiebe, Winkler, Man.**

Disappointed in coverage on Old Colony

I would like to say a "yes, but" in response to the editorial and article on "The Mennonite Mob" (May 3).

Yes, there are serious needs. Yes, the larger Mennonite community should do more to address them. And yes, we should not let inaccuracies in the

Saturday Night article divert us from this call.

But some inaccuracies have to be challenged. They led to an unfair blaming of the Ontario Old Colony Mennonite church.

Saturday Night said there are 50,000 Old Colony Mennonites in Ontario. The membership of the Ontario Old Colony church is just under 4,500. With the children, the number reaches almost 9,000. The 50,000 might refer to people of Old Colony background, though even then it is 10,000 higher than Mennonite Central Committee's estimate.

Many Mennonites from Latin America who come to Ontario never join the church. I dare say that most of the drug problems involve people who are not connected with any church. The Ontario Old Colony church tries to reach out to newcomers but *Saturday Night* is wrong to blame the church for the actions of people who may have chosen to avoid any connection with it.

There are vast differences among

churches that carry the Old Colony name. The Ontario Old Colony church deserves respect and support. It has had approximately 200 baptismal candidates annually for the past decade. These candidates have to go through nearly six months of weekly Bible studies with the ministers.

The Ontario church also seven schools, going up to grade 12, that use the Christian Light Education curriculum developed by Swiss Mennonite groups in the United States. This curriculum is vastly different from the German-language Old Colony curriculum.

Also, leaders of the Ontario Old Colony church are active in inter-Mennonite activities, including MCC Ontario programs to reach newcomers.

I thought it unfortunate that your editorial reference to "Old Colony life" sounded as if it is all more or less the same, and that groups who work with Old Colony people may have been too respectful of it. I don't want to downplay the serious needs but I believe efforts to address them should

Taking on Pharaoh: Bully work

The conflict resolution workshop concluded with a powerful role-play as participants challenged the bullying portrayed by one of the actors. We clearly named the abuses, we laughed and cried. We confronted painful memories of having been overwhelmed by another's bullying, and we gained strength to continue our efforts beyond the workshop.

In recent years, extensive materials have been prepared to help students and teachers address bullying in schools—with many successes. Adults in families, workplaces and churches are equally in need of such resources.

Naming the problem is the first step. While it's efficient to use the term bully, I try to focus on behaviour. I am keenly conscious that the ones who bully are more than their behaviours. They may be artists, church leaders, much-loved grandpas or even me!

The image of browbeating is included in the dictionary definition. Bullying includes insults, threats and name-calling, and tone of voice and posture to interrupt and intimidate. In schools, boys are more likely to use physical ways to bully. Girls are more likely to employ social strategies such as

rumours and exclusion.

Can we agree to avoid such behaviour in our families and churches? Can we agree to name it when we see it, and disciple one another towards Christ-like ways of using power and managing conflict?

In the workshop, I was reminded of the



Family Ties

Melissa Miller

psychological dimensions that drive such behaviours. People who bully often use aggression and intimidation to mask their insecurity. By "zooming back," a bystander can see the tantrum of a two-year-old, or a first-grader's swagger, lying under the surface. Such behaviour pushes people further away, denying the humanity of both.

Often, I struggle to contain my own anger and not reply in kind. "Don't pick up the rope" is worthwhile advice at such

times. I pray, "God, give me eyes to see him as you see him." Such a prayer often results in a clearer, more compassionate view of the brokenness within the bullying person.

Challenging bullying includes using one's own power. Much bullying is perpetuated by the silence of bystanders, who fear the aggression will be directed at them.

"Keep moving," advised the workshop leader. "Don't get paralyzed by the abuse." When the bullying is coming from a group leader—a parent, teacher or church council chair—it is important to link with others to confront the wrongful behaviour and reduce the power of the one bullying. Such confronting can be conducted in a spirit of compassion, limiting the ability of those bullying to damage themselves and others.

A key biblical motif describes a God who freed a desperate people from Pharaoh's oppression. The bullying we encounter can be a form of oppression. Our liberating God stands with us as we stand up to Pharaoh.

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

begin with respect for the good that is already there.

Readers should also know that police officer Mark Loop, quoted in *Saturday Night* as saying that 5000 Ontario Old Colony Mennonites are involved in the drug trade, has told MCCers that he was seriously misquoted.—**Bill Janzen, Ottawa, Ont.**

Suicide not rampant among Old Colony

As coordinator of Centro Menno in Bolivia, I want to challenge the article, “New radio programs for Low German colonists” (May 31, page 10).

Centro Menno is the MCC program that works with the 42,300 Colony Mennonites (not 50,000 as estimated in a box that accompanies the story) and attempts to accompany them in their simple lifestyle and faith.

We have a drop-in centre, bookstore and library for Colony Mennonites when they come to Santa Cruz. Over the years, Centro Menno personnel have walked with many fellow Mennonites in the colonies in Bolivia, and love them as brothers and sisters.

It is true that they do not have an easy life. Some are very poor. To say, however, that many are “addicted to alcohol and drugs, sexually broken.... Suicide is rampant” is unfair.

These social problems are certainly present in the Mennonite colonies, as they are in other communities. From our perspective, however, suicide is not out of control, as the article suggests.—**Alfred Koop, Santa Cruz, Bolivia**

Spirit nudges us to change and grow

I accompanied my father, a minister, to conference sessions from an early age. At one of them, a minister remarked, “Sometimes the sheep are ahead of the shepherds.” I have never forgotten that comment. It’s helped me to challenge and change my beliefs over the years.

In 1952, I listened to a minister condemn the new Revised Standard Version of the Scriptures as the work of communists. I decided I should not read it. As we left the church, though, a wise elder remarked, “Well, that was

one side of the debate!” What was the other side? And so began my journey in search of personal truth.

Life experiences have caused the Spirit to nudge me. I learned to listen to other perspectives, let go of judgment and form beliefs not solely on cold doctrine but on compassion and faith. I have always believed that “the model for humanness is Jesus.”

Those were the opening words of C. Kilmer Myers of the Episcopal House of Bishops in his address on homosexuality. “I know many homosexuals who are radically human,” he said. “To desert them would be a desertion, I believe, of our master, Jesus Christ, and that I will not do, no matter what the cost.”

I had to grapple with this issue when my younger son came out as a homosexual in 1983. Desert him or support him—what would I choose? I decided that God had a sense of humour to present a religious fanatic like me with a gay offspring!

My choice was to love and accept my son. But at the 1986 church conference in Saskatoon, a resolution was passed condemning homosexuality as sin. I believed for the first time that the Mennonite church had the capability to destroy lives.

How could I reconcile my beliefs with such harsh judgment? I asked one of my gay friends why he did not go to church and he replied, “Do you think I’m crazy? Why would I go where I’m hated?” A church that is not inclusive is not really a church at all.

Is fear of change anything to feel good about? If I still had the same views that I had at age 18 when the minister trashed the RSV, I would be ashamed that I had not grown.

We are being shortchanged by the leaders within the Mennonite church—history will not be kind to their inflexibility. As I grow old, I see church services as something like a spiritual buffet—I pick what I want and leave the rest. I have taken a vacation from conferences because I am uncomfortable there. I regret that I did not share our family crisis with my father. He was always one to offer sympathy and advice to people who were struggling. I would never want my own grandchildren to leave me out of their painful times.

My father used to quote a German song: “Love, as long as you can. The time is coming that you will stand at the graves and weep.” Love, live in peace and stand amazed in the presence of Jesus.—**Paul Klassen, Winnipeg, Man.**

Worship celebrates community in Christ

On Sunday morning, May 16, there was a Mennonite worship service in Winnipeg. Nothing unusual about that. There were about 150 people—children, youth, adults and seniors. There was special music, congregational singing, prayer, scripture reading, a sermon and communion.

The people at this service all considered themselves to be Mennonite. Many were members of Mennonite churches; others grew up in a Mennonite church and find that those spiritual roots express best their understanding of faith.

The service celebrated the community that had developed among these diverse people. There was joy in the recognition that we are part of God’s creation—that God made and loves each of us. There was pain in the recognition that people sometimes hurt each other. It was a powerful and moving service.

What was unusual about it was that it was the culmination of a conference sponsored by the Supportive Communities Network, an outgrowth of the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests (see page 23).

Many of the participants were not heterosexual. It was, nonetheless, a Mennonite worship experience in every way. It was a community of God’s people. There was a common understanding of faith, of following Christ in life as a response to the salvation that Christ offers—the same understanding that binds Mennonites together across the world.

We worship the same God. We are united in Christ by the same Spirit. Why can we not all be part of the same church?—**Karin Schlichting, Julia Zacharias, Katharine Wiebe, Elisabeth Braul, Val Warkentin, Erwin Warkentin, Winnipeg, Man.**

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Mennonite leader arrested in Vietnam

The general secretary of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, Nguyen Hong Quang, was arrested on June 8. He has reportedly been charged with “instigating people to obstruct officials from carrying out their duties.”

Police ransacked Quang’s home—also the meeting place of the church he pastors—taking documents and equipment. The Vietnamese government has banned independent religious associations, and the Mennonite church in Vietnam is not officially approved by the government.

This latest arrest comes three months after the arrest of four Mennonite evangelists who remain under detention without formal charges. It is believed that one or more of the Mennonite workers arrested March 2 may have cracked under torture and provided “evidence” to arrest Quang.

Quang, 45, who is trained as a lawyer, has been prevented from practising because he is not a member of the Communist Party. He has defended land rights cases of impoverished farmers, spoken out against the arrests of religious and political dissidents, and publicized the plight of minority Christians in the highlands of Vietnam.

Many of his critical writings have appeared on the Internet in both Vietnamese and English.

Quang, 45, is married with three young children. He was called to Christian ministry in 1981. His father, who had served the previous government, was assassinated in a re-education camp shortly after the 1975 communist takeover. Quang’s mother, unwell at the time, died of shock on hearing of her husband’s murder. Two brothers have also died.

“The church is now on stormy seas

but the boat still goes out. The Lord enables the brothers to row together,” wrote Quang to a friend, one day before his arrest. “Be at peace. I ask you and the church to pray for us.”

In a June 15 letter to Mennonite World Conference, the Mennonite Church Vietnam appealed for prayer during this time of “severe repression.” The letter, written on behalf of the church’s administrative committee, also protested “the defamation and slander” against Quang and the four evangelists that was published in a June 12 newspaper. The article characterized the arrested men as “those who obstruct persons carrying out official duties.”

Human Rights Watch and other worldwide groups are drawing attention to Quang’s case and the religious repression in Vietnam.—From reports

Nairobi, Kenya

Sudan signs major peace agreement

The government of Sudan and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army/Movement signed a peace agreement May 26, raising hopes that the decades-old civil war is finally drawing to a close. The Liberation Army is the major rebel group in the country.

Mennonite Central Committee workers joined the crowd waiting for the signing ceremony in Naivasha, Kenya. They also attended an ecumenical celebration convened the next day by the All Africa Conference of Churches.

The war has pitted rebels from the predominantly black, Christian and animist south against government forces from the Arab, Muslim north. The agreement speaks to power-sharing and administering disputed areas of the country. Further negotiations are planned for this summer.

The ceremony, which took place at a resort on Lake Naivasha, was packed with dignitaries and Sudanese of all

ethnic groups and religions.

“The all-day wait was a bit of a festival in itself,” said Harold Miller, MCC Sudan co-representative.

Sudan has experienced civil war almost continuously since independence in 1956, except for a nine-year period in the 1970s. The conflict has left some two million people dead and millions homeless.

“We are tired of killing, displacing, torturing and burning,” said one newspaper. “We excelled in war and in killing more than in agriculture and work.... The time has now come for our hearts to rest. The world, which was selling us arms and giving us assistance, should also rest.”

The agreement did not address the crisis in Sudan’s Darfur region, where government-backed Arab militias are accused of

“ethnic cleansing” of black Muslim villagers. Some 10,000 people have been killed in recent months.

MCC has long been involved with the two councils of churches in Sudan and has worked in both northern and

Sudan has experienced civil war almost continuously since independence in 1956, except for a nine-year period in the 1970s.

southern communities to encourage peace and improve living conditions.

“Even with all the uncertainties about this peace accord, we invite our constituency to be rejoicing and prayerfully holding this fragile peace in mind,” said Melody Rupley, MCC co-director for Africa.—From MCC release by **Rachel Miller Moreland**

Zaporozhye, Ukraine

Remembering the Russian Mennonite story

To celebrate the bicentennial of the Molochna Colony, the largest Mennonite settlement in Tsarist and Soviet Russia, academics gathered in Zaporozhye and Melitopol for a conference on “Molochna and its

pating. Canadian novelist Rudy Wiebe presented an address to university students at the historic Potemkin Palace in Dnepropetrovsk. The events received wide coverage in Ukrainian media.

Conference organizer Harvey Dyck

conference co-chairs were Canadian historian John Staples and Ukrainian geographer Nikolai Krylov.

Bicentennial events included the unveiling of other memorials. Two benches at the railway station of Svetlodolinskoe (formerly Lichtenau) recall the migration of Mennonites to the West and deportation to the eastern Gulag. The station is on the railway line built by the Wall brothers and other investors.

A plaque in Vladovka (formerly Waldheim) recognizes the role played by Agnes and Cornelius Warkentin in the establishment of a still-existing hospital. A second plaque was placed at the school which occupies the site of the former Isaac Neufeld factory.

In Bogdanovka (formerly Gnadenfeld) a monument was placed at the site of the former Mennonite cemetery.

An exhibit of 139 historic Molochna photos opened in Melitopol and will move to a Zaporozhye museum in autumn.

A worship service was conducted in the former *Zentralschule* (regional high school) in Halbstadt, the first service since 1943. The opening hymn, sung in Russian and English, was “Great is thy faithfulness.” Jakob Tiessen,

pastor of the nearby Kutuzovka Church, conducted the service.

Johannes Dyck, formerly of Kazakhstan and now in Germany, preached a sermon on the “love and hope of our Christian faith.” Members of the Zaporozhye and Kutuzovka Mennonite congregations attended, plus guests from various countries. Most of the packed hall was made up of local non-Mennonite Ukrainians.

Local people attending the events expressed appreciation for Mennonite contributions to the region and said that “we wish to build on the past which you so richly gave us.”

People said that this spring was unusually beautiful—rains have watered the steppe and the wild flowers are brilliant. This spring is a metaphor for what is happening to Mennonite-Ukrainian relationships. The Mennonite story, long suppressed,



Photos by Johannes Dyck

Canadian visitors at the monument marking the former Mennonite cemetery in Gnadenfeld, Molochna. All the monuments were designed by Paul Epp of Toronto and produced by craftsmen in Zaporozhye.

neighbours” in early June.

Many Mennonites in sixteenth-century Holland migrated to Poland, and then to Russia/Ukraine beginning in the 1780s. In the last decade, North Americans have been returning in considerable numbers as scholars and tourists. A former girls’ school now serves as a Mennonite centre, specializing in medical and educational projects. MCC and other Mennonite agencies are active in Ukraine.

Researchers from seven countries presented papers at the June conference, most of them Ukrainian and Russian scholars. Ceremonial events were held at three Molochna village sites, as well as in the city of Dnepropetrovsk.

The major event was the unveiling of the Settler’s Monument in Halbstadt/Molochansk with Canadian ambassador Andrew Robinson partici-

from the University of Toronto was not able to attend due to illness. The



Jakob Tiessen from Kutuzovka Mennonite Church led the bicentennial service in the former *Zentralschule* in Halbstadt.

Zaporozhye, Ukraine

New conference in Ukraine

Four congregations in Ukraine—with Mennonite Church and Mennonite Brethren support, and led by pastors of Baptist background—are forming a conference called the Christian Union of Mennonite Churches.

What's more, these congregations, with a membership of just over 100, are uniting in the same region where the Mennonite Brethren broke away from the Mennonite church in 1860, reports Peter Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada's Witness partnership facilitator for Europe.

Rempel says the four Evangelical Mennonite churches—Zaporozhye, Kutuzovka, Kherson and Balkovye—were already in fellowship with one another. Their supporting mission agencies encouraged them to form a union and let the conference grow with them, rather than going independent directions.

Rempel has been helping the Zaporozhye and Kherson congregations through the process. He attended the founding meeting and a celebration in honour of the new union.

is being rediscovered as a vital part of the region's history. The values that shaped Mennonites are being embraced for the renewal of Ukrainian society. People repeatedly referred to the Mennonites as a people of memory, a sense of tradition that anchors them in changing times.

Historian Piet Visser of Amsterdam said of the conference, "What struck me most dramatically was the substantial amount of work contributed by Ukrainian and Russian scholars. This is very promising for the future of Mennonite studies...allowing for new insights and perspectives."

He also noted the personal impact of meeting with people who are exhibiting courage in difficult circumstances.—From report by **Paul Toews** and **Walter Unger**

Paul Toews, from Fresno Pacific University, is currently a Fulbright exchange scholar in Ukraine. Walter Unger from Toronto chairs the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine.

"There is an interest in the Mennonite way of being church. There are Ukrainians who have fond memories of what the Mennonites did and were, for their honesty and work ethic," said Rempel. "We also have promoted a more democratic form of being church" that is attracting people.



Cliff Dueck (second row, centre, in front of white vehicle) participated in the ecumenical march at Easter through Kherson, Ukraine.

Rempel described the mood at the founding event as one of "joyful reverence at the unity we felt as North Americans and Ukrainians, as Mennonite Brethren and Mennonites."

After leaders signed a document, members of the four congregations gathered to worship and share gifts.

Rempel says we can learn four things from this story.

"When it comes to the fundamentals, there is much that unites us as Mennonites of different traditions. We can keep pursuing fellowship among Mennonites, not just on the practical service level but also on theological points." Maybe working together in other countries will help build unity in North America.

Recently the Kherson Mennonite congregation participated with other denominations—Baptists, Orthodox, Pentecostals, Presbyterians and others—in a march of 5,000 people on Easter Sunday.

"It served to strengthen their faith and help bring unity. We plan to make it an annual event in our city," wrote

Witness worker Cliff Dueck. The event, says Rempel, has increased interest in ecumenical work in the Kherson congregation.

Although the formation of a new conference is exciting, challenges remain. The four already busy pastors now have added administrative responsibilities.

"This is an informal fellowship of churches that cannot yet act legally," said Rempel. To be legally recognized

in Ukraine, a church union must have at least seven congregations.

There are prospects that new Mennonite congregations will be established, for example in Nikolaipolye, a former Mennonite village, where the Zaporozhye church is conducting Bible studies and youth events.

Another challenge is providing theological training in "what it means to Mennonite in Ukraine at this time," since several leaders have Baptist backgrounds.

"All of these concerns need to be accompanied by prayer support." Rempel encourages tourists to Ukraine to worship with these churches.

The Christian Union of Mennonite Churches will receive support from Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Mennonite Brethren Mission and Service International, and LOGOS International, a mission agency based in Germany. Witness provides a \$25,000 grant for the congregation in Zaporozhye and is supporting the work of Cliff and Natasha Dueck in Kherson.—From MC Canada

Chilliwack, B.C.

B.C. delegate session marked by hope

Under the theme, “Faithful past, hopeful future! Continuing the journey,” Mennonite Church British Columbia held its annual sessions on June 5 at Eden Mennonite Church.

After a year of addressing difficult issues, delegates felt positive as they looked to the future.

In a morning meditation, Willard Metzger, chair of Mennonite Church Canada’s Christian Witness Council, reminded delegates that experiences in the desert do not mean we are outside the will of God.

“Thank God for the desert,” he said, referring to Israel’s exile. “Without the desert, we could not experience refinement, refocusing or God’s mercy.”

There were some inspiring moments during reports. John Melendez, pastor of Centro de Fe y Esperanza Iglesia Menonita (Faith and Hope Centre Mennonite Church), the newest church plant in east Vancouver, praised God for doors opening in the community. Jorge Hoajaca, pastor of First United Spanish Mennonite Church, translated for him.

Hoajaca affirmed the process by which the congregation was launched—First United Spanish

Mennonite, Peace Mennonite and Grace Chinese Mennonite partnered with the Evangelism and Church Development Committee to establish the church.

“We should continue to encourage this model, especially when resources are limited,” he said.

The most poignant moment occurred when Helmut Isaak, pastor of Cedar Hills Mennonite Church, talked about the loss of his wife, Katie.

“When she died there was peace,” he said, choking back tears. “The room became a holy place and she gave us a great gift: she showed us how to



Photo by Angelika Dawson

Talking about the new Spanish church plant in Vancouver are, from left: John Melendez, Philip Wheaton of the Evangelism and Church Development Committee, and Jorge Hoajaca.

die, to go to God when he calls.” Isaak thanked “the family of God that is the conference” for the many ways he was supported during that time.

The financial report was the surprise of the day. Delegates were told they would not be voting on a 2005 budget. The executive committee had decided to move the annual sessions for 2005 from June to February, when a budget will be presented.

Some delegates questioned whether the executive could make such a decision without a constitutional change or at least a delegate vote. By the end of the day the matter had still not been clarified. Plans are to implement the February meeting.

Moderator Doug Epp reminded delegates that the past year has been “interesting.” Delegates met twice at special meetings and in four area meetings to discuss MC British Columbia’s relationship to MC Canada and issues around homosexuality.

Letter to B.C. delegates

A letter from Mennonite Church Canada was included in the packet for delegates at the June sessions of MC British Columbia. The letter, signed by moderator Henry Krause, pledged to work toward “greater cooperation and fuller understanding” between MC Canada and B.C.

It also admitted failure. “We acknowledge that we failed the churches in MCBC—especially those who had not been part of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the General Conference, but perhaps others as well—in not coming to you at the time of the transformation into the new structures.

“We fell short in helping you to understand what it means to be part of MC Canada and we did not get to know you well enough as we drew you in as members. Now at this late date we want to make up for that shortcoming.”

The letter offers to send representatives to facilitate conversation in B.C. “about what the congregations and the national church are doing to further the work of the gospel.”

The letter also notes that structures are being considered for dealing with “questions of theology, ethics and practice.” It is hoped that a plan will be ready for delegates at Charlotte 2005.

The letter offers to facilitate visits between B.C. and other area conferences, especially MC Eastern Canada, and outlines MC Canada’s ongoing dialogue on homosexuality and the role of *Canadian Mennonite*.

“We commit ourselves to improving our communication, including how we listen to voices from our churches,” says the letter. The entire text of the letter is available at www.mennonitechurch.ca.

Winnipeg, Man.

Families share stories of pain

A May 14-16 event here offered a place for homosexual persons and their families to share their stories and worship together.

“Come walk with me” was a gathering of the Supportive Communities Network, the third in Canada since 1997. At the front of the room stood an open closet, with shoes from every walk of life spilling out.

Julia Zacharias, a lesbian with a passion for theology, said, “My whole person lives a life of faith. Body and soul...are essential to each other.” She sees her struggle to remain a partici-

At the March special delegate meeting, delegates agreed that an ad hoc committee would address concerns so that the executive committee could return to revisioning for the future of MC B.C. During the next 18 months, the ad hoc committee will plan workshops on homosexuality and governance, hold more listening meetings, and work with MC Canada staff on these issues.

A letter from MC Canada, pledging to work together with B.C., included in the delegate package (see sidebar).

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to the proposed visioning and evaluation process drafted by the executive. It is anticipated that the process—which will include surveys, consultations with churches and individuals, the formation of a steering committee and the possible hiring of a facilitator—will be completed by 2006. The goal of the process is to have a clear and owned vision with “articulated and prioritized ministries.”

Although some called for a simpler process, delegates approved the proposal.

When Epp asked delegates what they had learned during the day, responses included the recognition that God calls the church to be faithful and that God is in the midst of healing and brokenness. The day ended with a commissioning litany and a sense of hope for the continuing journey of MC British Columbia.—From report by

Angelika Dawson

part in the church as an act of “holy resistance”—to control by the powerful, resistance to the breakdown of relationships, to hopelessness about an inclusive church.

John Dyck, father of a gay son, said he never doubted the integrity of his son when his son told him he was gay.

“But fear and guilt did not escape me. Can I continue in my church work? Can I face the ridicule?” were

“Are people aware that we are now connected with many across the country who want to relate to a congregation where they will be welcome?” asked Braul. This church has been involved in a seven-year study and worship process, and meanwhile “we will welcome whomever God sends through our doors.”

Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg also shared its story. It recently established a Pilgrim Group to walk



Photo by Aiden S. Enns

Curtis Wiebe and Marilyn Houser Hamm (at the piano) lead singing at the gathering of the Supportive Communities Network in Winnipeg.

questions over which he agonized. As his son was coming out of the closet, he and his wife entered their closet before beginning the arduous journey of finding their way out.

Several parents acknowledged that it was God who gave them the grace to respond with unconditional love when their children disclosed their sexuality. They needed to seek understanding but were determined not to abandon their children.

One elderly father shed tears as he said, “The church left us; we didn’t leave them.”

The group heard from Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church, “a safe haven for gays and lesbians and their families and all those who love them,” said Anneli Braul, co-pastor. The congregation has withdrawn from Mennonite Church Alberta for five years because of controversy over its position.

with homosexuals, their families and friends. This group is a “safe” forum where people can talk with one another and invite the church’s help.

“It was so long before we could talk to anyone,” said one father. “The violence of silence is difficult for us.”

Dyck, after more than 23 years, has not given up hope, “My hope for the church is that it truly will become an agent of healing and grace, welcoming people in gentleness and humility and will set aside the emphasis on power and authority.”

BMC, which has been denied official space at church assemblies for the 30 years of its existence, appreciates that Mennonite Church Canada is committed to dialogue. At the July assembly, the General Board will host a discussion on homosexuality and a meeting with families of gay people.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Winnipeg, Man.

Canadian council tackles array of issues

Discussions on biotechnology, just trade, interfaith dialogue, set in a context of worship, conveyed “a profound sense of commonality” at the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) board meetings in Toronto on May 12-14, said Dan Nighswander, Mennonite Church Canada general secretary.

“Despite our significant differences, there was a sense of having so many common convictions and commitments, so many common challenges and opportunities within the Canadian church context,” he said.

‘Our communities and church leaders... need a table where they can learn from the experience of church communities throughout the continent.’

Worship included Bible studies and frequent prayers, as well as a 60th anniversary celebration at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, the site of the CCC founding meeting.

“It was an excellent example of inter-church worship,” Nighswander reported. It included a powerful sermon by Anglican archbishop Terrence Findlay, Baptist and Armenian choirs, scripture in 10 languages, and fellowship and desserts afterward. Over 500 persons attended, including many dignitaries.

The meeting agenda included a report from the CCC biotechnology reference group which held a seminar on Faith and Bioethics last October. They’ve been asked to host UNESCO’s annual philosophy day in November on the theme, “Ethical implications of patenting human genes and genetic sequences for scientific research and healthcare.”

The reference group presented a draft of “Beginning Biotechnology Guidelines” (see sidebar).

Nighswander noted that although Mennonite churches may not be

discussing bioethical issues, some individuals are highly involved. For example, the reference group reported on an excellent conversation with John Dick, a medical researcher and member of Toronto United Mennonite Church.

The Commission on Peace and Justice reported a significant initiative on “just trade.” A new organization, called MESA: Churches Working on Just Trade in the Service of an Economy of Life, was established on April 2 for Canadian, Mexican and U.S. churches who have agreed to work together on the topic of trade.

“Our communities and church leaders need to become more aware of the effects of globalization and trade agreements and need a table where they can learn from the experience of church communities throughout the continent,” said the commission.

The letter on Ballistic Missile Defence signed by all members of CCC (and Mennonite Church Canada moderator Henry Krause) has elicited a thoughtful response from Bill Graham, Minister of Defence. A petition on health care is posted on the CCC web site.

The Commission on Faith and Witness reported that a second forum on ecumenical dialogue will take place in Ottawa in October. Helmut Harder of Winnipeg will report on Mennonite involvement in ecumenical conversations on behalf of MC Canada.

Prior to a discussion on interfaith dialogue, the group visited a synagogue, for evening prayers and a conversation with the rabbi. (At the November meetings, they visited a mosque). This visit was in keeping with an earlier letter of support to the Jewish community which MC Canada was unable to process, noted Nighswander, adding that he believes MC Canada needs to “take up interfaith issues intentionally, as our

priority statement (section 3c) directs.”

A letter to the Muslim community is being drafted with assistance from Bill Janzen of Mennonite Central Committee’s Ottawa Office.

MC Canada delegates will be voting on whether to become full members of CCC and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada this summer. In preparation, Nighswander suggested visiting their websites: www.ccc-cce.ca and www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/index.asp.—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Guidelines for biotechnology

A group from the Canadian Council of Churches has been working at theological issues in biotechnology (reproduction, genetic modification, pharmaceuticals, etc.). They drew up the following “beginning principles” to consider.

1. Keep *utility* and *vision* in a creative balance.
2. Recognize that *stewardship* is not ownership.
3. Be as sensitive to the suffering (human and non-human) our actions create as we are to the benefits we hope to trigger.
4. Be sensitive not only to new possibilities but also to the needs of other parts of creation.
5. Challenge simplistic and misleading rhetoric about biotechnological/nanotechnological advances.
6. Resist the temptation to “thingify” or commodify life.
7. Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.
8. Be willing to wait or consider alternatives in the name of the common good.
9. Make ethical decisions as part of a community in dialogue, not just privately.
10. Recognize that we need not defer death at all costs.
11. Seek appropriate regulations.

Windsor, Ont.

Highlights from visit to South Korea

From April 19-30, seven people visited South Korea in a tour sponsored by Mennonite Church Canada Witness. The following is from a report by John Harder of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship in Ontario.

The friendly way to greet a Korean is with the words *An-nyong haseyo*: How is it with your spirit? This greeting is an example of the deeply spiritual nature of Koreans, which I experienced during my learning tour of South Korea.

Korean Mennonites are fervent pray-ers. They pray often and passionately, and believe firmly that their prayers make a difference. Our host's first agenda item was sharing their Friday evening prayer meeting with us. Upon arrival in Chuncheon, we went straight to Brother Cha's apartment for a potluck supper, then to the prayer service.

When I stood up to introduce myself, I said, "I'm John, the husband of Julie." A ripple of recognition ran through the gathering. They have long prayed that Julie would be healed from cancer. I was able to let them know that she is doing well and thank them for their love and concern.

Up to 35 percent of Koreans—mainly Roman Catholics, Presbyterians and Methodists, and a few large evangelical charismatic churches—identify themselves as Christian. The only church that identifies itself as Anabaptist is the Jesus Village Church of Chuncheon.

Erv and Marian Wiens (formerly of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship) serve on the leadership team, together with three other couples. They are MC Canada Witness workers.

The Jesus Village Church is a family-oriented congregation of about 40 members that meets in an office building. Many of the adults are professionals, including several professors. This core of leaders—all men in a still male-dominated society—takes turns leading worship. Worship lasts about 90 minutes and consists of praise and hymn singing, prayer, a sermon, a children's story

and congregational sharing.

There are no pews. The common practice is to sit on cushions on the floor.

The congregation supports several religious and humanitarian organizations, such as Hospice and the Korean Anabaptist Centre in Seoul. The centre fosters discipleship, community and peace building throughout Korea. The staff of three Canadians and two Koreans, headed by Tim Froese of MC Canada Witness, conduct seminars on peacemaking and conflict resolution and interact with secular organizations promoting peace.

Staff of the Anabaptist Centre also meet with church leaders to promote Anabaptist values and the possibility of alternative service instead of participating in the military. This can be a challenge in a society where military service is mandatory for all young men.

One of the highlights of our visit was our trip to Unification Observatory in the demilitarized zone between north and south. We gazed across the heavily guarded border into North Korea, where a railway is being built that will link the two Koreas.

Brother Cha calls this passage a pinhole through the barrier dividing a people. His hope, and our prayer, is



Tour participants ring the Bell for Peace in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. From left: Marina Lepp from Harrow Mennonite Church, Hedy Dennis from Valleyview Mennonite in London, John Harder, Gordon Janzen from MC Canada Witness and Louise Langeman from Leamington Untied Mennonite. Other tour members were Werner Kliever from Charleswood Mennonite and Lois Konrad from Leamington United Mennonite.

that this pinhole may lead to the reunification of Korea.

The high point of the trip was the Sunday service with Jesus Village Church. We sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" for them and shared stories and gifts. The blessing of sharing our faith with brothers and sisters across the ocean will remain with me as long as I live.

Summer schedule

After the July 12 issue, Canadian Mennonite begins a three-week schedule.

The summer issues are dated August 2 and August 23.

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On gardens and temptations

For people of a northern climate, we Canadians have a surprising preoccupation with gardening. Maybe it stems from our desire to watch things grow (for example, the federal deficit), or our delight in the race to produce a ripe watermelon before the frost.

Or, it could be related to our western conviction that stewardship involves making the land work for its keep—an uncut forest or uncultivated patch of earth represent dangerously unproductive states of nature.

Growing up on a farm helped to reinforce this bias. Soil was to be used—it wasn't just put on this earth to get under our fingernails and cling to our spinach.

Our desire to cultivate and plant is not always rational. Take the case of my tomatoes. The other day, while in a

store searching for my shopping list, I noticed some tomato plants and something snapped. Suddenly, I just had to plant a garden!

There were a few problems to be overcome. We have no backyard. "Aha," I thought, "we do have a deck." I had a vision of our deck as a garden with corn swaying in the breeze and watermelon vines stretching into the neighbour's lot.

The second problem was a lack of soil on our deck. On the farm we never worried about such things. We didn't have to buy it in plastic bags. I considered what containers I might use. I raced over to the lumber store for some cedar, rationalizing that if it had been good enough for the quilt chests of my ancestors, it should be acceptable for my tomatoes.

Then there was the dainty question

of fertilizer. Having been raised on a sheep farm, I find it inscrutable that people would buy sheep manure at a respectable store. Who else but city folk would toss a box of chocolates into a shopping cart with sheep manure? I remembered this as I stood at the cash register with my cedar and sheep manure.

After building the beds, filling them with the store-bought soil and fertilizer, and planting the tomatoes, I made some calculations. It had cost me about \$35 to plant six tomatoes. I estimated that we spend \$5 a month on tomatoes. Unfortunately, my entire crop will be ready in late August when I will be away on holidays. So I'll lose about \$30 on the deal.

No wonder the first temptation took place in a garden! However, there is a positive side to all of this—I feel like a real farmer again. Not only am I actually producing food, but I am losing money in the process!—June 20, 1988



Emke Retro
Ivan Emke

Toronto, Ont.

Congregation blesses Korean ministry

May 2 was a joyful Sunday at Toronto United Mennonite Church (TUMC). Seven people were received into membership: Lisa Derksen, Gerry Derksen, Kap Jin John, Charlene Jongean, Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park, and Robert Shilk. All seven had shared faith stories with the congregation two weeks earlier.

"I marvelled at the unique people and unique stories and unique ministries God is entrusting us with," said pastor Gary Harder. "We heard faith

with Harder and Kap Jin John on behalf of the Korean group. The morning ended with a potluck lunch.

The commissioning service was the continuation of a journey that began when Bock Ki Kim, his wife Sook Kyoung Park and their two children began attending Toronto United Mennonite in 2002. The family had come to Toronto at the invitation of MCEC to work as church planters. Bock Ki Kim did an internship at Black Creek Faith Community to complete his M.Div. from Associated

Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg and was now the pastor of the Jesus Village Church in Chun Cheon City, the first Anabaptist congregation in Korea. With Lee's encouragement, Kim attended CMBC from 1996-99. He and other Koreans found a home at Charleswood Mennonite Church.

Kim continued his studies at AMBS, then came to Toronto, home to approximately 100,000 Canadians with Korean roots.

Kim has a vision for a multi-cultural church. He notes that Koreans, as distinct from some other immigrant groups, want to integrate without assimilating. He points to similar ministries at Charleswood and Valleyview Mennonite in London, Ontario.

"TUMC is a good place for Koreans," said Kim. "It is a healthy church with a long and rich history, and it is very welcoming."

Kim acknowledged that the congregation's recent discernment process on homosexuality was a difficult time for the Korean group, "but we can't run away from the issue. We are learning how a healthy church works."

In his message, Brian Bauman reminded the congregation that "missional church can be a very messy thing," but the good news is that missional church is a God thing and "God dearly loves these holy messes."—**Richard Ratzlaff**



Commissioning Bock Ki Kim (left) for the Korean ministry are Richard Ratzlaff, congregational chair; Gary Harder, pastor; and Brian Bauman, mission minister for MC Eastern Canada.

stories that began in Korean Presbyterian, Christian Reformed, Baptist, Lutheran and Mennonite Brethren faith homes."

Later in the service, Bock Ki Kim was commissioned to lead an emerging ministry among Koreans in Toronto. Brian Bauman, missions minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC), led prayers of blessing, along

Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Kim was born in South Korea, where his parents were members of the Presbyterian Church. Trained as a landscape engineer, he joined a Bible study group of Koreans who were looking for a new vision of being the church.

In that group, Kim met Yoon Shik Lee, who had studied at Canadian

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Youth trip combines faith and fencing

On April 3, the first day of our Easter break, nine youth and six adults from Foothills Mennonite Church headed to Kelowna, British Columbia. Our mission: to work with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to help fix a farmer's fence that had been destroyed by forest fires last summer.

In Kelowna, we checked into a hotel and hit the swimming pool. On Sunday we went to church, had a shopping spree at the thrift store for some work clothes, and played mini-golf.



Foothills youth find other purposes for the fence posts.

Later, we met a family rebuilding a home that burned in the fire. It was amazing to walk among the ashes, see signs of life and know that God makes all things new again.

On Sunday evening, we headed to the Pentecostal Bible camp at Falkland where we would stay for four nights. Early Monday morning, we tore down the old fence and began to pound new posts in the charred hills. The terrain was much steeper than we had expected. We worked under the leadership of Jerry and Doreen Klassen of MDS.

At lunch we enjoyed fabulous meals prepared by Brian and Linda, the host family we were helping. The youth

worked hard climbing up and down the steep hill until two and a half kilometres of fencing was done. God's presence was evident from planning to completion of our work. Even though we worked with large machinery on dangerous terrain, no one suffered anything worse than sore feet and a few scratches from barbed wire.

We were blessed with great discussion and prayer times in the evening as we looked at scriptures focused on Holy Week and the impact of the Christ event on our lives. The youth

impressed leaders with their deep understanding of God and their desire to serve. They also provided a steady flow of entertainment.

Thanks to all youth who participated—Meghan Thiessen, Sean Tarnowsky, Rebekah Hiebert, Josh Friesen, Jeff Heinrichs, Paul Beriault, David Dyck, Roger Dueck and Rachel Brault—and to the adults—Colleen Buller, Mike Beriault, Tom Dueck, Byron Thiessen, Shami and Deanna Willms.—**Shami Willms**

Anglicans defer decision on same-sex blessings

Canadian Anglicans voted on June 2 to defer a decision on whether same-sex unions should be blessed in church. The General Synod, the highest governing body that meets every three years, was deeply divided on a resolution that proposed giving dioceses (comparable to regional conferences) the authority to allow same-sex blessing ceremonies.

Instead, synod delegates passed (by a 55 percent majority) a revised resolution that asks the Primate's Theological Commission to determine by 2006 "whether the blessing of committed, same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine." Delegates noted that if the issue is a matter of doctrine, or faith interpretation, then General Synod should deal with it. If it is a matter of practice, or pastoral care, then it could be left to individual dioceses. The synod will deal with the issue again in 2007.

Integrity, an organization of gay Anglicans, said that postponing a decision on same-sex blessings means the church "is refusing to respond to an increasingly urgent pastoral need in our community and hindering any evangelistic work or witness" within the gay community. Essentials, a coalition of conservative Anglicans, said it was pleased with the deferral because "it represents the theology of this matter and the unity of the church."

The next day, the General Synod approved an addition to the resolution that tells same-sex partners that they are welcome in the church and that the church affirms "the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same-sex relationships." Some argued that the addition is not much different from approving a same-sex blessing.

Since the motion does not address diocesan authority, Michael Ingham, bishop of New Westminster, the only diocese officially offering blessings to gay couples, said his diocese would continue on its course. Toronto is scheduled to consider the question of same-sex blessings in November, and Ottawa and Niagara dioceses are expected to do so in the near future.

—From Anglican News Service

School notes

Photo by Steve Echols



Canadian graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, from left: Melody Steinman, Anne Garber Kompaore and Rachel Epp.

AMBS graduation

Elkhart, Ind.—Three Canadians were among 37 graduates at the commencement service of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary on May 21. Rachel Epp, a member of Sargent Avenue Mennonite in Winnipeg, received a Master of Divinity degree and will pursue a pastoral ministry assignment. Anne Garber Kompaore received a Master of Arts: Theological Studies degree in biblical studies. She has worked in Bible translation in Burkina Faso for many years. She is a member of Listowel Mennonite in Ontario. Melody Steinman received a Master of Divinity degree and will continue studies at AMBS. She is a member of Steinmann Mennonite in Baden, Ontario. In his message, “We do not lose heart,” James Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, challenged graduates to live by call and not by choice.—From AMBS release

Photos by kids

Attention children: If you are 12 or under, *Canadian Mennonite* would like to see some of the photographs you take this summer. They can be about your vacation, time at camp or other summer adventures. We will print some of the best ones.

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CMU surpasses goal

Winnipeg, Man.—Canadian Mennonite University has surpassed its annual development goal of \$1 million by raising \$1,038,159, said president Gerald Gerbrandt. The total is in addition to \$250,000 donated by the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba and \$350,000 by Mennonite Church Canada. Last year, \$922,177 was raised during the same time period. “We recognize the pivotal role that our constituencies play in our success as a university and we are extremely grateful for their ongoing support,” said Gerbrandt. CMU will release its audited fiscal year-end statements in July.—From CMU release

Students in Honduras

Rosthern, Sask.—Approximately 19 students from Rosthern Junior College spent April 21 to May 3 in El Salvador on a service project. They built houses, painted a church and added strong plastic to several shanties in the San Vicente area. Before going, they raised enough money to purchase two corrugated steel houses. Each house cost about \$1200. The students were accompanied by Gary and Glenis Koop (Gary is dean at RJC). Glenis said she was impressed with how little students complained, considering the extreme heat and smaller meal portions, consisting mostly of rice and beans. The group was heavily guarded, she said, and armed guards could be seen everywhere.—Karin Fehderau



Graduate Brett Scott is congratulated by Gerald Gerbrandt, president of Canadian Mennonite University. Gerbrandt is flanked by Lloyd Axworthy (left) and Dean Peachey.

Graduation at Menno Simons

Winnipeg, Man.—On June 5, 53 students graduated from Menno Simons College, the college of Canadian Mennonite University that offers studies in conflict resolution and international development on the campus of the University of Winnipeg. That same weekend was the installation of Lloyd Axworthy as president of the University of Winnipeg. Axworthy, a former professor at the university, is best known for his years in federal politics. He spoke at the Menno Simons ceremony, noting that conflict resolution skills are particularly needed in global hotspots because “development projects stop when conflict erupts.” Dean Peachey, vice-president and academic dean at Menno Simons, quoted scholar/activist Elise Boulding: “There is no time for anything but to make peace work a part of every waking moment.”—From CMU release

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Barkey—to Mary and Mark, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., a son, Elias River, June 5.

Berg—to Carolyn and James, Niagara United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Mitchell Peter, May 14.

Buehler—to Marilyn and Mark of Bolton, Ont., St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., twin sons, Andrew Jason and Ryan James, June 3.

Isaac—to Rose and Milla, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Faith Joanna, May 16.

Klassen—to Janet and Wayne, Morden Mennonite, Man., a son, Matthew Wayne, May 20.

Kotylak, —to Rhonda and Donny, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., a son, Ronald Stan, March 29.

Penner—to Michelle and Rob, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a son, Tyler Reid, May 26.

Renwick—to Rachel and Chris, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Melyse Mabel, June 12.

Salierno—to Kim (Wiens) and Carmen, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., a daughter, Bianca Grace, June 7.

Schartner—to Cathy and Carl, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Raylene Elora, June 12.

Streicher—to Miriam and Perry, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., a daughter, Quiana Hope, May 25.

Thiessen—to Rhonda and Ron, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., a daughter, Ava Carolyn Laurene, May 9.

Woelcke—to Carla and Reynold, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., a son, Andrew Joshua, May 9.

Zacharias—to Andrea (Penner) and Sheldon, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Kaitlyn Faith, June 4.

Zacharias—to Shauna and Robert, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Keely Renee Dawn, May 18.

Marriages

Driedger-Stouffer—Daryl and Karen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., June 12.

Gabriele-Martin—Kyle and Karrie, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., June 12.

Loeppky-Toews—Greg (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Margaret (Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) at Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., May 22.

Penner-Franks—Alvin and Debbie, Morden Mennonite, Man., June 12.

Tarr-Kuhl—Keith (Calgary, Alta.) and Andrea, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., in Winnipeg, June 18.

Thiessen-Bergen—Derek, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., and Laura (Shafter, Calif.), in Shafter, California, May 22.

Wolfe-Petkau—Jonathan and Amy, Morden Mennonite, Man., May 29.

Zehr-Schlegel—Brett and Lindsay, East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, Ont., June 19.

Deaths

Dyck—Peter, 87, Hanley Mennonite, Sask., May 30.

Enns—Anna, 90, Clearbrook

Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., June 8.

Funk—Tina, 78, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 9.

Gerbrandt—Ben, 66, of Toronto, May 17. Memorial service at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Ham—Elmer Oscar, 90, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., May 27.

Klippenstein—Susan, 92, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 15.

Sawatzky—Mary, 75, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Feb. 22.

van Riesen—Erich, 91, Niagara United Mennonite, Ont., June 6.

Woelk—Christine, 49, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., funeral June 1.

Baptisms

Agape Fellowship, London, Ont.—Helen Hilborn, May 30.

Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.—Micella Klassen and Andrew Wall, June 12.

Glenlea Mennonite, Man.—Larissa Dyck, Jason Neufeld, Toban Wiens, May 30.

Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.—Carlos Fernandez, June 6.

Hanley Mennonite, Sask.—Melanie Dyck, Tracey Dyck, Stephanie Klassen, Blaine Pauls, May 30.

Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.—Sara Banman, Adolf Dyck, Abe Giesbrecht, Brian Langeman, Mary Munyabarenzi, Linda Rempel, Joel Rivait, Darren Tiessen, Brian Warkentin, June 6.

North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.—Zoom Hallock, Leonard Homeniuk, Kathe Remillard, Tricia Wiebe, May 30.

Springstein Mennonite, Man.—Jacqueline Hogue, Lisa Rogalsky, Natalie Wiebe, May 30.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes transitions announcements within four months of the event. When sending by e-mail, please identify congregation (name and location).



Photo by Maurice Martin

Willard Martin displays the crokinole board with the Allis Chalmers logo that he made for this year's Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale. It accompanied the restored 1955 tractor that sold for \$4,950. The 38th annual sale on May 29 raised \$341,754 for Mennonite Central Committee. Firsts this year were an auction on Friday evening and new attractions for children, including a clown, auction and rides on a covered wagon such as the original settlers used. The featured quilt, "Flowers for Lois" made by Gail Hunter, sold for \$6,100. The Koinonia touring quilt, made by delegates to Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe, raised \$4,200 for AIDS sufferers in Africa.—From reports

People & Events

Elkhart, Ind.—John H. Neufeld from Winnipeg was one of two longtime church workers honoured in Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary's first Alumni Ministry and Service Awards. Neufeld received his award from Loren Johns, AMBS academic dean, on May 2 at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, where he

was a pastor from 1969-84. Neufeld was president and taught at Canadian Mennonite Bible College from 1985 to 2003. He continues to give seminars on preaching. The other award winner was Shantkumar S. Kunjam from Rajnandgaon, India.—From AMBS release

Montreal, Que.

Quebec Mennonites urged to 'think for a change'

R*eflechir pour faire changement!* (thinking for a change) was the theme of the seventh annual gathering of Quebec Mennonites on May 23. The theme, adapted from John Maxwell's recent book, shaped an inspiring service of worship and reflection for 80 French and English Mennonites and friends who gathered at the invitation of Conseil Mennonite Quebecois.

Given Mennonites' nearly 50-year history in Quebec, it seemed fitting to

mingled with worship.

A musical ensemble from Joliette, led by Sylvie Lamoureux, introduced the assembly to French praise songs that complemented English Mennonite hymns led by Ross Brownley and Patricia Friesen from Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal.

The variety of experience among Mennonites in Quebec was further emphasized by several speakers. Ellen Schmitt, a veteran missionary in Rawdon, took listeners back to earlier

times. Audrey St. Martin, a new member at the Joliette church, and Eric Akele, a Congolese refugee worshipping with Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, reflected on the essential role the church plays in their lives.

For St. Martin, the Mennonite church has provided community in a society driven by

downturn in membership in French churches since the mid-eighties, he asked if we, like the exiles returning to Jerusalem, have forgotten the project of God. Have we burned out? Are we, like the culture around us, focusing on material gain? Are we seeking only our own good? Are we depriving ourselves of spiritual blessings that come when we do God's work?

Theoret reminded us that as people of God we are called to reflect on our priorities, support God's work with our tithes, seek justice and the will of God, but in moderation.

We need to think about new ways to focus on the project of God that will allow us to run the long race, he said. We need to reflect on ways our churches can recover from burnout. Can we "think for a change," and again make the will of God central to our lives?

As we moved from the two-hour *ralliement* (rally) to the fund-raiser lunch provided by La Maison de l'Amitié (House of Friendship), I was inspired with much food for both soul and mind.—From report by **Lucille Marr**

The writer is co-pastor of the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal and teaches in religious studies at McGill University.



Music group from Joliette performs during the Quebec rally.

think together in the gymnasium of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame, a religious order going back 350 years to the first decades of French presence in Canada.

As a people more recently called to Quebec, we were challenged to consider what the Old Testament prophet Haggai's message might mean for us today. What do we have in common with Hebrew exiles who forgot their religious heritage on their return to Jerusalem? What does Haggai's warning say to us as 21st-century Mennonites living in a post-Christian culture?

Daniel Genest, director of Conseil Mennonite Quebecois, moved us through the full program. Reports from Richard Lougheed (president of the Conseil), Jean-Victor and Annie Brosseau (directors of Mennonite Central Committee Quebec), and Brian Bauman (missions minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada),

individualism and materialism. For Akele, the church is the setting where he can seek God and find inner peace, far from home and family.

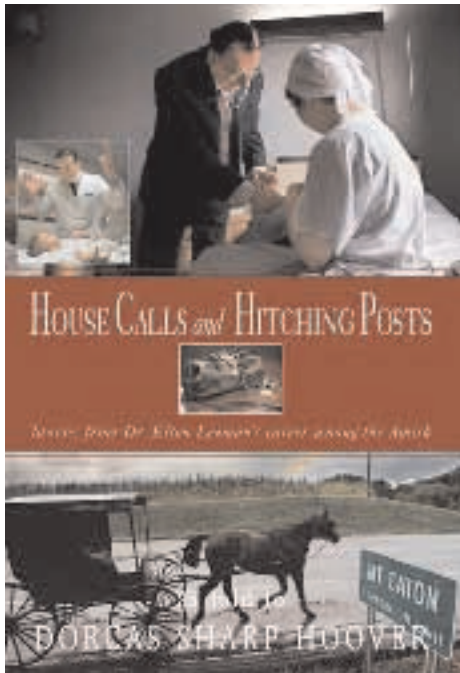
The testimonies were illustrations for a message by Jean-Raymond Theoret, president of the Frere Mennonites (Mennonite Brethren). Theoret challenged us consider our priorities as the church in Quebec, to "think for a change."

Reflecting on the



Quebec Mennonites enjoy lunch together at their annual gathering.

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Mennonite Church Canada

New finance director for MC Canada

Randy Wiebe has been appointed director of finance for Mennonite Church Canada, beginning July 5. A member of Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, he is currently employed as an accountant.

Wiebe has degrees in business administration and accounting from the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Catholic University in Paraguay.



Wiebe

For four years he was a manager for Sociedad Cooperativa Colonizadora Chortitzer Komitee Ltda in Paraguay—a cooperative of over 3500 members which markets dairy products, with sales of about \$100 million US annually. Wiebe supervised a team of 14 staff and attended to all financial responsibilities.

Wiebe graduated from junior high school in Canada and then returned to Paraguay with his parents where he completed high school in the German language. Since returning to Canada a year ago, he has begun studies in the Certified General Accounting program with advanced standing because of his previous studies. Wiebe is fluent in English, German and Spanish.

He said his decision to seek a job with the church “came from God. I wasn’t searching for a new job...but I think I can continue to grow in my profession, doing the work I have best prepared myself to do and do it for a good cause.”

Wiebe looks forward to the challenges of working in a non-

profit environment, but sees similarities with his experience in the cooperative in Paraguay. He looks forward to “the people, the working environment and seeing my staff and I together reach our objectives....”

Randy and Laura Kasper-Wiebe have two daughters: Nikita (4) and Natasha (2). They are expecting their third child in September.

Wiebe will succeed Paul Klassen, who worked in MC Canada’s finance area for 14 years. Klassen resigned in May to accept a position at Investors Group. Lloyd Plett, interim financial consultant, will continue to give overall leadership to the finance department through July 2005.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Exploring the call to pastoral ministry

What does it mean to be “called” to pastoral ministry? Does this suggest a certain career training path? How can I realize this calling as I maintain my present vocation?

These and other questions emerged during the second Ministry Inquiry dinner held at Conrad Grebel University College on May 6. The event is sponsored by the Pastoral Leadership Training Commission and the Leadership Commission of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, along with the college.

Thirty-four persons participated, about 70 percent of them young people. Some were considering a career change. Ed Janzen, chaplain at Conrad Grebel, sensed that most of them were asking about the possibilities of being bivocational ministers.

The first Ministry Inquiry event last year focused on people who went through the “normal” seminary route into

ministry. This event featured a panel with a variety of pastoral perspectives, all from First Mennonite Church in Kitchener: Noe Gonzalia of the Hispanic ministry; Nancy Mann who is doing an internship; and Mark Diller Harder who is also Young Adult Minister for MC Eastern Canada. Tom Yoder-Neufeld hosted the panel.

A theme which emerged is that the role of the congregation in calling to ministry, and the community’s affirmation of that call, is as important as the personal sense of call.

Randall Miller from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Yoder Neufeld of Conrad Grebel described the ministry training available at their schools. Muriel Bechtel, Minister of Pastoral Services for MC Eastern Canada, concluded the evening by having people reflect on what they heard.

Janzen noted that there was a lot of “chat energy” in the room after the program ended. He also noted the significant number of youth at the event.

Several church leaders had done some good “shoulder tapping” to invite people to attend. A notable example was Fred Lichti, pastor of Listowel Mennonite Church, who again brought six young people to the event. One of them brought a friend.

Lichti says: “We are getting the message that Mennonite Church Canada will be facing a leadership crisis in the not-too-distant future. We as a congregation have done a few things to try to rectify that trend. In fall I presented several sermons on the call to ministry, preparing people to consider future ministry leadership.

“Also, the elders discussed how we might work more deliberately at a process of ministry inquiry. [This] seemed like a good event to promote.” Lichti selected young

people who have shown aptitude in such things as youth group leadership and leading worship.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Equipping Conference in October

This year’s Equipping Conference, “Resources for ministry and life,” is the combined effort of the four ministry areas of Mennonite Church Manitoba. The conference will take place on October 2 at Canadian Mennonite University’s north campus.

A variety of workshops on different areas of church life are planned. Pastors can choose from such workshops as “Just as I am: Overcoming personal barriers to leadership” or “Ministry stresses and strategies,” while “Stewardship education—afterthought or core component?” may appeal to stewardship and worship committee members.

Those involved in Christian education will find a variety of skill-building workshops such as “Centred teaching—How one small congregation has brought new life to their Sunday school teaching.”

Other workshops will focus on caregiving, marriage enrichment, film and culture, peacemaking, gift discernment and other topics. Churches are encouraged to make this resource available to as many members as possible.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

CD features school choirs

Rosthern Junior College has released a recording featuring all the choirs of the past school year. Titled “The Alpha and Omega—Beginning and End,” the CD is selling for \$15.

The RJC Chorale, one of the

choirs featured on the CD, has been chosen to represent Saskatchewan at the National Music Festival in Prince Edward Island in August. This past March, the Chorale participated in a local music festival. A recording of its performance was sent to officials at a provincial level. That won the choir a spot at the summer festival.

Leadership changes in Saskatchewan

Some staff changes in MC Saskatchewan churches will be occurring over the next few months. Duff Warkentin will be coming on staff in a part-time role of music director beginning in September.

Osler Mennonite is hiring Gordon Allaby as a full-time pastor, beginning August 1 for a three-year term. Gordon and his wife Leslie, from Kansas, have one daughter, Catherine. Menno Epp, who has been working at Osler in a quarter-time position, is retiring at the end of June.

The four-person lay leadership team that has been in place since December at Osler Mennonite will continue, said Wilf Buhler, church chair. At present, two of the team members are pursuing ministry-related activities outside their church.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Hikers raise money for camp

June 5 started out sunny and clear as 50 registered hikers handed in sponsorship money and donned their boots to raise money for Camp Valaqua at its third annual hike-a-thon.

The group hiked the seven km Moose Mountain trail in Kananaskis, which ends at a scenic peak. Children, seniors, youth groups, and families were represented, with many able to make it to the top of the mountain. A bit of light rain and wind developed at 4:00 p.m. when the group gathered for a barbecue and weiner roast at Allen Bill Pond.



Alberta hikers reach the top.

“All in all, it was a very fun day and a successful fundraiser,” said Valaqua director Don Dyck Steinmann.

The hike-a-thon raised over \$8400 toward the current project, a new staff residence.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Committee formed to guide discussion

At its annual sessions in June, MC British Columbia introduced the ad hoc committee that will guide the churches through the process on homosexuality and governance.

At the special delegate meeting in March, delegates forwarded names for consideration for this committee. After prayerful consideration and many phone calls, five

people were brought forward for affirmation at the June sessions: Doug Epp (moderator of MC British Columbia), Ed Janzen (Emmanuel Mennonite) Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen (West Abbotsford Mennonite), John Heinrichs (First United Mennonite, Vancouver), and Stacey O'Neill (Olivet Mennonite).

The committee presented its goals to the delegates at the June session, with clear timelines for reporting and plans to communicate through listening meetings, workshops, the MC British Columbia newsletter, and a website. A workshop on homosexuality is already planned for October 22-23 with resource people Willard Swartley from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Toni Dolfo Smith and Neil Rempel, who represent a community-based organization called “Living Waters” that deals with relational and sexual brokenness.

The committee will also meet with other area conferences to discuss common concerns, beginning with a meeting with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada members in Winkler this summer. The committee will also work with MC Canada to develop a forum to discern matters of church polity.

Pray for the church

What is the church about? There are many ways to answer this, depending who you are.

Two possible answers are surely wrong. They are: “The church is about asking people for money,” and “The church is about structure, power and politics.” Structure, power and politics exist in any organization. And it is necessary to have money to accomplish what the church needs to be doing. But the real purpose of the church is to do ministry.

“The church is the new community of disciples sent into the world to proclaim the reign of God and to provide a foretaste of the church’s glorious hope,” says our Confession of Faith. “We believe that the church is called to proclaim and

to be a sign of the kingdom of God.”

At the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Winkler, Manitoba (July 7-10), delegates will receive a new edition of *World of Witness, A guide to supporting and praying for Mennonite Church Canada*. This booklet will help us understand and imagine the scope of the ministry in which we are engaged. And it will remind us to pray and to know how to pray intelligently for every aspect of our denomination’s ministry, every way in which the national church proclaims and is a sign of the kingdom of God.

Previous prayer directories concentrated on international missions, and that remains a prominent part of this new edition. This edition also describes what MC Canada is doing within Canada, both for and on behalf of member congregations.

From our leaders

I’ve seen prayer directories used in many ways—as guides for personal devotion and prayer, as sources of information for contacting missionaries, as source books for learning about and supporting what the church is about. This one can be used in each of these ways.

Soon after assembly the prayer directory will be available in your church. Do get a copy and use it to give substance when you pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as is in heaven.”

Dan Nighswander,
General Secretary,
Mennonite Church
Canada



Employment opportunities

Grace Mennonite Church invites applications for the position of:

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

Our church is located in Steinbach, Manitoba, a growing, progressive community of over 10,000 located 30 minutes from Winnipeg. Working together with our full-time associate pastor, the successful applicant will provide spiritual leadership based on Anabaptist theology for our congregation of over 200. Aside from duties which include pastoral care and regular preaching and worship service participation, we are looking for someone who has a keen interest in relationship building.

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

Phil Guenther
Church Chairperson
Grace Mennonite Church
430 3rd St.
Steinbach, MB R5G 1M4
E-mail: pjg@mts.net

or
John Klassen
Mennonite Church Manitoba
Phone: (204) 896-1616

Vineland United Mennonite Church invites applications for

FULL-TIME LEAD MINISTER

We are a 350 member, active congregation located in a growing rural community, in the heart of the Niagara Peninsula.

Our church is seeking a full-time pastor with a strong desire to nurture our church spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. Candidates should possess a desire to work with our church with a vision to the future and be committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith.

Please submit inquiries, resumes and references to:

Vineland United Mennonite Church
c/o Dave Gossen
4563 Cedarbrook Lane
Beamsville, ON
L0R 1B5
Phone: (905) 563-6482
E-mail: dgossen@sympatico.ca

Grace Mennonite Church, Regina SK is seeking a

YOUTH PASTOR

for a 40%-time position. Grace Mennonite is a dynamic, multi-cultural congregation. The youth pastor would work primarily in the area of planning and directing activities with our junior and senior youth, aided by a youth ministries committee, and working with our pastoral team.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit a resume and covering letter to:

The Church Council
Grace Mennonite Church
2935 Pasqua Street
Regina, SK S4S 2H4
E-mail: grace.mennonite@sasktel.net

Employment opportunity at Rest Haven Care Services Steinbach, MB for position of

CHAPLAIN (.8 EFT)

Responsibilities:

- Plan, develop, coordinate and conduct regular scheduled religious services for nursing home residents
- Plan and maintain a visitation program for nursing home residents and housing tenants
- Provide counselling or guidance to residents, tenants, family members, and employees

Qualifications:

- College degree in pastoral studies, clinical pastoral education, or equivalent work experience
- Must be able to communicate in Low German
- Must have an understanding of cognitively impaired geriatric residents
- Singing ability would be helpful
- Must agree with Rest Haven Care Services mission, vision and values
- Must agree with the statement of faith as outlined by the Evangelical Mennonite Conference

Application Deadline: July 10, 2004

Projected Start Date: July 28, 2004

Please apply to:

Director of Psychosocial Services
185 Woodhaven Ave;
Steinbach, MB
Phone: (204) 326-2206
Fax: 326-3521
Email: mrempel@sehealth.mb.ca

Successful applicants will be required to obtain (at their own expense) and submit a "Criminal Record Check and Child Abuse Registry" form prior to beginning employment. We thank all those who express interest in this position, however, only those invited for an interview will be contacted.



Christian Labour Association of Canada
 Benefit Administration Office

Due to the continued growth of CLAC's benefit plans, the Grimsby Benefit Administration Office is currently seeking a candidate for the following full-time position:

BENEFIT PLAN ADMINISTRATOR

The successful candidate will be a highly motivated self-starter and possess a degree in business administration or the equivalent. In addition, this individual will have excellent communication skills, both oral and written, as well as strong interpersonal skills. Preference will be given to those knowledgeable in the areas of finances, insurance and pension benefits. Knowledge of Microsoft Office (especially Word and Excel) and DataEase computer programs would be a definite asset. We offer a competitive salary and benefit package.

Applications should be addressed to:

Peter Van Duyvenvoorde, General Manager
CLAC Benefit Administration Office
89 South Service Rd, PO Box 219
Grimsby, ON L3M 4G3
Tel: (905) 945-1500
Fax: (905) 945-7200

Family & Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin has an opening for a

**CHILD PROTECTION WORKER
with Fluency in speaking Low German**

This is a permanent full time position within the Bargaining Unit, 35 hours per week. Duties include child protection investigations, ongoing work with children and families and work with children in care.

Applicants must have:

- A university degree in Social Work or a related field;
- Fluency in speaking Low German;
- Ability to work well in a team setting and in collaboration with other community services;
- Child and family assessment skills;
- A commitment to provide effective service to families and children;
- Proven organizational skills;
- Comfort in using the authority inherent in the child welfare mandate.

Proficiency with word processing is an asset.

Compensation \$45,898 - \$56,291. We offer a comprehensive benefits and vacation package. We also offer the opportunity of a compressed four day work week.

Please apply by July 9, 2004 in writing with a resume to:

Dawn Flegel
Manager, County Family Services
410 Sunset Drive
St. Thomas, ON N5R 3C7



MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ONTARIO
invites applications for the position of

DONOR RELATIONS COORDINATOR

This position requires a person with a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking. MCCO is seeking an individual with knowledge of MCC and the Ontario constituency, and fund-raising for not-for-profit organizations.

This 80% to full-time position is based in Kitchener. Application deadline is August 22, 2004. Inquiries and requests for applications may be directed to:

Cath Woolner
Mennonite Central Committee
50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
Phone: (519) 745-8458
E-mail: cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca

Unanswered questions

1. Why does the sun lighten our hair but darken our skin?
2. Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
3. Why don't you ever see the headline, "Psychic wins lottery?"
4. Why is "abbreviated" such a long word?
5. Why is it that doctors call what they do "practice?"
6. Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavour and dishwashing liquid with real lemons?
7. Why is the person who invests your money called a "broker?"
8. Why is the third hand on the watch called the second hand?
9. Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?

Announcements

MENNONITE TRUST LTD.
is pleased to announce

that **Mr. Wayne Harms** of the Saskatchewan Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has been appointed as Advisor of the Mennonite Trust Ltd. Board of Directors. Mr. Harms will be taking the position which was vacated by Mr. Ernest Block who has retired as Advisor. We look forward to working with Wayne as he assumes leadership in the Board. We would like to wish Ernest God's richest blessings as he continues to serve Him.

Spanish Jubilee Sunday school materials are now available at reduced prices. Also available is **Centered Teaching**, a supplement for adapting Jubilee to broadly-graded groups. To order, call Faith & Life Resources: 1-800-245-7894. Find Spanish materials pricing and a sample session of Centred Teaching at www.jubileeonline.org

**ABNER MARTIN
MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP**

Annual scholarship awarded by the Menno Singers to a fulltime student, graduate or undergraduate, who is affiliated with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

Applications must be mailed by September 15, 2004.

For application documents or further information contact:

Lewis Brubacher
16 Euclid Avenue
Waterloo, ON N2L 6L9
Phone: (519) 884-3072
Lbrubacher@sympatico.ca

For rent

MTS student and family looking for short-term rental housing in Waterloo area from August to Dec. Please phone Knocks at (519) 576-6256.

For sale

Tenders may be submitted for the purchase of the Wingham Mennonite Church building, 30 X 54 ft., including pews and pulpit, to be moved off the premises and the basement closed. Tenders will be accepted until July 31, 2004. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. For inspection phone Isaac @ (204) 436-2117, Jake @ 436-2572 or Fred @ 436-2521. Please submit sealed tender to:

Wingham Mennonite Church
c/o G. A. Rempel
RR 1 Elm Creek, MB
R0G 0N0

Canadian Mennonite

"Canadian Mennonite provides a vehicle for CMU to say what we need to say directly to the people of Mennonite Church Canada."

—Kevin Heinrichs,

Communications Director, CMU

Advertising Information

Barbara Burkholder
at:
1-800-316-4052

**advert@
canadianmennonite.org**

Friday Festival in the Park

Winnipeg, Man.—Mennonite Church Canada invites the community of Winkler and surrounding area to Friday Festival in the Park, a celebration of faith, family and friends, on July 9 from 3:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. in Winkler Park.

There will be activity stations, intergenerational activities, contests, music, a barbeque supper (\$10 per adult), an evening worship service and late-night concert featuring Manitoba's own Dry River Boys. Donations will go towards the support of international churches under political pressure.—MC Canada release

Second conference on martyrdom

Collegeville, Minn.—Mennonite and Catholic scholars will meet at Saint John's Abbey here July 26-28 to continue a study of martyrdom that began last year. The conference, "Sixteenth-century martyrdom in ecumenical perspective," will include plans for an ecumenical institute. The first conference, held last July at Saint John's, the largest Benedictine abbey in the world, was motivated by the dialogue, since 1998, between Mennonite World Conference and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Margaret O'Gara, a Catholic ecumenist who teaches theology at the University of Toronto, is a keynote speaker. Other speakers include Helmut Harder, Arnold Snyder, Peter Erb, John D. Roth, and Ivan Kauffman. Registration forms and further information is available at www.MartyrsConference.org.—From release by **Ivan Kauffman**

Study of quilt culture

Newton, Kan.—Marilyn Klaus and Sharon Sawatzky of Kansas are conducting the Mennonite Relief Sale Quilt Project to study the quilting culture of Mennonite and Amish women. They plan to examine how quilts have functioned as cultural expressions and how they reflect women's experience. They will ask how women organize to quilt for MCC, how younger women view the tradition and how things have changed over the years. Klaus and Sawatzky will visit relief sale quilting groups and sales. To participate in the study, visit the web site at www.quiltingculture.com, or write to Quilting Culture, 8848 Hirning Rd, Lenexa, KS USA 66220.—From report by **Melanie Zuercher**

Resource

Mennonite Central Committee has two new video resources: "Iraq: emerging voices" and "Child's view: Iraq/Noor lives near Nineveh." They depict a different Iraq than is shown in mainstream media—one of people and neighbourhoods. "Iraq: emerging voices" presents stories of ordinary Iraqis who express their hopes for self-determination and stability. It is geared to church groups and students, grade 9 to adult. (The DVD version contains "Child's view: Iraq/Noor lives near Nineveh" as well.) "Child's view: Iraq/Noor lives near Nineveh" is a slideshow on Iraq and a video on Afghanistan. It is the 12th in the "Child's View" video series, for kindergarten to grade 5. These can be ordered from MCC offices, phone toll free 1-888-622-6337.—From MCC

Search for new MCC director

Akron, Pa.—Ron Mathies, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee, will retire in summer 2005. A search committee has been selected to find a replacement. The committee is contacting a wide variety of partners and church leaders to find what qualities they believe are important for MCC's next director. "We hope to build on the strengths of the past but also look to what people envision being the work of the future," said committee chair Donella Clemens, from Pennsylvania. The committee expects to bring a recommendation to the MCC executive committee in January. The new director will begin in June.—From MCC release

Klassen offers cycling ministry

Abbotsford, B.C.—Earl Klassen, an accountant here, has turned his passion for cycling into a ministry. In 2001, after riding in cyclathons for 10 years, he began The Cycling Connection. The next year his ministry helped raise funds for 23 different groups. Any Christian ministry can apply to participate. The Cycling Connection takes care of food, jerseys, and a praise barbecue at the end of the ride. Klassen hopes future rides can will spread to the United States and beyond. More information can be found at <http://thecyclingconnection.com>—From report



Mennonite Central Committee's Mission Thrift Shop, one of nine in British Columbia, opened for business on June 15 in a new building one block west of the previous location. The new facility offers an extra 3,000 square feet of space. The 60 volunteers from 11 churches and the community have made the shop successful, said Mary Ann Taves, co-manager. The shop made \$156,000 in 2003. The shop also supports 11 local organizations. Last year, 107 Mission families received clothing, furniture and other household items.—From MCC B.C. 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: rcwiebe@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 in Mission retreat on "Prayer," with speaker Karen Heidebrecht-Thiessen.

October 22, 23, 29, 30: Mennonite Disaster Service informational evenings, at Willow Park MB Church, Kelowna (22), Sardis Community Church (23), King Road MB Church, Abbotsford (29), First United Mennonite, Vancouver (30), 7:00 p.m.

Alberta

October 15, 16, 17, 18: Community Justice Ministries celebrations with speaker Wayne Northey (M2W2 in B.C.), in Edmonton (15), Calgary (16), Rosemary (17), Didsbury (18).

Saskatchewan

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.

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.

November 5-6: MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting.

November 5-7: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah.

Manitoba

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 9: Festival in the Park for Mennonite Church Canada participants and community, in Winkler Park, 3:30 to 11:00 p.m. Includes barbecue, evening worship service, and late night concert with Dry River Boys.

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 21: MCC Manitoba golf tournament for Ukraine, at Quarry Oaks golf course in Steinbach.

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

July 18: UMEI Pancake Breakfast, 8:00 a.m. Service 10:00 a.m.

July 19: UMEI Watermelon Open.

August 8: Reesor Picnic at Backus Mill, Port Rowan. Worship 11:00 a.m. Phone Mary Wiebe at (519) 586-2986.

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 10-12: Building Community Retreat for persons with disabilities, at Hidden Acres Camp. Speaker: Irma Janzen. Call (519) 578-2608.

September 18: Relief sale at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

United States

July 26-28: Ecumenical conference on 16th-century martyrdom at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn. Visit www.martyrsconference.org.

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 number **Expiry date**

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Kathy Mennonite	
999 Menno St.	
WINNIPEG MB X0X 0X0	

- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)

3. 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

Waterloo, Ont

From bluegrass to Bach

At the Sound in the Land conference, a voice teacher argued that when we sing hymns, we are singing text—that without text it's just mushy. Soon after, a collection of poets intimated that when we sing together, we find meaning in the music itself. Finally, words and music get all “upjixed.”

Sound in the Land—a clever play on *die Stille im Lande* (quiet in the land)—gathered composers, conductors, hymnologists, musicologists, theologians, literary critics, poets and musicians—from turntablism to country to bluegrass to Bach—under one roof.

Papers of a decidedly academic nature, such as Judith Klassen's exploration of the television career of A.M. Friesen from Reinfeld Old Colony, rubbed shoulders with Mel Braun and Laura Loewen's workshop on arranging and singing hymns, with academics and musicians asking questions and singing along.

It was also the first meeting in which music Mennonites make in church was discussed in the same breath as music Mennonites make outside church, as sound-track composers, rock bands, and so on. In other words, the weekend was an unprecedented meeting of minds and voices.

A few moments stand out for me. One was Mary Oyer talking about the history of Mennonite singing and where it is going. It was magical to hear how our “sacred” texts were arrived at, with those who cobbled them together (among them George Wiebe and J. Harold Moyer) in the room listening.

Oyer thinks that increasing ethnic diversity and an expansion of musical styles won't necessarily mean a loss of four-part singing. Rather, diverse Mennonite churches can develop their own musical heritages and grow by learning new styles of music.

Another gem was listening to Irmgard Baerg and Cheryl Pauls of Winnipeg play the Mennonite Piano Concerto,



and realizing that listening to this concerto as a child was where I learned the *Kernlieder* (core hymns of the Russian Mennonite tradition), blue notes and all.

Added to this were the numerous conversations with teachers of mine—and with their teachers—and the sense that our Mennonite music tradition is changing and growing. Good thing someone is watching, talking about it and writing it down.

Carol Ann Weaver and Conrad Grebel University College are to be commended for this meeting. Sign me up for the next one.—**Jonathan Dueck**



Mel Braun of Winnipeg leads workshop participants at the Sound in the Land conference (see page 14). At right is JD Martin (a.k.a. Jerry Derstine) who wrote the well-known song, “Unity.”

Photo by Jennifer Konkle