

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

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Bible school reunion

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Seeking acts of God

I'm the kind of person who likes to read the instruction books for things I use. I still have manuals for those plastic kitchen gadgets and sandwich grillers that I seem to keep buying. After all, one never knows what kind of useful things might be hidden in all that small print, chocolate chips of knowledge in the cookie of life.

I was brought up short a few weeks ago reading just such an instruction manual. Shopping for a \$15 travel alarm clock at the Bay, I discovered that the manufacturer has no obligation to repair the clock if damage is due to, among other things, "acts of God."

I'm not used to seeing the reality of God acknowledged at all in secular society, let alone to have God be considered so present and powerfully active as to be recognized by a very ordinary alarm clock instruction booklet!

Now, I know that the phrase "acts of God" is standard legal boilerplate. There's a specific legal meaning for it: "An extraordinary interruption by a natural cause (as a flood or earthquake) of the usual course of events that experience, prescience, or care cannot reasonably foresee or prevent" (this one is from Merriam-Webster's dictionary).

Acts of God supersede human acts. Acts of God interrupt the normal course of our everyday lives in extraordinary and unstoppable ways.

That God is seen as active at all in the language of contracts and commerce is a remnant of our society's now-past Christendom era. Law.com wryly notes that "Many insurance policies exempt coverage for damage caused by acts of God, which is one time an insurance company gets religion." But within that stock phrase in the small type is a very important truth, one which we must not forget.

The superficial assumptions made by the statement are

also what Christians assert as profound and eternal truths. God is not only real and living, but also—praise God!—vitaly engaged with us and our world through an ongoing relationship, a relationship that stretches from our most ancient past to our most distant future.

Acts of God are extraordinary interruptions in our daily lives. However, if we just open our eyes to them, I think we will find they are much more common than we might have believed, for acts of God are far more than natural disasters.

As he did with so much conventional wisdom of his day, Jesus turned the logic of weather as punishment on its head. He preached in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."

From the superlative act of God that was Jesus, we learn one appropriate response to God's action: loving our enemies and praying for those who would harm us. One breaking through of God gives birth to another and another, in a waterfall of faithfulness and blessing.

A faithful church is constantly experiencing acts of God—whether the life changing experiences in AMBS's !Explore program for youth, the food and shelter many of us are helping MCC provide those suffering from flooding in India or fleeing violence and death in Sudan, the Vacation Bible School programs wrapping up across the country, or in the many ways God touches us individually in worship and prayer. I hope you will share many of them with each other in these pages in the years to come.

God is eternally active in seeking us. Seek out those acts, but also seek to bring them about.—**Timothy Dyck**

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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 Sept. 20 issue by Sept. 16.

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Photo by Tammy Sawatzky.

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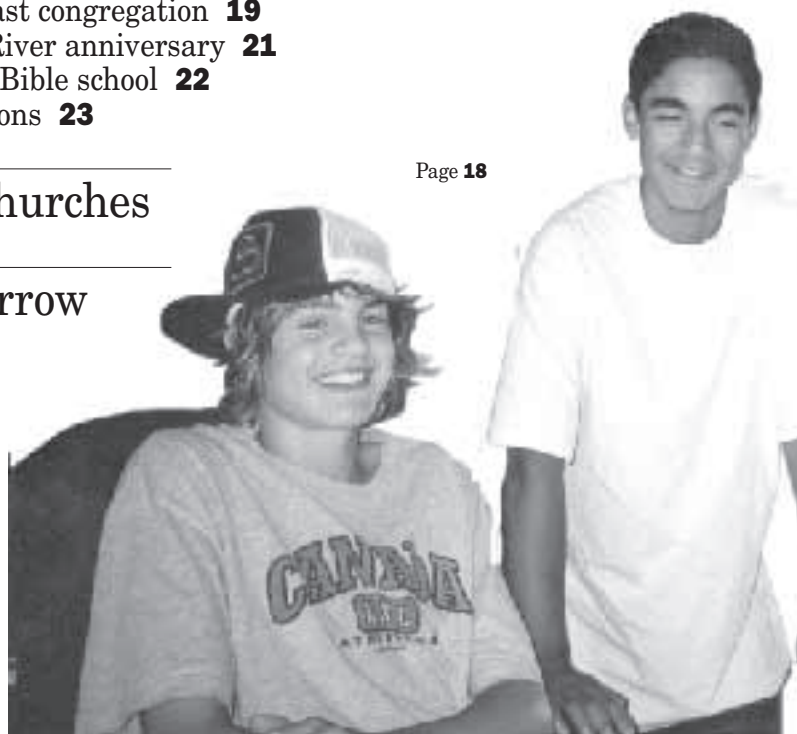
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Saskatoon, Sask.

TV reporter reflects on his profession

It's election day in Canada, and I'm sitting in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation offices in Saskatoon. The walls are lined with impressive-looking awards. To my left is a television camera next to a large window. To my right, a man speaks in rapid-fire French; his colleague answers in kind.

Welcome to the world of Chris Epp, a CBC reporter in Saskatchewan. Epp files between 250 and 300 stories a year. When he's not doing interviews, he travels to Toronto for training and more work.

Epp, 28, talks about the tension of long hours and little downtime.

"You don't know when your day will end," he says. Work often continues into the evening with phone calls and plans for the next day's stories. His job, he says, is consuming.

There are other challenges. Who wants to talk to a someone who is standing in front of a large video cam?

"There is a stigma attached to being a reporter," Epp says. People are distrustful of the media. Journalists are often perceived to be unethical and editors rely on sensationalism to sell papers or boost ratings. Epp dismisses those stereotypes.

"I've seen how much agonizing goes into making sure everything's clear," he says, pointing to the code of ethics he has to follow. "A lot of integrity, a lot of thought, goes into what we do."

"In my field, mistakes or dishonesty are seen by thousands of people," he notes. "A mistake causes more than hurt feelings—it causes lawsuits."

Journalism, Epp admits, is not the usual choice for someone from his background. He was raised in Didsbury, Alberta, a rural community. He attended grades 11 and 12 at Rosthern Junior College, and then studied theology and political science at Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

A stint in radio propelled him to study journalism at Ryerson University in Toronto. He has moved from the



Chris Epp sees integrity in media journalism, despite the cynicism.

business beat in Toronto to agriculture stories in Saskatchewan. He has interviewed baseball greats for "Sports Journal" and did a story for Hockey Night in Canada two years ago.

Does he cover stories differently as a Mennonite?

"No.... It's imperative that neither my religion nor my politics colour the way I cover a story," he says. "That being said, I'm probably drawn to certain stories because of my background." A piece that involved his interest in theology and political science was a mini-documentary he did about pastors who go into politics.

"I've never been in a position where I see [faith and work] at odds with each other," he says. But journalism, he admits, is a cynical profession with little room for religion. He himself is cynical about the justice system and the way government operates.

Is working for the CBC different from working with other media?

Yes, there's a difference, he says. Since the CBC is publicly funded, the show goes on with or without good

ratings. Sponsors do not influence agenda. The corporation strives for excellence without pressure to bow to the standards of others.

"I believe CBC has the best journalistic reputation in the country," he says.

Christians don't often choose journalism as a career, he notes. Fewer Christians in the business means less faith-based fellowship. And being on call on Sundays, not to mention the long hours the rest of the week, offers few chances to connect with a church community.

In the midst of all that, Epp says it's nice to remember his other self—the person raised in a Mennonite home and church. Because of his upbringing, Epp is drawn to particular stories.

"I always enjoy doing stories that revolve around religious issues."

—From report by **Karin Fehderau**

Winnipeg, Man.

Short-term service leads to mission in Italy

A couple with a passion for Italy, a supportive pastor and congregation, and a new relationship with a sister mission agency have combined to create a new ministry for Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Jason and Donna Martin, from Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ontario, have been doing “friendship evangelism and church planting” in Bari, Italy, since November 2001 with Virginia Mennonite Mission Board. This summer, Jason was ordained by his congregation. The couple will return to Italy in early September.

What brought them to Italy was a series of short-term mission stints and a sense that God was calling them to work longer term.

Missional church thinking motivated Community Mennonite Fellowship to seek a partnership with Mennonite Church Canada Witness. The congregation wanted to broaden its mission and church connections.

“It’s exciting to be able to respond to a congregation’s vision for ministry in a way that both strengthens and enables it,” said Janet Plenert, executive director of MC Canada’s International Ministries.

Mennonites have been involved in Italy since 1949 through the Virginia mission board. There are six congregations in Sicily and a few emerging on the mainland.

Jason was inspired by short-term mission experiences in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Albania. An experience in Ukraine cemented his dream.

“Seeing how ‘ordinary’ missionaries were...recognizing that they weren’t superhuman Christians but that even I could be one” gave Jason confidence to move forward. He has long sensed a calling to Italy and is intrigued by its culture and language.

Donna’s passion was for Latino people, having participated in short-term assignments in Belize and Brazil. Common to both, however, was their experience at Community Mennonite Fellowship.

“Willard Metzger [pastor] has

played a significant role in both our lives in discipleship,” said Donna. Despite not knowing any workers in Italy, the couple found themselves preparing for a 10-month period of discernment in Bari.

A two-year pastoral internship for Jason in Canada, and challenges in getting a religious service visa did not subdue their zeal, and they returned in 2001. They raise the bulk of their financial support, with help from their congregation, the Virginia mission board, and now, MC Canada Witness.

Although Italy is a first-world nation like Canada, “there is a great spiritual void there,” observes Jason. “People are

fed up with organized religion. They want to see a personal God, and we believe through our relationships we can offer that to them.”

The couple recognizes that transforming lives is not only about tallying saved souls. “We don’t see the people as a project. We want to treat them as people and love them.”

The Martins have three children—Emily, age seven; Sara, six; and Luca, three. They invite guests to visit them in Bari. They also invite prayers. Contributions for their ministry can be sent to Mennonite Church Canada Witness.—From MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**



Donna (left), Luca, Sara, Emily and Jason Martin are mission workers in Italy.

Akron, Pa.

Peace theology papers available on the web

An August 1-4 conference here was entitled “Seeking the welfare of the city: Public peace, justice and order.” Organized by Mennonite Central Committee, the event brought together 86 people at the MCC headquarters.

Participants shared perspectives on peace theology from various vocations—social workers, lawyers, theologians, teachers and pastors. Papers examined pacifism in an age of terrorism, as well as nonviolence and human security. Participants from Colombia and Indonesia looked at Mennonites in conflict situations. The friction between work and religious ideals was the subject of several papers by lawyers.

Many papers from the conference are available on the MCC website at www.mcc.org/peacetheology/papers.htm.—From MCC release

Youth explore God's call in new seminary program

Fifteen young people gathered at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary from July 15 to August 1 for the first !Explore. The program encourages high school youth to investigate leadership in the church. Canadian Mennonite asked the four Canadian participants for their responses. See also back cover.

A few years ago I began hearing rumours about a seminary program for youth interested in ministry. It sounded exciting.

After what felt like a lengthy application process, some church meetings and two airplane rides, I arrived at the seminary with 14 other apprehensive youth. Our nervousness lasted all of five minutes until we started talking to each other.

After a few days at Amigo Centre camp doing team-building activities, we went to Chicago where we spent six days doing service work in the community. We definitely learned more than we taught.

At the seminary we took classes ranging from biblical texts and turnaround strategies for small churches to gender issues and practical ministry skills. After six intense

days of all-day classes and late-night talks, we returned to camp for debriefing and group time.



The highlight of the trip was people. Here we were—a group of youth from all over North America who shared a deep love for God and commitment to the church. We were able to talk for hours about our churches, and

struggles we face growing up Mennonite.

Part of our assignment was to pick a theological issue to explore over the summer. Topics included women in leadership, wealth and consumerism, tradition in the church, homosexuality and the politics of Jesus. We challenged each other, shared stories, laughed and cried, and prayed for one other.

We talked about things that we were proud of in our denomination: our respect for leadership, love of peace, and a wonderful sense of community. We shared our frustration at not always being taken seriously in the church, and not knowing how to balance tradition with culture. We discussed what it meant to be a leader and joked about being gifted.

I don't think any of us know exactly where God is calling us, but we came away feeling encouraged and supported. And we made new friends that we could share our journey with.

!Explore was lots of fun, but more than that, it was a chance to see that God is working in the youth of today. It was a chance to be motivated and challenged.—**Gabrielle Plenert, Winnipeg, Man.**



Learning about tradition and community

It began with a phone call from my pastor. Even though my summer was booked, I sent my application in and left it to God to decide if I got accepted into the !Explore program. Sure enough, it was God's will that I go.

What attracted me most was that we would learn about Anabaptist history. I've always been interested in why traditions are the way they are. I had never been to Indiana, and to meet 14 young people from all over North America also attracted me.

We did some awesome work during our 18-day program. The first three days at Amigo Centre, isolated from the world and its distractions, we began to form close relationships through team-building activities, late-night games and conversations.

Arthur Boers taught us about different kinds of prayer: *lectio divina*, prayer of awareness, physical prayer, consciousness prayer and the daily

office. I now practice them on my own.

In Chicago, groups of five worked in different settings with the DOOR program. One day, my group went to a home for women and children. We gave the kids piggyback rides and played outside with them.

One girl, around age eight, was bossy and controlling. Later, we saw her sucking her thumb. It struck me that she hadn't been able to grow up in a good family or community. I couldn't imagine spending my childhood here.

The kids loved the attention and many asked if we were coming back. It broke my heart to tell them that we weren't.

Classes at the seminary included preaching, leading worship, communion and Revelation. I found communion especially interesting. One question was whether communion could be taken by baptized people only, or by anyone. The group was divided in half to debate the issue, to help us understand the choices congregations make.

My church back home has grapes for those not yet baptized. Just as grapes become wine, we have

faith that those who have not yet made a decision for baptism will do so one day. I believe this is a good solution that includes everyone in the service.

A few things I've done in the congregation include visitation, organizing fundraisers for youth missions, being a leader on the youth's mission trip and sharing with the congregation what God is doing in my life.

I enjoy working with the church and using the gifts God has given me. My hope is to be open to where God is leading me.—**Carolyn Klassen, Vancouver, B.C.**



Andy Brubacher-Kaethler (left) with !Explore participant Thomas Epp.

Youth called to !Explore

!Explore is a summer program that encourages high school youth to explore a possible call to church leadership. The program was launched by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Indiana this summer, directed by Andy Brubacher Kaethler.

The program includes:

- Focus on leadership development and spiritual disciplines
- Urban experience with focus on ministry and theological issues
- Introduction to seminary life and pastoral ministry
- 100 hours of ministry in participants' home congregation over the summer with their pastors
- Reflection paper on ministry experience.

In their 18 days together this summer, the 15 youth spent six days at a camp, six days in Chicago in urban ministry, and six days in and around the AMBS campus. Participants are eligible for summer stipends and for scholarships if they enrol in a Mennonite college or university. More information is available by e-mailing: explore@ambs.edu or phoning (574) 296-6225.—From AMBS releases

A life-changing summer experience

My "exploration" started on January 9 with an e-mail from Ruth Bruinooge, my youth pastor. At first, I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a part of the program because it would take me away from my summer job at Camp Moose Lake.

Continued on page 8

I realized that the church will never be stagnant. Certainly, we have our traditions, but many theological issues keep challenging our beliefs as Mennonites. Throughout the 18-day program, I was continually challenged to think about many issues....

!Explore *From page 7*

After consideration and some forceful arm-twisting from family and friends at church, I applied. Little did I know I was about to take part in a life-changing experience.

I was continually amazed by the people I worked with. In Chicago, I volunteered in a soup kitchen with men whose testimonies seemed amazing in comparison to mine. I learned that God is indeed a good God who wants everyone as his child.

My favourite part of the program was not learning about “Creation in the Old Testament” or “How to preach effectively”—although the classes were mostly interesting—but rather the social interaction within our group of 15 young people.

It kept surprising me to see how much we had in common. It was nice to know that others enjoy zwiebach, borscht and platz. It was comforting to know other youth struggle with the same issues I deal with.


I realized that the church will never be stagnant. Certainly, we have our traditions, but many theological issues keep challenging our beliefs as Mennonites. Throughout the 18-day program, I was continually challenged to think about many issues, some of which I never thought were a problem.

My congregational work at Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg has been a great experience. I helped lead the junior youth group on a four-day Winnipeg Urban Plunge. Leading our congregation in worship, preparing a sermon



and making hospital visits have given me a good look at pastoral ministry.

I have been blessed this summer. I hope I can use some of what I’ve learned to be a leader in the Mennonite church in some way. Only God, however, knows for certain what is in store for my life, but I trust he will lead me into more amazing experiences.—**Thomas Epp, Winnipeg, Man.**


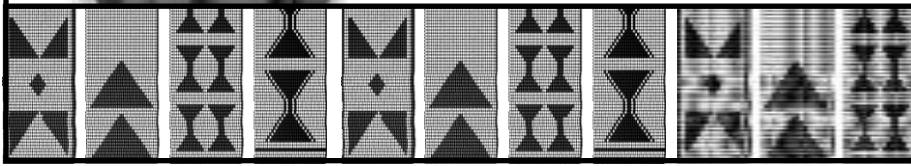


The Global Family Resource Box

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Great for elementary teachers.

To order this Resource Box:
In Canada call 888-622-6337.
In the United States call 888-563-4676.

Which Christianity?

Many Christians have eagerly embraced Mel Gibson's *The Passion*, a movie that has grossed well over \$600 million since it was released on Ash Wednesday. Now Christian groups are cashing in on the success by promoting the video.

One of those marketing the video is Kingdom Ventures, a U.S. media company that sells "articles that offer a Biblical Worldview." In a July 19



release, the company offered this startling statement: "The success of *The Passion* is part of a...rising tidal wave of Americans who are deciding to

make a financial statement by supporting those companies and products that reflect their way of life."

Presumably, the fact that this movie is about Jesus automatically ties it to a Christian "way of life."

Much has been made of Gibson's Roman Catholic faith. Many critics have observed, however, that *The Passion* is a highly personal vision, springing from a medieval spirituality and an obsession with blood. The focus is on Jesus' tortured death, not the meaning of his life.

Another movie by a Roman Catholic currently reaping millions at the box office has received a markedly different response from many Christians. *Fahrenheit 9/11*, a documentary by Michael Moore denouncing the U.S. response to terrorism, has been widely condemned as unpatriotic and untrue, and was banned in several states.

"I come from the other extreme of the Catholic church," commented Moore. His films are passionate critiques of the violence and imperialism at the heart of American life. Gibson, on the other hand, has made his living perpetuating the American myth of redemptive violence in movies such as *Lethal Weapon* and *The Patriot*.

Moore has stated that he is motivated by two beliefs: 1) that we will be judged by what we do to "the least of these" in society; and 2) that things can change; in other words, we can make a difference. For him, that means making hard-hitting documentaries that expose the ills of contemporary society.

One Canadian Catholic periodical called Moore the "most effective social

justice Catholic in America."

The two filmmakers share many similarities. Both Gibson and Moore are idiosyncratic, daring filmmakers, driven by personal passion. And both are extremely clever promoters of their own work. And both are shaped by Christianity, but with vastly different results.—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

Arts notes

Movie on DVD

The Radicals, a movie featuring the story of Michael and Margaretha Sattler and the origins of the Anabaptist movement, is available on DVD from Mennonite Church USA's Historical Committee. The movie was produced on location in Europe in 1989 by Sisters & Brothers, a group of Mennonite filmmakers. It won a CINE Golden Eagle award in 1990 and a silver medal at the Houston Film Festival. The DVD includes a Spanish track and teaching aids, and a condensed version suitable for younger children. It is available for \$29.99. Phone toll-free 866-866-2872 or go to www.mcusa-archives.org.—From MC USA release

Video award

"Iraq: Emerging Voices," a video produced by Mennonite Central Committee in 2003, won a CINE Golden Eagle Award this spring. The 21-minute video features interviews with Baghdad residents two months after the U.S.-led invasion and the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Golden Eagle Awards recognize excellence in filmmaking; other recipients included major television networks and media companies. "MCC tries to produce videos that have journalistic value and good production value," said Cheryl Zook, the producer. "It's nice to receive this kind of positive feedback from the professional community."—MCC release

Publishing notes

The logo and writers for the new Sunday school curriculum, "Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News," have been selected. Among the seven writers are Rebecca Seiling of Ontario and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld of Alberta.



"The sample sessions are creative and reflect solid Anabaptist theology and strong pedagogy," said Eleanor Snyder of Mennonite Publishing Network, a partner in the curriculum with Brethren Press. Bible background pieces will be written by biblical scholars Robert W. Neff from Pennsylvania and Michael McKeever from Illinois. The curriculum, for ages 2 to 14, will begin in September 2006.—From Mennonite Publishing Network

Letters

Love missing in assembly response

I firmly believe that as a church and conference we need to hear Jesus' words: "Thereby shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another."

I felt that such an element of love was missing towards the delegation from Rosemary at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly this summer. I sensed a deep concern in their resolution asking for a clearer voice from MC Canada, and that they were looking for clarification from our biblical Mennonite faith. Their resolution was quickly tabled.

We are a community of believers who care for each other. When a proposal comes to the floor we are asked to consider it uncritically and "in love." Yet when this resolution concerning basic matters of faith came to the floor it seemed to receive rather shoddy treatment and was not pursued compassionately.

I felt that the Rosemary delegation deserved better treatment. Will assembly leaders pursue a discussion with them in order to draw together rather than push aside?

I did appreciate various reports and was especially taken by the Witness report of mission activities on such an extensive scale. Much Great Commission work is taking place. For us nearing our 80s, there were so many dear friends who greeted us, even though we are not regular attendees of

these events anymore.

Do keep up the good work but do so in love for all who raise concerns. Fair treatment is every member's due—that makes for a healthy body.

—Elizabeth Enns, Winnipeg, Man.

Editor's note: Elizabeth Enns wrote her letter (above) to both *Canadian Mennonite* and Mennonite Church Canada. Dan Nighswander sent the following report on MC Canada's response to date.

Elizabeth Enns has shared her concerns about delegate responses to the resolution presented by the Rosemary church. I was personally impressed by the respect shown by delegates who were careful to state both what they affirmed and what they disagreed with in it.

To address her question about further discussion "in order to draw together rather than push aside," I am happy to report that I and others at the assembly talked with the Rosemary delegates with exactly that intention. Our moderator, Henry Krause, has written a letter to the congregation in which he affirms parts of their resolution and invites discussion about other parts. We sincerely hope that the congregation, and others who share their concerns, will engage in conversation with us and with congregations that hold other views.

—Dan Nighswander, MC Canada General Secretary

Church well-positioned to pressure Israel

I was pleased to note the report on the decision by Presbyterian Church USA to divest itself from companies that invest in Israel (Aug. 2, page 33). For Palestinians, and for us in the Palestine support movement, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa points the way forward. The apartheid regime was undone only when divestment, especially North American divestment, became a mainstream concern and resulted in enormous economic pressure on South Africa.

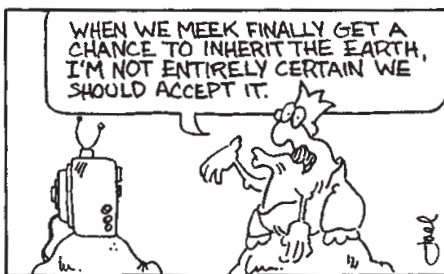
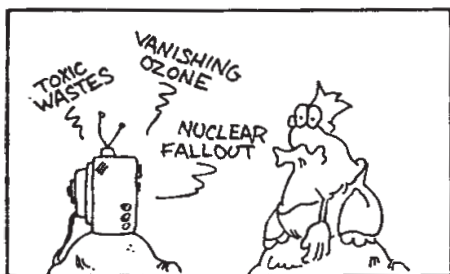
Significantly, the end of apartheid did not bring the slaughter, expected by many white South Africans, of former rulers by the oppressed population.

Christians and their churches took a leading role in that struggle, as they are now in the struggle against apartheid in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Israeli apartheid, represented so hideously by the enormous wall Israel is building on Palestinian lands—effectively creating the world's largest prison—affects both Palestinians and Israelis, albeit unequally.

We must help both peoples end this nightmare. Mennonite organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, together with Christian Peacemaker Teams in which Mennonites are prominent, are already well represented in the West Bank and Gaza, providing food and medical aid and human-rights monitoring.

The Mennonite church—which self-identifies as a "peace church"—is well positioned to join with Presbyterian Church USA in taking up the lead in divestment from Israel.

Pontius' Puddle



This section is a forum for discussion and discernment. Letters express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily that of *Canadian Mennonite* or the church. We publish most letters, unless they attack individuals or become unnecessarily repetitious. See page 2 for address information.

The only choice in this movement is between leading and following.—**Ed Janzen, Winnipeg, Man.**

Don't minimize needs of Old Colony community

While exaggerations occurred in the *Saturday Night* article on Old Colony Mennonites and the drug trade, it would be wise not to underestimate the problems within this group. (See May 3 article and subsequent letters, such as in Aug. 2 issue.)

It has become a predictable pattern to have someone describe the needs among the Old Colony Mennonites and then read the letters in defence of their beliefs and way of life.

This has led not only to confusion about the real state of affairs in Mexico and Bolivia, and among returnees to North America, but has undermined efforts to encourage positive change.

It is seldom noted, for example, that the birth rate within many of the

colonies is still so high that they will always be short of land and condemned to poverty. The groups who left Canada in the early 1920s have grown from about 7,000 to about 150,000—a doubling of their numbers about every 15 years.

If Canada and the United States had not provided a safety valve for this growth, many in Latin America would be far worse off, an irony since they left Canada to escape the “world” it represented.

Furthermore, some leaders forbid any engagement with people outside the colonies. The *Steinbach Post* reported last winter that dozens in Bolivia had been excommunicated by the church for going to work for non-Mennonites. Relationships with other Christians have always been treated with suspicion by many Old Colony leaders. While this is changing, it remains a heavy weight in many places.

It is striking that while 40,000 colonists (according to David Quiring in *Mennonite Old Colony Vision*) have come back to Canada and the U.S., a

large percentage of these are not found in any church. Part of the reason is the strong teaching they've grown up with that to join elsewhere is to be damned to hell.

Colonies are not providing young people with healthy activities. Even Bible studies are opposed in some colonies. In Bolivia, attempts to begin co-ops or a credit union were opposed by church leaders. In their efforts to control their members, leaders too often resort to harsh approaches.

Large numbers of Old Colony people are hardworking, honest, and deeply sincere about their faith. But many thousands are also hugely disadvantaged—poor, illiterate, fearful of any change, convinced that God is a harsh taskmaster.

We need to find a respectful way of engaging the Old Colony leadership in an exchange that can lead to change at every level. Only if leaders change will real change happen among the many who live under their control. To minimize the needs only hinders the changes that need to happen.—**Harold Jantz, Winnipeg, Man.**

Is talking overrated?

“Anything more to say?” my husband generously queried after a tedious argument.

“Much,” I thought in frustration, dismally aware that my words were not having the desired effect. I pondered the likelihood that more words would lead only to more deadlock.

I looked into his eyes while right(eous) phrases marched through my mind. I assessed each response as unhelpful or potentially inflammatory, and discarded it. Continuing to search his eyes for clues about his thoughts, I saw or imagined affection, guardedness, fear, openness, tension, light.

After a long, wordless pause, he smiled and said, “That sounds good.” I smiled in return.

Such an experience leads me to question whether talking it out is always the best strategy. Nonverbal communication—what we convey without words—makes up 80 to 90 percent of the messages we send. Maybe there is value in going the extra 10 to 20 percent to see how nonverbal communication would affect dynamics.

I exaggerate, of course, but there's a point here. My friend Carolyn and her

husband Carmen concluded some time ago that they wouldn't solve all their problems by talking.

“You have an unfair advantage,” Carmen said. “It would be like playing hockey to resolve the conflict.”

Often there is a gender dynamic. Women, both because of socialization and apparently because of well-developed brain cells that control language, are often more skilled than men at expressing and

Family Ties

Melissa Miller



interpreting language, especially when it relates to emotions.

Such generalizations, however, need to be held lightly, for both men and women have the capacity to use language to communicate compassionately and respectfully, or to hammer and hurt.

When considering how to use words and

silence, the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12 comes to mind. In that discussion, different gifts of church members are noted. Using the metaphor of a body, Paul reminds us that each ability or function has its place in contributing to the wellness of the body.

Perhaps some people have the gift of words and others the gift of silence; still others may have the gift of touch, or forgiveness, or lightheartedness. Perhaps we can find ways of honouring a range of gifts.

Jesus said that the truth will set us free. Perhaps words offer one facet of truth, and actions another. Maybe even silence carries with it a truth that can set us free.

For a talker like me, that's a startling concept, close to heresy. I even fear that some will misinterpret me and claim silence is preferable to talk, even golden.

Which is not what I'm saying. Still, I can begin to see where fewer or no words could allow more space for the gift of silence to glow. I'm going to go ponder that thought—silently.—**Melissa Miller**

The writer is a counsellor, author and teacher living in Winnipeg. She is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church.

Winnipeg, Man.

MCC joins appeal to change refugee system

Mennonite Central Committee Canada has joined eight Canadian churches in seeking changes to Canada's refugee system.

An August 13 letter to Immigration Minister Judy Sgro responds to her July comment that churches should cease to provide sanctuary to people whose refugee claims have been rejected by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

"We agree with you that sanctuary is not a solution," wrote church leaders. "The solution is in having a refugee determination system that is just, open, expeditious, and treats people equally. In particular, we encourage you to implement the Appeal Division as contained in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act" passed in 2001.

In certain cases, however, sanctuary

can represent a faithful response to the church's calling.

"In taking such a step," said the letter, "the churches have been motivated by the Christian ideal of love for one's neighbour, noting that people who flee persecution are among our most vulnerable 'neighbours.'"

In fact, there are fewer than a dozen cases of churches providing sanctuary. In most cases, churches do so only if convinced that the rejected refugee claimant faces a risk of death if forced to return home.

The church leaders asked that the government allocate more resources for overseas sponsorship which allows churches and other private groups to bring refugees to Canada. This avenue is seriously hindered by limited resources.

"We also note your statement that

Canada's number one concern is to protect Canadians," said the letter. "In fact, Canada's efforts to embrace refugees are in the interests of both Canadian and global human security."

The letter noted the churches' long history of relief and development work in areas of crisis, and their more than three decades of involvement in helping to sponsor refugees to Canada.

Church leaders hope to meet with the minister in early fall.

The letter was signed by Donald Peters, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada, along with leaders from the Presbyterian, Friends, Anglican, United, Lutheran, Catholic and Christian Reformed churches.—From MCC Canada release



MCC photo

Families leave flooded areas in the Sirajganj area of Bangladesh. Summer floods covered some 60 percent of the country, adding to the disaster of an April 14 tornado that killed 69 people in the north-central area of the country. See also page 25.

Winnipeg, Man.

MCC prepares major aid for Sudan

Mennonite Central Committee is preparing a \$6.1 million aid package for victims of violence in western and central Sudan. Together with the Sudan Council of Churches, MCC is providing food, blankets, survival kits, school kits, shelters and other aid.

An MCC assessment team travelled to the region in late July. They found tens of thousands of people without adequate food or shelter when they visited four camps in the Darfur region of western Sudan.

The United Nations estimates that attacks by roving militias have killed 50,000 civilians and displaced more than a million more.

The most significant aspect of

The United Nations estimates that attacks by roving militias have killed 50,000 civilians and displaced more than a million more.

MCC's response is a 4,500 metric ton food shipment, worth \$4.5 million, which will be sent to Sudan via the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

MCC is also appealing for 100,000 blankets and 6,830 school kits for Darfur, as well as \$700,000 for local purchase of supplies and trauma training for teachers. A portion of survival kits and blankets will be distributed to people in central Sudan who have been displaced by a separate conflict.

Donations designated "Sudan Emergency Assistance" can be sent to MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9. To donate online, visit www.mcc.org.
—From MCC Canada release

Austin, Texas

South Central joins wider church with two-vote process

South Central Conference decided to become a full member of Mennonite Church USA in a two-vote process during its assembly July 16-18.

In the first vote, delegates gave 90 percent approval to move from provisional to full membership. In a second vote, delegates approved by 95 percent the direction set by the first vote.

"We wanted to provide a process that was based more on discernment than percentages," said moderator Heber Ramer. This process "made it more of a group consensus and affirmation."

Four questions for discernment were included in the second vote, including "What do we want to say to the 10 percent?" and "What do we want to say to Mennonite Church USA?"

Robert Nolt, conference minister, was delighted with the outcome. "It's the fruit of a lot of dialogue in the last three years," he said.

A week after Nolt began his conference position in 2001, delegates voted only 54 percent in favour of full membership in MC USA. A motion to withdraw gained only 37 percent. Several congregations withdrew.

Nolt and other leaders helped the remaining 47 congregations talk about concerns such as homosexuality and set future direction. Dialogue meetings helped to build trust.

"These meetings helped tremendously," said Ramer. "We grapple with economic survival, the flight of our children out of rural areas.... We explored what it would mean for us not to be a part of the larger church. Put in that light, it became clearer how being part of the larger church will help us find leaders, bring teaching resources and help us biblically discern our direction in the context of the larger community."

Part of gaining a solid identity includes integrating the growing Hispanic constituency. Of 105 delegates at assembly, 25 were from Hispanic congregations.

"I got a glimpse of a new reformation in process and identity," said Jim Schrag, executive director of MC USA.—From MC USA release



Akim Kambaba (left), executive director of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Program, presents a \$2,000 cheque to Daniel Lepp-Friesen (right) and Willie Reimer of Mennonite Central Committee. Half of the money was raised by Winnipeg's 1,500-member Sudanese community, and the other half was donated by other Canadians. The money is for aid to displaced people in Darfur, Sudan. Lepp-Friesen is director of MCC Manitoba; Reimer is director of Food, Disaster and Material Resource Handling for MCC.—From MCC

Recife, Brazil

AIDS patients find help in Brazil

Fernando da Silva was fired from his trucking company when facial sores betrayed what he wasn't ready to admit: he had AIDS. The doctor told him, "Go home and wait." His mother told him not to tell anyone.

"It was something so awful and ugly that I was supposed to say nothing about it," Da Silva says. "For four or five years I was totally closed off."

Da Silva, 39, owes his current health and well-being to ASAS, an AIDS organization that Mennonite Central Committee supports. Da Silva learned from ASAS how to get government benefits and proper treatment. He received information and food, and met others with the disease.

Hopelessness and discrimination are common for AIDS victims even in Brazil, often seen as a model in its efforts to prevent and treat the disease. The Brazilian government provides drugs at no cost.

But patients say that they have other needs. ASAS provides pastoral



de Oliveira

and psychological counselling. The organization, begun in 1992 by a group of Christians, now serves 86 people with AIDS, does AIDS prevention education in churches and schools, and runs a food bank and income-generation program.

MCC has worked with ASAS since its beginning and awarded it a grant of about \$40,000 in June through its Generations at Risk program.

Cristiano Maximiano de Oliveira, a pastor at one of Recife's two Mennonite churches, is helping with AIDS by educating about the disease. Too often, he says, these people are ostracized.

"A lot of times when someone goes to their pastor and says they have AIDS, the pastor announces it in church," he said.

Last August, de Oliveira attended Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe, and spoke about AIDS in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. MCC sponsored his trip.



Photo by Matthew Lester

Rosane Carneiro da Silva, who worked as a domestic before she got AIDS, makes carnival masks as part of an income-generation project at ASAS in Recife, Brazil. The masks are sold as far away as Holland.

"The church should be the place that loves and accepts people as they are," De Oliveira said. "When the church doesn't do this, then God raises up people in other places to love those that need to be loved."—From MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Recife, Brazil

Loans for neighbourhood businesses in Brazil

As a loan officer, Hildjane Soares Silva does business in an unlikely place—the poor neighbourhood of Janga, on the outskirts of Recife. Her clients work in low brick houses and corner stores, next to dirt streets where children shoot marbles. During the rainy season, flooding slows traffic to a crawl.

"The job market is very difficult," says Silva, who works as a credit coordinator for FRAME, a small-loan program started by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) seven years ago.

FRAME, which in Portuguese stands for "Rotating Fund of Micro-Entrepreneurs," is helping to create jobs by giving very small businesses the chance

to borrow and grow. Clothing sellers, bakers, hair stylists and shopkeepers in Janga apply for loans from FRAME at less than half the going rate, starting with about \$175

Saulo Cruz first borrowed from FRAME to buy a hair dryer and other



Photo by Matthew Lester

Hildjane Soares Silva of FRAME talks business with Moab Albino de Santana in his store in the Janga neighbourhood of Recife.

South Bend, Ind.

U.S. consultation encourages interchurch connections

The 35 participants at a recent interchurch relations consultation agreed that it's time to seek new relationships with other Christian traditions.

The consultation, sponsored by Mennonite Church USA, was held here July 13-15. Pastors, theologians, educators, and representatives of peace groups considered how to seek greater understanding with Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox groups.

It will mean airing differences, and sharing strengths and weaknesses. It will mean promoting mutual growth in theological understandings and dreaming of future joint efforts in peacemaking and evangelism, said participants.

"Jesus' calling for unity in John 17 is an imperative to be obeyed and not something we do only if we feel like it," said Al Meyer, volunteer director for Mennonite Church USA interchurch relations.

One panel discussion included members of other traditions, including Methodist theologian Stanley Hauerwas, evangelical publisher Rodney Clapp, Catholic theologian David Burrell and Baptist ethicist Glen Stassen.

"Michael Sattler looks kind of simple next to Martin Luther, but that is part of the genius [of Anabaptism],"

equipment for his hair salon, and he paid it off in eight months. Cruz and his wife, Maria Luiza de Oliveira, are now paying back their second loan, for a freezer she uses to sell ice popsicles in her adjoining candy store.

Cruz says FRAME is well known in neighbourhood churches. He found out about FRAME through his Evangelical Baptist Church, where more than a few of his clients end up.

"In my church there are eight deacons, and four of them were converted right here," he says.

FRAME became legally separate from MCC in 2002 and is on track to be financially independent in four years. It has two other credit coordinators, and serves more than 400 clients.—From MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

said Hauerwas. "Your focus on the commitment to the unity of the church, nonviolence and Jesus as the centre of all you do and say are the things you bring to ecumenical life."

Stassen, who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary, encouraged Mennonites to choose Pentecostals as dialogue partners.

"Pentecostals...follow Jesus and don't have a thick exegesis but simply say, 'Here's what it means to follow him,'" he said. "They began as pacifists but lacked the deep arguments and these convictions got lost.... You could help them recover that, while Mennonites could benefit from their emphasis on the Holy Spirit."

Suggestions for next steps included building relationships with peace fellowships in other denominations, joining a larger church association such as Christian Churches Together,

encouraging Mennonites to join other churches in reaching out in their own communities, and continuing a healing of memories with groups such as Catholics and Lutherans over issues that led to Anabaptist martyrdom.

Members of the four interchurch relations groups in MC USA will develop the suggestions and share their progress at Charlotte 2005, the churchwide assembly. Plans are to organize a similar consultation every two years.

"We're at the stage of development in Mennonite Church USA when we have the opportunity to expand our witness and vision through connections with other Christian groups," said Jim Schrag, executive director of MC USA. "We need to both learn from them and also to share our strengths."—From MC USA report by **Laurie L. Oswald**

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Nairobi, Kenya

How is globalization affecting Africa?

How is globalization affecting Africa? And—just as important—what does Africa have to offer to the global community?

These questions were explored at a consultation on March 23-25 in Kenya. The event, co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Churches and Christian Councils in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, and Mennonite Central Committee, was one of a series of consultations on globalization that MCC is organizing around the world.

Twenty-nine participants gathered, from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Eritrea. They represented local and continental church-related agencies, advocacy groups and national development organizations.

Participants shared their perceptions of globalization from media, technology, trade and economic practices. They were also invited to consider the “global significance” of three African initiatives: a Kenya-

based micro-finance bank; an ecumenical agency (the All Africa Conference of Churches); and low-tech, community-based “sand dams” in Kenya. One day of the seminar was devoted to a visit to the sand dams and discussion with local residents.

Many participants spoke of the devastation that globalization has brought to traditional African cultures. They described how the flood of Western imports damages local trade networks, and how multinational corporations can devastate time-tested agricultural practices.

Many expressed support for a “bottom-up” approach in which people throughout the world learn from one other.

The sand dams project seems to embody the potential for traditional African values—community involvement, simplicity, collective self-help and relying on the wisdom of elders—to improve economic conditions. Communities work together to build

rock and cement dams across small rivers. In the dry season, water remains pooled in the sand, providing water for drinking and for gardens, nurseries and livestock.

MCC consultations on economic globalization have also taken place in Honduras and Nepal. An MCC-related conference in Texas examined globalization and immigration. A final conference on globalization and agriculture will be held in Kansas.

Reports and papers are available at www.mcc.org/globalizationconsultations/.—From MCC release

News briefs

Medical supplies sent to Iraq

A Mennonite Central Committee partner has distributed medical supplies in Najaf, Iraq, for victims of fighting between Shiite militias and American and Iraqi national forces. The partner supplies medications and other aid to hospitals in dangerous or remote parts of Iraq. The organization, which has asked to remain unnamed, received a \$30,000 grant in mid-August from MCC and All Our Children, an MCC partnership with several other charitable organizations. To learn more about All Our Children, go to www.allourchildren.org.—MCC release

Ukraine event focuses on depression

In Ukraine, church teaching has often denounced depression as sin. In June, Mennonite Central Committee and Evangelical Christian Baptist churches held a women’s conference in Zaporozhye on issues related to emotional wellbeing and the church’s response to depression. “These are important issues for Christians to talk about openly,” said Lyuda Zolotaryov, MCC peace worker who wove biblical teaching and academic understanding into a presentation at the conference. “It was especially good for the pastors’ or deacons’ wives to see that it is okay for church people to come to them for help—and that they don’t need to judge others’ problems, but rather to help them.”—From MCC report

NEEDED IN 2005: MCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This person will lead Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and build understanding and support for its mission among an increasingly diverse constituency.

For a job description or application, please contact search committee chair Donella Clemens, PO Box 64439, Souderton, PA 18964; dmclemens@mindspring.com.

Application review begins Sept. 1, 2004, with a January 2005 appointment and a June 2005 start date.



In 2004, MCC budget was \$63 million U.S., with 1,200 people serving in more than 50 countries.

Ho Chi Minh City

Trial of Vietnamese pastor may come soon

Sources in Vietnam say authorities are working hard to put Mennonite pastor Nguyen Hong Quang on trial as soon as possible. A court decision to prosecute is expected in early September.

It is believed the authorities will attempt to convict Quang of “possessing and distributing materials harmful to the state,” based on evidence he has compiled on numerous human rights infractions by state officials. The crime, if deemed to be in the severest category, carries a penalty of up to 20 years in prison.

Vietnamese authorities are reportedly surprised and upset at the widespread negative publicity their oppression of the Vietnamese Mennonite house church organization has generated on an international level. Apparently they were not aware of the extent of Mennonite church bodies around the world, many of which have spoken up on behalf of Quang and five other prisoners—the “Mennonite Six,” as they have come to be known.

Various secular and church-related media organizations have published news about the Mennonite Six. At least a half-dozen countries are pressing Vietnamese authorities on their mistreatment of Mennonite leaders and churches.

Quang’s wife, Le Thi Phu Dung, saw her husband briefly in prison seven weeks after his arrest. The meeting

occurred after Dung, a university student and mother of three small children, wrote a letter to senior Vietnamese officials.

Dung explained in the letter that the confiscation of the family’s money in the June 8 police raid has put her in a difficult situation.

The following day, local officials summoned Dung and Mennonite evangelist Nguyen Thanh Tam to the police station to open the sealed containers of documents and other items confiscated at Quang’s home and church centre.

When Dung declined to open the containers without first speaking to her husband, the police took her and Tam to Quang’s cell. Police officers remained with them during the brief visit. Quang looked thinner, Dung said. On August 18, Dung was allowed to visit her husband a second time, this time accompanied by the couple’s three small children.

Authorities have allowed visitors for three more of the Mennonite Six. Pham Ngoc Thach, Nguyen Van Phuong and Nguyen Hong Quang have received family members in the respective Ho Chi Minh City police jails where they are incarcerated, awaiting charges. Officials have denied visits for female evangelist Le Thi Hong Lien, arrested in early July, on the grounds that she is “hard-headed and uncooperative.”

On August 23, the mother of Mennonite evangelists Nguyen Huu Nghia and Nguyen Thanh Nhan was allowed to visit her imprisoned sons for the first time since their arrest on March 2. The mother, a longtime Christian, reported that her younger son, Nguyen Thanh Nhan, appeared thin but in reasonably good spirits. Her older son, Nguyen Huu Nghia, was in a fragile emotional state.

According to sources, authorities are working hard to put the Mennonite Six on trial as soon as possible. The prisoners believe that city-level public security police are close to completing an investigation to determine whether to prosecute them on a prisoner-by-prisoner basis. If

officials decide to prosecute, prisoners facing charges will likely be transferred to Chi Hoa Prison, in the greater Ho Chi Minh City area. Further investigations will follow, and then charges against the defendants will be published, followed by a trial.

Quang is said to be concerned that his five co-workers have already suffered greatly. It seems doubtful that charges against the five defendants will include anything more serious than “resisting an officer doing official duty” for which they were supposedly arrested.

In other news, the Hoi An Church in central Vietnam reports that two women were baptized on August 1, and that members of the church visit each other regularly to offer comfort and encouragement in the faith.

—From Mennonite World Conference and Compass reports

News briefs

Prayers for peace on September 21

For the first time, the Canadian Council of Churches (which Mennonite Church Canada delegates voted to join this summer) is calling on churches to mark September 21, or a nearby Sunday, as an International Day of Prayer for Peace. About 550 million Christians in the World Council of Churches have also been invited to join in prayers and vigils for this event. In 2001, the United Nations declared September 21 as the International Day of Peace. It asks all nations and peoples to observe the day with global cease-fires and nonviolent activities. The United Nations Peace Bell is 50 years old in 2004, and the CCC encourages bell-ringing as a way of calling attention to the cry for peace. Prayers and biblical texts for reflection are available on the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence website at www.overcomingviolence.org/peace2004.—From CCC and WCC releases

Reminder to Congregations

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CANADIAN
Mennonite

Abbotsford, B.C.

Youth use rap to comment on world

*Yesterday, out on the streets
I saw a young girl with plain
bare feet
she was an orphan, her parents had
deceased
she had no one to lead her, she
needed to eat
but had no one to feed her
the ends just don't meet
we hope you get the message
we hope you can read
we're asking for help with a
thank-you and a please
so please come, do something,
maybe sponsor a child
give 'em some clothes you think are
in style
and help make their life a bit more
worthwhile.*

Joel Brandt, 14, and Daniel Nofziger, 13, look like ordinary teenagers, sporting the “look” of their peers and listening to their music. What makes them different is that they make music that reflects thoughtfully on what's going on in the world.

They've come up with a rap band called “Tremaindellic,” a creative take on Brandt's middle name. Through a computer program (the software is Sony Pictures Digital Inc.'s ACID Music) and web site they're creating songs that people listen to online. Brandt is writer, rapper and creator of the beat. Nofziger does the vocals.

“He's a better singer than me,” Brandt said, but added that they both rap the lyrics.

Using a computer program means they don't need expensive instruments or recording equipment. The program lets them choose beats, rhythms and sounds, adjust pitch, volume and tempo. Using a tiny microphone on their computer, they record the lyrics over top.

Brandt says the inspiration for his songs comes from listening to the news and how he reacts to that. The text of “Where to go” reflects local and global conflict, and directs the listener to God without being preachy.



Rappers Joel Brandt and Daniel Nofziger.

*If you ever need help, go to my saviour
whether it's questions, concerns or
maybe a test paper
he'll always be there, no cost,
no pay-per
hour, it's free, believe me, he doesn't
mind
he's willing and kind, just close
your eyes
and pray to him, any day any time
any problem—it's fine.*

“I believe Joel's music is great,” says Nofziger. “In his lyrics it talks about strife and the things that go on in this world...and how not to blame God for the things that happen.”

Brandt began writing about two years ago. Ironically, he credits bad-boy rapper Eminem as an inspiration.

“I like Eminem because he's a talented rapper and has great rhythms,” he explains. “I was listening to one of his songs and his lyrics aren't that great, so I got the idea to write my own lyrics to one of his songs.” He showed the song to his family and got excited about writing his own lyrics.

Being in a band was something both Brandt and Nofziger dreamed of. His

parents got a drum set to get him started. He and Brandt found they “were into the same type of music and I guess we hit it off.”

So far Tremaindellic has two songs online and they are working on more. The two think it would be cool to sign with a Christian label but for now are content to have their music online.

To hear their music, go to www.soundclick.com/bands/0/tremaindellic.htm and click on “music.”—**Angelika Dawson**

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Winnipeg, Man.

River East members are citizens of two countries

Paul's assertion to the Christians in Philippi that their citizenship is in heaven holds particular significance for the people of River East Mennonite Church here. Most of the members are citizens of both Paraguay and Canada, and they try to balance the ambiguity of homeland while straddling two countries.

When River East began in 1989 as the River East Menno Gemeinde, it offered a church home for the growing number of Mennonites coming to Canada from the Menno Colony in Paraguay. Conducting its services and classes in German, it is a place where families and friends can reconnect.

Membership has grown steadily to its present membership of 172. This spring alone, membership grew by 49.

Except for one couple who came to Canada via Poland and Germany, all members were born in Paraguay to Canadian citizens who had emigrated to Paraguay.

Economic reasons compel many to leave Paraguay.

"It is hard to make a living there," said Ed Reimer, congregational chair. "They usually come with nothing. They have cattle and a ranch there but most of the money stays behind. They stay with relatives here until they get a job."

One year, 20 people immigrated to Canada while 20 others returned to Paraguay, said Abram Unrau, minister at River East from 1991-98 and currently a lay minister in the church. Pastoring a transient congregation creates unusual challenges.

"They come from big churches in Paraguay where they have no voice...expecting the minister and deacon to do everything," said Unrau. About a year ago, the church suffered a split over divergent views on leadership roles. It has since restructured, with the formation of a church council.

"The council can take care of the financial aspects, the building and other concerns, leaving the ministerial to concentrate on spiritual and teaching matters," said Reimer. "It seems everyone likes it.

"It is a challenge to find long-term

people to do the work of the church," said Reimer. "Training never stops."

John R. Friesen, who began pastoral leadership at the church on August 1, is "the first pastor hired from the outside," said Reimer. "It is the best thing that's happened."

Travel between Paraguay and Canada is affecting other churches in Manitoba as well.

"Elmwood Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg has hired Victor Kliever to pastor them in the German language and to enhance the German language worship service which was dying," said Friesen. Steinbach Mennonite is also seriously consider-

ing expanding its German service.

Reimer feels that the emigration from Paraguay "will be pretty steady because of the instability of the economy and political situation." Nearly 9,000 people live in Menno Colony. Most were successful dairy farmers but when Paraguay opened its border to cheaper milk products from Argentina, the farmers fell deeply into debt. Drought has also plagued them.

On October 24, John P. Klassen, Mennonite Church Manitoba conference minister, will assist in transferring pastoral leadership from interim pastor Gerhard Friesen to John R. Friesen.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Leamington, Ont.

Leamington prepares 14,400 cans of meat

Leamington held its annual meat-canning project in April at H.J. Heinz' tomato grading station here. It was the second last stop for the Mennonite Central Committee canner, which began its annual canning itinerary in Ohio last October.

Volunteers came from 32 area churches, not all Mennonite. Several fundraisers helped reach the goal of \$65,000 to cover all costs, from purchasing the turkey to shipping the finished cans to their destination.

One event was a Sunday luncheon hosted by the local canning committee, at United Mennonite Educational Institute. The event, which offered borscht, chili and *fleisch perishky* (meat turnovers) drew over 400 people and raised over \$11,000. Faith Mennonite Church also hosted a fundraiser dinner and talent show.

A dedication service for the meat-canning project was held at Faith Mennonite on April 18. MCC representative John Wiebe and canning committee member Peter Fiss gave moving reports

about the impact the project has.

From April 19-22, 550 volunteers, including students from United Mennonite Educational Institute and Paincourt High School, processed 26,910 pounds of turkey into 14,400 cans. Nineteen different groups provided meals and snacks.

Everything ran smoothly under the direction of MCC canner operators Marcus Heinrich, Tim Friesen and Jerry Hiebert. The participation, prayers and financial support of the community demonstrated God's presence. Plans are already underway for next year.—From report by **Cathy Lankin** and **Marlene Schmidt**



Meat canner operator Marcus Heinrich from Kitchener (foreground) works with Charlie Wolfe of H.J. Heinz company during the recent canning in Leamington.

Altona, Man.

Palestinian educators visit Manitoba

Eight educators from Palestine, here to attend a conference at the University of Manitoba on education and democracy, visited several southern Manitoba communities in July.

The group came to Altona July 17 for the Sunflower Festival and a public forum at the Neubergthal Community Centre. (Neubergthal is a Mennonite village which has been declared a national heritage site.) The group also visited the Roseau River First Nation.

The forum, attended by over 100 people, focused on education, democracy and conflict resolution. Ray Loewen, one of the organizers, called for open discussion.

"We're one global family," he said.

Howard Davidson of the university's Faculty of Education said that 75 Manitoba educators took the six-week course on global democracy. "We took two weeks to examine the Israeli-Palestinian situation, and tried to see what conflict resolution really means."

Sami Adwan, a professor at Bethlehem University, said, "Education is all-important to Palestinians—it's all that's left for them.... Bypassing daily humiliation, we have not given up; we would like to have our own borders and a cordial relationship with Israel.

"Right now, Palestinians are viewed negatively in the news media," he said, "and it's a struggle to see that our children may have a better life." He noted that some students have to go through checkpoints in order to attend school.

"They are traumatized children, and we work with them in healing projects. We deal with them very peacefully in school; it's the only space where they can express themselves," said Adwan.

"Christians and Muslims attend the same school, but have their own religion teachers; then every two weeks we have them together and they can then express themselves."

As for peace in the Middle East, Adwan said that "we hope for some compromises.... We need other powers to come on our behalf, and the international community is a real challenge for us." He added that "we must create more democratic practices."

Adwan encouraged contact through less controlled means such as the Internet and person to person. "Be critical about what you hear in the news media," he warned.

Wendy Kehler, who spent several weeks in the region, including two weeks with Christian Peacemaker Teams, said, "There's a danger in accepting what we hear. I didn't get a

grasp of it all till I went there. Canadians have a responsibility too."

Asked what the Palestinians would like people to remember, Adwan said, "Ask what can I do to be a responsible person in this world. Oppose the building of the wall that Israel says they need for their security. It encroaches on Palestinian land and divides people from each other."

—From report by **Elmer Heinrichs**

Abbotsford, B.C.

Construction begins on seniors' housing

Just before the annual meeting of the Mennonite Benevolent Society on June 12, members turned the sod to launch construction of a six-storey, 95-unit housing facility here for seniors.

It is defined as supportive housing with home-like features that enable seniors to live independently with access to basic services such as meals and social opportunities. The new facility will be under the Mennonite Benevolent Society umbrella, which includes Menno Home, Menno Hospital, Menno Pavilion and Menno Terrace. It should be completed by September 2005.

The sod was turned by Ed Pankratz, chair of the society; Gerald Neufeld, chief executive officer; Fred Strumski,

building chair; and Rudy Loewen, representing Palcor, the project management firm.

Members had an opportunity to suggest names for the new building. Membership in the Benevolent Society has increased by 151 this past year, for a total of 695. Lucy Meyer, the first woman appointed to the board, stepped down after nine years of service.

This was the first year of a restructured organization with a chief executive officer and chief operating officers for each division. Reports indicated a successful transition. The society itself, the home and hospital ended the fiscal year with a small surplus.—From release

Peace church in Africa

The following is from a statement that came out of the first conference of African Historic Peace Churches in Kenya in August.

We believe—together with all other Christians—that we are healed and reconciled by the grace of God. We believe that the love that is revealed in the incarnation, the cross and the resurrection is the way God has healed what is wounded and reconciled what was broken. This healing love...liberates us from self-denial, from selfishness, from self-love and self-centredness. Therefore we participate in God's shalom, which creates right relations: with our creator, between each other, with all of creation....

In the midst of widespread despair and trauma, we Historic Peace Churches in Africa are living our faith, by ministries of prayer, by breaking the silence, by showing our presence in places of conflict, by getting in direct contact with armed groups, by initiating dialogues between governments and opposition groups when public space is closed for all other non-governmental organisations, and facing the tension between Christian and Muslim communities. We try to listen and tell the stories from the victims' perspectives and provide alternative perspectives to all sides of a conflict by spreading information.

We work in peace and justice committees, we are providing trauma-healing centres, we are training our pastors in non-violent conflict transformation and healing skills for victims and relatives. We are developing seminars on political situations, special ministries to women and peace-building youth programs. We build networks with other churches and organisations, as we seek voices of support from outside one country.

Carrot River, Sask.

Carrot River congregation honours 75 years

The Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5) was the theme for the 75th anniversary of Carrot River Mennonite Church, August 7-8.

Approximately 200 people registered for the weekend celebration. Current members were joined by former pastors, teachers, family members and friends from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Indiana.

Acquaintances were renewed and new ones made as stories were shared. Several former teachers who taught in the rural schools of the area during the 1950s made connections with former students. One person remembered being hosted by a church family when he was in a conscientious objectors' camp during World War II.

Histories, photographs and regional maps on the wall created considerable interest. Some found the homesteads their parents or grandparents came to in 1926 and in the years following. Others found the location of rural schools that have long since disappeared.



Charter members of the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church, 1929 (left to right): Mary Gerbrandt, Tina Schapansky and Tina Andres.

In 1925 the first three Mennonite families came into the area south of what is now the town of Carrot River. Abandoned shacks became their temporary homes. More people arrived—by 1931, over 100 families. Participants celebrated the beginning of the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite

Church south of Carrot River in 1929, and the establishment of the Petaigon Mennonite Church, north of Carrot River, in 1937. The two congregations joined in 1960 when a new church was built in Carrot River itself.

Three original charter members of the Hoffnungsfelder congregation—Tena Andres, Catherine Schapansky and Mary Gerbrandt—attended the celebration. Three former pastors—Peter Peters from Manitoba, Abe Buhler from British Columbia, and John Wiebe from Manitoba, participated in the Saturday evening program or Sunday worship. Current pastor Craig Hollands shared moments from the life of the church and led the choir on Sunday morning.

Although inclement weather curtailed outdoor activities, the atmosphere inside was warm and hospitable. As the celebration ended we were reminded that the Lord has been, and is, good. We claimed God's enduring love for the future of this church, in this community.

Membership and attendance has fluctuated over the years. Presently the church is on an upward trend, blessed with a large group of young children.—From reports by **Audrey Bechtel** and **Trudy Fast**



Past and present pastors and spouses of Carrot River Mennonite Church (left to right): Alma and John Wiebe, Mary and Abe Buhler, Hilda and Pete Peters, Vera Schmidt (husband Irvin is deceased), Elsie Enns (husband Frank is deceased), Craig and Amy Hollands. Tina Andres is seated in the front.

Waterloo, Ont.

Remembering the Ontario Bible school

Over 300 exuberant voices filled the halls of Conrad Grebel University College August 13-14. From across Canada and the United States they gathered to remember the Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute (OMBS&I) and to learn about present-day theological studies at Grebel.

The doors of OMBS&I closed 45 years ago, but the spirit of fellowship among those who studied there remains strong. Gasps of recognition, hugs, laughter, animated conversations, sharing of pictures and life stories continued throughout the weekend.

At the welcome program, we listened to a tape from a choral reading, "From glory to glory," which was performed by OMBS&I choirs during the 1950s. A silence hovered over the audience as we listened to the voices of Arnold Cressman as Judas and Osiah Horst as Jesus.

On Saturday, two bus loads of participants toured old haunts such as Victoria Park where many had skated on the frozen pond, House of Friendship where some had done service, and

First Mennonite Church, the site of OMBS&I. We also visited the historic Detweiler Meeting House and cemetery, and Ten Thousand Villages shop in New Hamburg.

A choir of 60 voices rehearsed under the direction of V. Paul Martin who was music director at OMBS&I during the 1950s and early 60s. Other met for class reunions.

Reminiscing included many stories about teachers and school life. J. B. Martin often told his students, "When you find the word 'therefore' in the Bible go back and see what it is there for."

Sponsors for the event made it possible for all ticket sales to be donated to the Ralph and Eileen



Ralph Lebold speaks to former students of the Ontario Bible school.

Photo by Fred Martin.

Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training at Grebel.

A women's trio sang several numbers, including, "Have you heard the sobbing of a thousand millions souls?" Rufus Jutzi shared how OMBI made the Bible applicable to the ministry. Roy Koch, 91-year-old former principal of OMBS&I, stated that he is continually impressed when thinking about folks who found the Lord, sought guidance and still serve him.

Ralph Lebold, a former student of OMBS&I, pointed to the continuity of that experience at Grebel, even though the cultural context and needs are different.

On Sunday morning, the reunion participants met at First Mennonite Church for the final worship service. Herb Schultz in his sermon reminded us that even though we are imperfect, we contribute. Learn from the past and let the song go on by rekindling the fire, he said. God continues to build his church in spite of us.

Paul Martin led us in the school song, "Christ who left his home in glory."

People also mentioned the pleasure of recognizing people they haven't seen in over 40 years, and seeing the commitment live on in people today.

—From report by **Leah Boehm**

Bible study for lay people

In 1906, S. F. Coffman, a bishop from Vineland, Ontario, shared his vision for a Bible study program for lay persons. The first sessions of the Ontario Mennonite Bible School were held January 14 to February 8, 1907 at the Berlin Church (later First Mennonite) in Kitchener.

Students from out of town stayed in homes in Kitchener for \$1.00 a week (later \$5.00) and ate their meals at the school. The board was appointed by the Ontario conference (forerunner of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada).

In 1912, a six-year program with six weeks annually was initiated but students had problems completing the whole cycle.

Coffman was the only Bible instructor until 1919 when Oscar Burkholder joined him. These two taught to the end of their lives. C. F. Derstine and J. B. Martin soon joined the staff.

The school was also promoted in several states to raise the student numbers. Soon more space was needed

and in 1927 the conference and First Mennonite Church built an addition to the church at a cost of \$10,000.

In 1928, the first diplomas were given to four graduates. In 1929, there were another 14 graduates. Attendance peaked in 1939 at 224. In 1946, a twelve-week, three-year program was adopted.

A second wing was added in January 1950 for office and library space. That year Eastern Mennonite College had 34 Canadian students and Goshen College had 17. Was there a need for higher education locally?

Ontario Mennonite Bible Institute was added in 1951 with an advanced program of five months. Forty students registered, and twenty of them made up the first graduating class in 1954. There were now eight teachers at OMBS&I.

A one-year pre-university program was added for several years. In the 1960s, enrolment dropped as more young people went to high school and university. In 1969, the board decided to close OMBS&I.—From report by **Leah Boehm**

People & Events

Leamington, Ont.—On August 22, 350 people attended a pig roast at the Leamington Marina that raised \$10,000 for Project Home Rebuild. The event included a raffle with prizes donated by local companies. Project Home Rebuild is a \$9.4 million addition of 84 long-term care beds at Leamington Mennonite Home. A June 26 golfing fundraiser raised \$19,600 for the project. This brings the total raised to \$1,414,000. The goal is to raise \$1,790,000 by the end of the year. The next fundraiser is a five-kilometre walkathon and run on September 25. Call Wendy Koop at (519) 326-7212 for more information.—From reports

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Bezditny—to Michelle and Russ, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Lauren Kaci, Aug. 15.
Derksen—to Audra and Matthew, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Joshua Norman, May 31.
Driedger—to Erin and Jason, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Samuel Colton, June 29.
Dyck—to Lisa and Ryan, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., a son, Kaden Ryan, June 23.
Goertzen—to Mary and Brian, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., a daughter, Leah Grace, Aug. 19.
Harms—to Laura Lee and Kevin, Trinity Mennonite, Mather, Man., a daughter, Emma Grace, February 13.
Hildebrandt Penner—to Lori and Brian, Fort Garry Mennonite Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Maren, Aug. 15.
Pearson—to Sandra and Dean, North Leamington

Colombia—When government airplanes fumigate coca plants here to stop cocaine production, they poison farmers and food crops as well, said Bonnie Klassen on a U.S. radio broadcast on July 19. Klassen, Mennonite Central Committee representative in Colombia, spoke on Chicago Public Radio about the problem. Last year, she travelled to an area two weeks after it had been fumigated. “Large areas of food crops that had been destroyed,” she said. Homes and water sources were contaminated, and doctors reported health problems. Klassen said some farmers raise coca because bad roads make it too expensive to sell legal crops in town. Farmers raising only legal crops were also fumigated and were unable to claim compensation. Colombia’s efforts to stop cocaine production have made it the third largest recipient of American aid.—From MCC release

United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Lucas Zachery, July 27.
Peters—to Pam and Maury, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., a daughter, Zoe Brianne, Aug. 4.
Schroeder—to Irene and Orlando, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a son, Rafael Rene, Aug. 16.
Thiessen—to Donna and Jeff, Trinity Mennonite Fellowship, Mather, Man., a son, Derek Scott, August 3.
Wedel Rempel—to Gina and Chris, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Ella Marie, Aug. 12.
Williams—to Kim and Bradley, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Ella Drew, June 29.

Marriages

Barnewall-Dick—Jamie and Danielle, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 24.
Billing-Pickford—Steven and Corynn, North Leaming-

ton United Mennonite, Ont., July 31.

Enns-Cook—Phil and Natalie, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 14.

Enns-Letkeman—Travis and Stacie, Carman Mennonite Church, Man., Aug. 21.

Gartner-Nesdoly—Clayton and Stephanie (Laird Mennonite, Sask.), at Mt. Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 28.

Grunau-Schellenberg—Brian and Miriam, Steinbach Mennonite Church, Man., Aug. 14.

Hamel-Friesen—Bob and Evelyn, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., May 22.

Koch-Kuepfer—Jamie and Rose, Brussels Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 21.

Marshall-Enns—Chris and Jennifer, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 15.

Martin-Dubien—Greg and Christine, Zion Mennonite Fellowship, Elmira, Ont., Aug. 13.

Miller-Epp—Wendell Sean and Rachel Ruth (Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.), in Elkhart, Ind., July 31.

Narine-Dyck—Don and Corinne, Springstein Mennonite, Man., July 10.

Peters-Bryson—Cameron and Tara, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., June 19.

Sawatzky-Johnson—Don (Trinity Mennonite, Mather, Man.) and Jennifer (Richmond Park Mennonite Brethren, Brandon, Man.), in Brandon, Man., July 10.

Thiessen-Scott—Mark and Janet, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 14.

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

Yuen-Epp—Cory and Michelle, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., May 22.

Deaths

Barg—Marie, 94, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., Apr. 12.

Bartel—Gertrude, 92, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Aug. 4.

Driedger—Sandra, 37, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 19.

Dyck—Gerhard, 80, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Aug. 14.

Friesen—Bertha, 87, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., May 15.

Gerbrandt—Anne, 76, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., July 19.

Hiebert—Jacob, 83, Carman Mennonite Church, Man., Aug. 12.

Janzen—Helen (Penner), 91, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., May 25.

Mantler—Mary, 102, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., July 25.

Martens—Marie, 102, Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C., Feb. 17.

Pauls—Bernard, 86, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 3.

Siemens—Anna, 79, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Aug. 12.

Toews—Alice, 64, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 19.

Toews—Elizabeth, 65, Zion Mennonite Fellowship, Elmira, Ont., July 10.

Waldner—Tillie, 83, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., July 12.

Baptisms

Brussels Mennonite, Ont.—Ashley Cove, Anna Hiebert, Aug. 22.

Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.—Kristen Friesen, June 13.

Zion Mennonite Fellowship, Elmira, Ont.—Danielle Brubacher, Stephanie Gedcke, Brian Martin, Hannah Weber, July 11.

Wideman Mennonite, Markham, Ont.—Byron Baranieski, Milissa Fortier, David Hoover, Laura Lehming, June 20.

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

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Akron, Pa.

Families destitute after disasters in Asia

Mennonite Central Committee is responding to severe monsoon flooding in Bangladesh, India and Nepal with an aid package worth some \$670,000. The effort includes emergency relief, agricultural rehabilitation and disaster cleanup.

Floods have claimed more than 2,000 lives across South Asia since mid-June. Millions have been left homeless.

In Bangladesh, floods have covered some 60 percent of the country. Diarrhea and other water-borne diseases are a concern, as temporary encampments and water-ravaged villages do not have treated water or latrines. (The country was already suffering from a tornado which swept through a northern area in April.)

MCC is working through 19 partner organizations in Bangladesh to distribute \$124,800 of emergency relief, including food, cooking utensils, medicines and other supplies for 8,600 families.

Handicrafts from Bangladesh will be slow in coming to Ten Thousand Villages this fall because of the floods there. This has a serious impact on the artisans.

"It's not only a loss of income, but it's a loss of food, a loss of home, a loss of assets," said Shahjahan Miah, employed by MCC Bangladesh. Many artisans have had to leave their homes.

In Bihar, India, floodwaters are receding but people struggle to meet their basic needs, said MCC officer Achinta Das who visited villages in early August. Many people pleaded for something to eat.

Mennonites are being called from other areas of India to help with relief distributions in Bihar. MCC is responding with \$245,600 in aid, working with the relief agency of the Indian Council of Churches. The funds will go for food, clothing, hygiene supplies, blankets and plastic sheeting for 1,000 families. Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MCC will provide 500 metric tons of rice for a food-for-work cleanup program.

MCC will also give \$26,800 to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ agencies for flood relief work in India.

In Nepal, MCC is providing \$13,400 of relief supplies for 100 families affected by flooding. Each will receive a month's supply of food, cooking utensils, clothing and bedding, and a tarp.

MCC is seeking to raise \$268,500 for

the relief effort. Donations should be marked "Asia Emergency Assistance" and sent to MCC, 134 Plaza Dr. Winnipeg, MB, R3T 5K9, or call toll-free 888-622-6337.—From MCC releases



Photo by Bethany Osborne

Moving into a new home provided by MCC are Montaj Ali and Hasina Kahtun, with their three children and two relatives, Hatima Khatun and Amina Begum (at right). The family lost its home in the April tornado in north-central Bangladesh.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Days of prayer

Tradition has it that Martin Luther, knowing he had much to do in a day, got up early to spend four hours in prayer. This was, no doubt, a habit he learned in the monastery.

This fall, programs in MCEC churches kick into high gear. There is much to do! So a group of Mennonite spiritual directors is calling people to days of quiet prayer with the words: "Experience quiet prayer in community...rest in God...learn about spiritual direction."

The spiritual directors are offering three days of prayer, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. They include a time of worship and ample time for silent prayer and reflection. The leaders will be available for conversation.

Events are as follows:

- October 20 at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre.
- October 23 at Breslau Mennonite Church (an indoor labyrinth will be available).
- January 26 at Erb Street Mennonite Church (preparation for Lent).

If a congregation or group is interested in hosting a day of quiet prayer at a different time, spiritual directors are willing to lead. Call Miriam Frey at (519) 880-9684 or e-mail: miriamfrey@online.net.

Pastors begin work

The following people are beginning new assignments:

- Eleanor Epp-Stobbe will become pastor at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo in October. She returns to MCEC after several years in Winnipeg where she worked for MCC's Voices for Non-Violence and as interim pastor in a United Church congregation.

- Nancy Mann will be pastoral care coordinator at Nithview Home, New Hamburg. Mann, a member of First Mennonite in Kitchener, worked as a counsellor at the University of Waterloo and has been studying in the Master of Theological Studies program, Ministry Option, at Conrad Grebel University College.

- Emily Schaming began as youth pastor at Ottawa Mennonite Church on August 1. Schaming, a graduate of Conrad Grebel University College, was a youth worker at Preston Mennonite Church and did a service assignment in Montreal.

- Pieter Niemyer, a graduate of Tyndale Seminary, became lead pastor at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church in Markham on September 1. He has been associate pastor for several years.

- Myrna Miller of Kansas begins as Christian community pastor at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden. Miller graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary this spring with a master of divinity degree. She has taught in the U.S., as well as in Egypt with MCC.

- Marilyn Rudy-Froese will begin a part-time assignment as associate pastor at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener. A graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, she was chaplain at Fairview Mennonite Home.

- This past May, Jeff MacMillan began working as English pastor at the Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church in Toronto. He is a graduate of Tyndale Seminary and has had previous pastoral experience in the Formosan church and Toronto Alliance Church.

- Chris Steingart began as youth pastor at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church in mid-August. Steingart is a graduate of the University of Waterloo and has worked at the House of

Friendship. He and his wife, Jillian Burkhardt, are host couple at Brubacher House on the University of Waterloo campus.

Several people will be ordained this fall—Troy Watson at Bethany Mennonite Church on September 19, and Matthew and Hendrike Isert Bender at Nith Valley Mennonite Church on September 26. Jason Martin was ordained on August 22 at Community Church in Drayton. He and his wife Donna return to Italy in early September (see story, page 5).—From MCEC release

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Equipping conference offered in fall

Mennonite Church Manitoba is offering another Equipping conference on October 2, the second time in its new format. Last year the conference brought together the ministers' and deacons' conference with the Equipping event for Christian educators.

This year, the combined format will expand to include workshops representing all four ministry areas of MC Manitoba: Leadership, Evangelism and Service, Education, and Church Community Building.

New workshops this year include mystery and gospel, multimedia in worship, gift discernment, visual arts in the congregation, coming to terms with church growth, forgiveness tales and family sanity.

Also new this year are "sharing circles," guided by a resource person. Workshops that were well received in the past include hospital visitation, gift discernment, peace-making and caregiving.

Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service for MC Manitoba, is the plenary speaker. Voth brings a passion

for sharing the gospel in contemporary ways. This year's event, at Canadian Mennonite University, will include morning and afternoon workshop.

Registration forms are available from local congregations or MC Manitoba at (204) 896-1616, or from www.mennonchurch.mb.ca/events.—**Bob Wiebe**

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Pastor moves to Steinbach church

Mel Letkeman, who has just completed a five-year term as associate pastor at First Mennonite church in Saskatoon, will become lead pastor at Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, Manitoba. Mel and Enid have three school-age children: Rebecca, Julie and Andrew.

Cookbooks ready

Camp Shekinah, located close to Waldheim, has its 25th anniversary cookbooks ready for sale. The anniversary celebration took place July 4 on the camp grounds. The cookbooks are available for \$10 from the camp office (phone (306) 945-4929) or from Shekinah board members.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Seminars offered on homosexuality

"Walking in grace" is the first of two seminars originally presented at the extraordinary delegate meeting in March. The seminar, on October 22-23, will look at homosexuality from a theological and practical ministry perspective.

A second seminar, in 2005, will address how Mennonite church structures support our belief and practice.

Speakers are Willard Swartley, professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and author of *Homosexuality—Biblical Interpretation and Moral Discernment*, and Toni Dolfo-Smith and Neil Rempel, who work with Living Waters, an organization that addresses emotional and sexual issues and is dedicated to speaking biblical truth with compassion.

Swartley will look at scripture, culture and the church as they relate to homosexuality. A copy of Swartley's book is available for \$20 from the MC B.C. office.

Dolfo-Smith and Rempel will share their experiences of same-sex attraction, and what it means to create a loving ministry in the church.

The seminar is \$40. Register through your church or through the MC B.C. office before September 24. (A late registration fee will apply after that date.) For further information call (604) 850-6658 or e-mail: admin@mcbbc.ca.

Unless otherwise credited, articles in TheChurches pages were written by Candian Mennonite's regional correspondents.



Almost 140 children filled the sanctuary and grounds of Waterloo North Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ontario from August 23 to 27 for Vacation Bible School. Run by two MCEC churches, Waterloo North and Erb Street Mennonite Church, the program provided a place for area children to experience Jesus and to connect local families with the church. Children aged from 4 to 14 (up to Grade 8) participated in

worship, drama and crafts around the theme "Kids in Conflict: Solving Problems Jesus' Way." Children gave money throughout the week to the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support to buy toys for refugee children. "Around \$600 was raised. The goal was \$400 so we did really well," said Julie Snyder-Penner, one of the event's organizers.

Please tell us your stories of how your Vacation Bible School program has affected your community and church. —Timothy Dyck

The One Church and our missions programs

God's will is the peace, joy and love (shalom) of all of God's creation. The church is the community of people who believe that this is God's will and that Jesus Christ is the expression of it. Thus the church becomes the primary community in whose words and deeds the world observes God's will and way.

Jesus prayed that his disciples would be one so that the world would believe that God had sent him. Our mission as Christ's disciples is to point to Jesus Christ. As North American Mennonites, we have tried to be faithful in this mission; indeed, we have earned a name for ourselves through our international ministries.

And herein lies a hazard to which I have become increasingly sensitive as I have worked in Mennonite mission programs.

A recent proposal for renewed effort toward visible Christian unity names the hazards of mission focused on

denominational identity:

"If [through missions] we seek to intensify and extend loyalty to our traditions...we risk emphasizing precisely those distinctive features...that divide us from others. Thus, we run the danger of enhancing denominational loyalty by "boasting" of something more unique than the gospel of Jesus Christ" (*In One Body Through the Cross*, ed. by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, Eerdmans, 2003).

We need not abandon the Anabaptist tradition nor dismantle our denomination to avoid emphasizing divisive features and supplanting the gospel of Christ with denominational boasting. But we should "incorporate the imperative of unity [i.e. oneness of the gospel of Christ and the oneness of God's church] into our mission" (*In One Body*).

The practical ways we can pursue the unity of the church through our denominational missions could include:

- Pray for unity in mission;
- Invite believers from Mennonite

From our leaders

churches abroad and from other denominations in our communities to share their insights about mission;

- Test all mission goals and methods according to biblical tradition rather than our Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition;
- For every new mission venture seek the invitation and cooperation of nearby churches, Mennonite and other;
- In our publicity highlight the ways in which we cooperate in mission;
- Always work with a sense of the temporality and limitation of our denomination and its programs;
- Seek the signs whereby God is leading our mission to visibly cooperate with others;
- Pray for the unity of the church.

Peter Rempel, Mission Partnership Facilitator for Europe and Africa for MC Canada Witness. He also works with mission organizations in the wider church.



Employment opportunities



**Conrad Grebel University College
ACADEMIC DEAN**

Conrad Grebel University College, a Mennonite college on the campus of the University of Waterloo, is seeking a dynamic and energetic person to serve as Academic Dean beginning July 1, 2005. The Academic Dean is the chief academic officer of the College and a member of the administrative leadership team.

Conrad Grebel is the residential and teaching college of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Its undergraduate academic program is fully integrated with the University of Waterloo and includes departments of Music and Peace and Conflict Studies as well as courses in Religious Studies, History, English, Sociology, Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Arts. The College also offers a graduate program in Theological Studies and is affiliated with the Toronto School of Theology.

Preference will be given to candidates who have established themselves as excellent teachers and scholars, have experience in academic leadership and administration, stand within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

For more information, please contact the President's Office at cgcpres@uwaterloo.ca. Applications or nominations, to be received by October 18, 2004, should be addressed to:

**Dr. Henry Paetkau, President
Conrad Grebel University College
Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6**



**Stewardship education and service
from an Anabaptist perspective**

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) is a charitable foundation serving seven Anabaptist church conferences across Canada. These conferences combine to form a constituency of 60,000 people in 480 churches. MFC currently manages \$64 million in charitable assets and has distributed \$28 million to charities over its 30-year history.

GENERAL MANAGER

MFC is seeking a General Manager at its head office in Winnipeg, MB. This person will be responsible to manage the overall operations of the Foundation and ensure that MFC's biblical stewardship message and charitable gift and estate planning services are effectively carried out.

The successful candidate will:

- Have management training and experience
- Be innovative, entrepreneurial, and a person of vision
- Possess strong written and verbal communication skills
- Possess excellent public relations skills
- Support MFC's stewardship message and principles

This position reports directly to MFC Board. The candidate must be a member of one of MFC's seven participating conference churches. MFC offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

Applications should be submitted by September 30, 2004 to:

**Personnel Committee
12-1325 Markham Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
E-mail: gmsearch@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca**

MANAGING EDITOR

Herald Press, Mennonite Publishing Network, is seeking an editor for its book division. For more information visit www.heraldpress.org. Send letter of application to:

**Herald Press Director
616 Walnut Avenue, Scottsdale, PA 15683 or
E-mail: levi@mph.org**

Applications will be reviewed immediately, and position remains open until filled.



MANAGING EDITOR

Canadian Mennonite is seeking a Managing Editor. This full-time position begins Jan. 1, 2005 and is based in Waterloo, Ontario. A resumé and two news-writing samples should be submitted by Oct. 22, 2004.

The person filling this position will have the responsibility of editing and producing each issue. Duties include working with the Editor on story ideas and soliciting contributions, overseeing layouts, and proof reading. The Managing Editor also will do some reporting and writing.

Applicants should have: a passion for the church and for Canadian Mennonite's mission; excellent communication and listening skills; the ability to manage multiple tasks and details, and flexibility and creativity under pressure.

**Direct inquiries and applications to:
Timothy Dyck, Editor and Publisher, Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524,
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org**

www.canadianmennonite.org



Mennonite Central Committee Canada seeks applications for the positions of:

COORDINATOR OF ABORIGINAL WORK
(half time position - Winnipeg preferred)

REFUGEE PROGRAM COORDINATOR
(half time position - Winnipeg preferred)

DOMESTIC POLICY ANALYST
(half time position - Ottawa)

Any two of these positions can be combined with one other and based in Ottawa or Winnipeg.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership, and nonviolent peacemaking.

Contact:

**Marsha Jones
Phone (204) 261-6381
E-mail: mgj@mennonitecc.ca
View job descriptions on the web at
www.mcc.org/servicetree/st_frame.html**

Applications will be considered beginning September 30, 2004.



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

MCC CENTRAL STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States.

Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills, and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States.

Contact:

Charmayne Brubaker

Phone: (717) 859-1151; E-mail: cdb@mcc.org
or your nearest MCC office for the full job description.

Application review begins immediately. Position available January 1, 2005 or sooner, if possible.

VOLUNTEER DIRECTORS Mennonite Centre in Ukraine

The Mennonite Centre, located in a restored former girls school in Halbstadt, Molochna, specializes in medical and educational programs and acts as a learning centre. We are forming an ongoing team of several retired or semi-retired volunteer couples, each spending 3 to 4 months a year in Ukraine. We are looking for men and women who can model professional leadership and management roles. Knowledge of German is very helpful, as is some familiarity with Russian. For more information contact:

Walter Unger

Phone: (416) 925-9461; E-mail: walterunger@ica.net

Housing

Mature couple looking to house-sit in Winnipeg January through April 2005. Phone (250) 782-3589 or e-mail plenernt@pris.bc.ca

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Focus on Mission
& Service

Burns Lake, B.C.

Burns Lake congregation reminisces about 50 years

Jubilee was the focus of the 50th anniversary homecoming of First Mennonite Church of Burns Lake on August 20-22.

People gathered to share stories and memories of God's faithfulness over 50 years.

The organizing committee welcomed us with words from Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 6, calling us to give thanks and sing to the Lord for what he has done.

The first session focused on 1954 to 1964. It opened with rousing singing led by Martin Epp and accompanied on the piano by Ruth Dick, wife of Elmer Dick, the church's first pastor. A PowerPoint presentation, prepared by John Rempel and Tina Giesbrecht, illustrated the first decade.

Henrietta Giesbrecht assembled women who throughout the life of the congregation have sung in a women's double trio. What a delight to hear their voices raised in praise to God! As Ruth Dick talked about the beginnings of the church, she challenged the congregation to keep building for the next generation.

Saturday morning covered 1964 to 1984. Rob Wiebe focused on heroes who inspired with godly wisdom and upbringing. These pioneers blazed the way and are cheering us on, he said.

Singing under the leadership of former pastor Ed Giesbrecht was enthusiastic. Ed talked about his years in ministry at First Mennonite and the beginnings of the church in Granisle. A second PowerPoint presentation focused on the highlights of that period.

In a memorial presentation, former pastor Jerry Klassen reflected on the story in Joshua 4 in which the Israelites were told to set stones as a memorial to God's faithfulness. As Klassen called to remembrance those who have died in the past 50 years, his wife Doreen placed a flower in a bouquet of remembrance.

Saturday evening's program focused on 1984 to the present. Another PowerPoint presentation showed the completion of the present building. Former pastor Abe Buhler challenged us to seek God's will and plan for the future.

One of the strengths of First Mennonite has been its sending people out as pastors, missionaries and volunteers. Pastor Abraham Buhler presented the names.

Judy Martens led the worship team at the Sunday morning closing celebration. A mass choir, directed by Lee Dyck and accompanied by Norma Hoy, brought back memories through songs such as "Gott ist Die Liebe" and "Take Thou my Hand, O Father."

"What mark are you leaving in Burns Lake?" asked Paul Dick, in his message. Dick, son of the church's first pastor, is a pastor at South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church. He was born in Burns Lake but left at the age of three. This visit was his first trip back.

He challenged us to live according to the pattern God has given and reminded us that our influence leaves a lasting mark. Where are we going? God wants to give us a vision for the future, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

As a conclusion to the celebration, Henry Kliewer, conference pastor for Mennonite Church B.C., led in communion. He reminded us that we are the beneficiaries of those heroes of faith who have gone before.

The organizing committee thanked all who had come to the jubilee celebration. After singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," we reassembled outside to plant a tree in commemoration of the event. Former pastors Jerry Klassen, Abe Buhler, Abraham Buhler, and Ruth and Paul Dick spaded the earth as we sang "To God be the Glory."

Thanks to the culinary skills and direction of Rose Unruh, delicious meals provided time for people to share stories and reminisce. Truly we have raised an Ebenezer.—From a report by **Lee Dyck**

Calendar

British Columbia

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 South Abbotsford Mennonite Brethren Church, 2:30 p.m.
September 25: MCC Fall Fair at Civic Centre, Prince George. Call (604) 850-6639 or visit www.mcc.org/bc.
October 4-6: MC British Columbia pastor/spouse retreat.
October 15-17: Women in Mission retreat on "Prayer," with speaker Karen Heidebrecht-Thiessen.
October 16: Annual banquet of Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. at Columbia

Bible College. Harry Loewen will speak on "Saints and Sinners among Russian Mennonite Leaders." 6:00 p.m. Call (604) 853-6177 for tickets.
October 16-17: Thanksgiving Vespers with Abendmusik Choir. Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (16); Knox United Church, Vancouver (17); 8:00 pm. Donations received will support the Menno Simons Centre.
October 21: MCC Thrift Shops evening with "quilt lady" Elda Martens, 7:00 p.m. at Emmanuel Mennonite Church. Call Norma Neufeld at (604) 850-6639 for details.
October 22-23: MC British Columbia workshop on homosexuality with Willard Swartley, Toni Dolfo Smith and Neil Rempel. Location and time forthcoming.

October 22, 23, 29, 30: Mennonite Disaster Service information 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. Speakers include Gerry Klassen and Karen Midland.

Alberta

September 25: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta fall workshop, "Preserving our Family Stories," 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at First Mennonite Church, Calgary. To register, call Dave at (403) 328-0237.
October 15, 16, 17, 18: Community Justice Ministries celebrations with speaker Wayne Northey (from M2W2 in B.C.), in Edmonton (15),

Calgary (16), Rosemary (17), Didsbury (18).

Saskatchewan

September 19: Installation of Gordon Allaby at Osler Mennonite Church.
September 30: MCC workshop, "Living creatively with stress," at MCC office, Saskatoon, 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
September 30-October 2: Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly at Shekinah.
October 15-16: Saskatchewan Women in Mission retreat at Shekinah.
October 15-16: Preaching seminar at Osler Mennonite Church with John Neufeld. To register, call Julie Bergen at (306) 653-4051.
October 20-23: Christian Peacemaker Team meeting at

Twenty-seven Canadians participated in the July orientation at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters. Front row, from left: Rena Keenan Buhler of Timmins, Ont., will be community educator in Timmons; Aidan Keenan Buhler; Sheralyn Janson of Grande Prairie, Alta., Indonesia (assignment pending); Daniel Janson; Marinus Janson of Grande Prairie, Alta., curriculum development in Indonesia; Luke Janson; Brian Dick of Winnipeg, warehouse worker in Winnipeg; Esther DeGroot, Hamilton, Ont., environmental educator in Haiti; Carina Soderlund of

Vancouver, activity director in Guatemala; Mike Keenan Buhler; Jack Keenan Buhler.

Second row: Mukai Muza of Winnipeg, refugee program coordinator in Winnipeg; Cori Reimer of Steinbach, Man., administrative assistant in Winnipeg; Heidi Koole of Aldergrove, B.C., houseparent at Uturn House in Brandon, Man.; Judy Shantz of New Hamburg, Ont., recycling manager in New Hamburg; Lisa Richardson; Lauren Richardson; Helen Quick of Comber, Ont., family support worker in Chatham, Ont.

Third row: Orlando

Vasquez of Edmonton, refugee coordinator in Edmonton; Maryanne Mutch of Winnipeg, justice researcher in the Philippines; Reuben Koole of Aldergrove, houseparent at Uturn House in Brandon; Justin Unrau; Jane McIntosh and John McIntosh of Toronto, thrift shop managers in Toronto; Jacqueline Anderson of Winnipeg, administrative assistant in Winnipeg.

Back row: Rick Pauw of Hamilton, Ont., program coordinator of Circle of Support, Hamilton; Matthew Van Geest, Hamilton, Ont., consultant with agroforestry program in Haiti. Not pictured: Justin Unrau of Winnipeg is teaching English in China. —From MCC release



Shekinah Retreat Centre.
October 28-29: Missional church workshop for lay leaders, "Being a Church that Makes a Difference," at Camp Elim.

Manitoba

September 18: MCC Relief Sale at Big M Centre in Morris.
September 19: MCC Manitoba alumni barbecue at Mitchell Park, 2:00-8:00 p.m. Call (204) 261-6381, toll-free: 888-622-6337.
September 21: Meeting of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Society at Bedson campus, 7:00 p.m.
September 24-25: MCC Relief Sale at Keystone Centre, Brandon.
September 24-25: Canadian Mennonite University homecoming weekend. Opening program Saturday, 7:00 p.m. More info at www.cmu.ca.
September 25: Advent planning day for Manitoba congregations, at Steinbach Mennonite Church. Call church by Sept. 10 if attending.
September 25: Cyclathon for Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, at Birds Hill Park.
September 26: Opening program of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 3:00 p.m.
September 26: Young adult "welcome party" at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 4:30 p.m. Call MC Manitoba office or visit www.mennochurch.mb.ca/events.
October 1-2: Conference on "State of the Art of North American Mennonite History," at University of Winnipeg. Speakers John Lapp and Barbara Nkala Oct. 1, 7:00 p.m. Visit web site: uwinnipeg.ca/academic/as/mennstudies.
October 1-3: Young Adult Fellowship North American gathering at Canadian Mennonite University on "Community: Living the tension." Contact Bob Wiebe, phone (204) 896-1616, ext. 254;

e-mail: bwiebe@mennochurch.mb.ca.
October 2: MC Manitoba Equipping Conference at Canadian Mennonite University.
October 3: Opening program of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School at Portage Ave. Mennonite Brethren Church, 2:30 p.m.
October 6-7: John and Margaret Friesen Lectures at CMU with Barbara Nkala from Zimbabwe.
October 15-16: 24-hour women's retreat at Camp Assiniboia, with speaker Kathy Koop on "Faithful women: then and now."
October 19-20: J.J. Thiessen Lectures at CMU with Peter Erb of Wilfrid Laurier University.
October 22-24: Mennonite Marriage Encounter in Winnipeg. Call (204) 757-4705.
October 23: Manitoba Women for MCC conference at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 10:00 a.m. Bring bag lunch and bar of soap.
October 23: Canadian Mennonite University's annual fall fundraising banquet in gymnasium at 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, 6:30 p.m.
October 23: Mennonite Church Manitoba delegate session at Steinbach Mennonite Church, 1:00-4:30 p.m.
October 30: Seminar on worship planning and leading with Irma Fast Dueck at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.
October 30: Canadian Mennonite University fundraising program and dessert evening at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

Ontario

September 10-12: Building Community Retreat for people with disabilities, at Hidden Acres Camp. Speaker: Irma Janzen. Call (519) 578-2608.
September 12: George Albrecht (spouses Elizabeth Bauer and Maria Hammer) potluck reunion at Khaki Club, Wellesley, 1:00 p.m. Call Gwen

Albrecht at (519) 662-2927.
September 12: Service of remembrance at Altona Mennonite Meeting House (near Stouffville), 3:00 p.m. Speaker Martha Smith Good.
September 17: MEDA tour of Leis Pet Distributing Inc. of Wellesley, 7:00 p.m. Call (519) 725-1633 by Sept. 13.
September 17-19: Student and young adult retreat at Crieff Hills on "Finding a home in a disconnected world."
September 18: Relief sale at Black Creek Pioneer Village.
September 19: Celebration of 50 years in ministry with Jim and Helen Reusser, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, 3:30 p.m.
September 26: Bluegrass fundraising concert for Toronto

Mennonite Theological Centre and Mennonite Centre Ukraine at Niagara United Mennonite Church, 3:00 p.m. featuring The Peachpickers, Five-on-the-Floor and Sweetwater.
September 26: Colombia dessert evening at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Fundraiser for MC Canada Witness, featuring Rudy and Helen Baergen; music by Bryan Moyer Suderman. 7:30 p.m.

United States

November 4-7: MEDA convention at Westin Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa. Theme: Risky business. Call (717) 560-6546, e-mail: wcoleman@meda.org

Subscriber services

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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 Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Chance to air opinions about church

I am 17 years old and have completed grade 11. One night after a Bible study, I got into a philosophical conversation with Ron Weber, my pastor. I was struggling with things in the Mennonite church I disagreed with.

As I was pulling out of the parking lot, Ron burst out the door with some papers with the !Explore logo. He thought the program might answer some of my questions.

I prayed that if God wanted me in ministry I would be accepted into the program. I was.

Questions raced through my mind as the car pulled into the camp in Indiana. Fourteen people introduced themselves. By the end of the day we were all friends.

Our experiences in Chicago's DOOR program stretched everyone. One service site had a profound effect on me and my friend Peter Koontz. We worked at a soup kitchen where we observed three categories of people—men and women down on their luck (they had homes but needed something to eat); people who were homeless but still had a glint of defiance and hope in their eyes (they joked around); and people who were broken—no homes, no hope.

The people without hope would not look us in the eye or acknowledge our presence. They shuffled on weary feet, shoulders slumped.

It was hard for us to see such broken people, but we saw God working in all classes of people.

We had many such soul-stretching experiences in Chicago before heading back to AMBS. The time at the seminary was encouraging to me, a time of great fellowship and reflection. I had time to think, pray and discuss things in the church I disagree with.

One thing is the unhealthy pride I have experienced in the church. I consider myself a Mennonite, but beyond all else a follower of Christ. Many times people get so caught up in denominationalism that they forget Christ.



I also had time to reflect on things I like about the Mennonite church, the major one being our belief in pacifism.

It was traumatic to leave everyone. We shared a deep bond of kinship. On the first night, leader Andy Brubacher Kaethler had said we were brave to venture into the program because it had the power to change our lives. I only half believed him.

However, I now see things through new eyes. My faith and reliance on God has increased through my soul-stretching experiences. I am working on a pastoral internship and preparing for my last year of high school. I am scouting various schools for possibilities in ministry and theology.

I recommend the !Explore program to any high school student who feels a call to ministry. It will change your life.

—**Jeff Metcalfe, Drayton, Ont.**

A group photo of the !Explore participants.

