

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

November 29, 2004
Volume 8, Number 23



**A shoot
shall
come
out
from
the
stump
of Jesse**
(Isaiah 11)

God's self-giving love

While the calendar year is drawing to an end, the church year has just begun again. The first Sunday of Advent is the first Sunday of the new church year, a New Year's Day of hope and anticipation for what is to come. It's a reminder for me that while the world is still waiting for renewal, we can welcome others into the renewal that has already come, free for the asking. It's another reminder of how Christians live by a different calendar—the same days but with a different meaning and purpose.

I cherish the quiet way the church year starts with Advent. As with Simeon and Anna who hoped to see the Messiah before they died, this is a time of longing for the coming of the Lord. L.M. Montgomery wrote, "Looking forward to things is half the pleasure of them." Waiting changes us.

"You can tell. / The way light surges / out of nothing," writes Kathleen Norris in her poem "True Love." God's breaking through into human existence was something worth waiting for.

The word incarnation means, literally, enfleshment, becoming flesh: God—eternal, all-powerful, unlimited God—taking on the limits of being human with us, with all its fragility, pains and certain intimacy with death.

The very first thing Jesus did in his life was to take on those vulnerabilities that we all share. That decision alone says much to us.

Vulnerability, as defined by Vanessa Herrick and Ivan Mann in their book *Jesus Wept*, is "An openness to being wounded (physical or otherwise) which is motivated by love of God and is the outcome of a voluntary relinquishment of the power to protect oneself from being wounded.... [T]o choose the way of vulnerability is to assent to God's choice."

A number of years ago, I went on a long van ride powered

by Mountain Dew and 1980s Christian rock with fellow youth group members to hear Tony Campolo speak. He told a story about vulnerability that I have never forgotten. Campolo regularly took a group of college students to Haiti as part of his university sociology classes. One student, a tall, brawny young man, was shocked to discover himself weeping, just bawling, while holding a child. The suffering he saw around him had become incarnate within him. Campolo told us that, in order to follow the path of Jesus, we had to let the things that broke the heart of Jesus also break our hearts.

Jesus chose, in coming to Bethlehem, in the Temptation in the Desert, outside Lazarus's tomb, in the Garden of Gethsemane, over and over, to be moved by human need and then respond in obedient love.

In the same way, Advent is a time, in the middle of waiting again for the Feast of the Incarnation (Christmas Day) to ask ourselves how well our choices line up with Jesus'. In Philippians 2, we are called to "look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who ... emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness." It is because Jesus was as we are that we can be of the same mind as him.

I'm reminded of words to the hymn, "Will you let me be your servant": "I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you. I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through."

Christ's incarnation is our call to be motivated by the love of God to enter into relationships where we are vulnerable: the grieving co-worker, the bitter relative, the difficult neighbour. Through the love of Christ, the incarnation can be present in every human relationship. God reached out to us to show us how to reach out to others. Christmas is a gift we need to pass on.—**Timothy Dyck**

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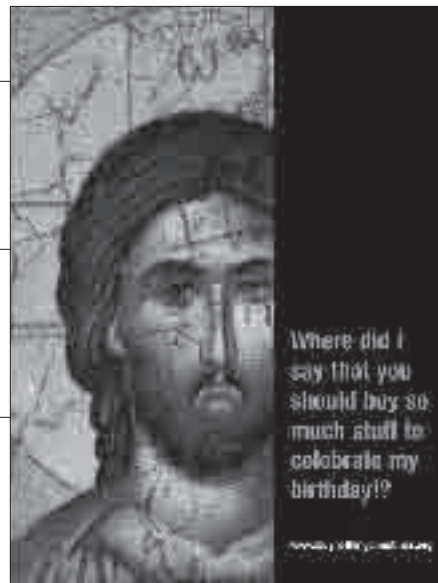
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Web site preview

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 December 20 issue by December 16.

Cover: Tree of Jesse linoleum cut by Tom Yoder Neufeld. See related article on page 26.



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Waterloo, Ont.

Police officers meet for second conversation

As a Christian police officer, I struggle with fellow Christians to follow in Jesus' steps in a fallen world," said Allister Field in his opening meditation at the second Christian Officers' Peace Seminar (COPS II) on October 30.

Field, member of a Brethren in Christ congregation, works as a policeman in Toronto. He concluded, "We are cruel, self-centred, yet God cares for us even in our fallen nature."

The event was sponsored by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel University College and the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario Peacebuilders Program.

Tim Schmucker, representing MCC, further set the stage by commenting, "Our traditional [Anabaptist-Mennonite] theology of nonresistance is not to bear arms or use force, yet we rely on peace officers and law in our defence." The MCC binational Peace Office has been working on a project that asks how Christians committed to peace respond to terrorism, violence of states against their citizens, and crime.

Last August, MCC convened a group



Photos by Maurice Martin

Police officers meet for discussion at COPS II. From left: Steve Brnjas, Rob Davis, Morley Lymburner, Wendy Shoreman (hidden) and Allister Field. Looking on from the outer circle is Lowell Ewert, director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel University College.

to discuss public peace, justice and order. One of the key questions is to discern when policing becomes military action on behalf of a government.

The police officers at this October event said they are grateful that policing in Canada is separate from the political order. Yet it is important

that police be held accountable for how they do their work.

As was done at COPS I last year, the police officers sat in an inner circle to discuss issues with "participant-observers" in the outer circle. This year there was more interaction between the two circles.

A policeman tells his story

Rob Davis, who attends a Mennonite Brethren church, started his career as a military police officer at age 16. By age 20, he was in the Middle East with a United Nations peacekeeping force.

In the army, he thought of himself as Christian, but his understanding of both his faith and work have changed since then.

When he entered policing, he wanted to be on a tactical squad, which tends to use weapons and violence to achieve its ends. Now he has found a role in community policing where he is more comfortable. He feels the term "law enforcement" needs to be accompanied by the idea of "crime prevention."

Can police be agents of change? Davis tells his own story to illustrate. Hired by Waterloo Regional Police at age 21, he

started part-time studies in social work and sociology. One of his areas of work included a neighbourhood where drug addicts slept in a vacant lot.

The theory was to take a safe activity and put it into a high risk area to reduce crime. The residents of the neighbourhood planted a community garden. Cultural and racial differences were forgotten as they planted seeds together and took turns caring for their garden plots. Calls to the police dropped and crime was reduced in the community. For Davis, this illustrates the broader social aspects of good policing.

Davis concludes: "My study program gave me a chance to think out of the box in the area of community development and put theory into practice. However my real education



Rob Davis, left, confers with Lowell Ewert at the seminar for police officers.

has evolved from spending time with people and listening to their story. You quickly learn that a lot of offenders were at some time victims themselves."—**Maurice Martin**

The five police officers, all of whom attend Mennonite or Brethren in Christ churches, discussed questions such as the following: 1) Is there police work you cannot do as a Christian? How is “loving the enemy” applied in your work? 2) What tensions do you face in following Christ and your oath of office? 3) What impact does policing have on society? How do you see law enforcement advancing the kingdom of God? 4) What do you want from the church community?

About “loving your enemy,” one officer responded, “I never considered anyone among my clientele to be my enemy.... If we see them that way, we escalate the violence.” He noted that a police officer almost has a split personality between personal feelings and the “professional way of dealing with things.”

The group agreed that it is important to have a life outside of policing to maintain a balance and mental health. They conceded that “cops and robbers” can be a lot of fun, so you need a support group to keep you “real.” Instead of relying on alcohol or other crutches, “it’s a conscious choice to rely on your faith,” they said.

The group noted that in the past, police officers were taught that the perpetrators of crime were “the enemy,” a mindset that came out of the military system. Officers at this event said, “We were taught to keep the peace,” and “We experienced more human rights components in our training.”

Officers noted that maturity is needed to be empathetic. One officer observed that many do police work by default, rather than from a sense of vocation.

A voice from the outer circle said: “I grew up with the ‘what if’ questions—what if someone attacked someone dear to you? Dad would say, ‘I would do whatever it would take to stop him, short of killing him.’” There was a tacit willingness to use some force.

One officer responded: “We are constantly being monitored regarding the use of excessive force. We are taught to use ‘necessary, reasonable force’ in our work.” Concerning the recent hostage incident in Toronto, the police agreed that the man should have been “taken out” sooner for the sake of public safety.

One officer said: “I always felt that if



stocking stuffer

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lavender soap

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with you

chocolate

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I had to shoot someone, my career would be done. I would be too traumatized to continue.” Another observed: “No officer can be ordered to take a life, unlike the military where you can be ordered to kill.”

“We need to find better solutions” than simply enforcement, said an officer. One officer said, “I invested in a car thief for three years; my phone calls kept him out of trouble. If we could free up officers to ‘come alongside’ people, things would be better.”

Another said, “The best investigative job I ever did on a young shoplifter was to take him to his parents. The whole family...sat in that circle and shared their concerns for him. Laying criminal charges would have done nothing for that boy.”

What do officers want from the church? The officers feel the need to more clearly negotiate an understanding of their place within the faith community. One officer said that the church also needs “to bring up-to-date the 500-year two-kingdom theology to be relevant to our present time.”

Someone noted that it is significant

that officers participating in this event “were all police officers first, then became Mennonites,” implying that not many from within the Mennonite church have become police officers and stayed within the church.

A former police chief from the outer circle said, “It would be disappointing if you discouraged your Mennonite young folks from being police, because they would make good peace officers, concerned with bringing Christ’s peace.”

In this year’s dialogue, the police officers seemed more aware of how deeply ingrained is the “peace church” identity within those who have always been Mennonite. Surely more discernment is needed before one can say that “peace witness” and “peace officers” are fully consistent terms, though there were glimpses into their commonality.

How can we take these conversations back to pastors? And how can we provide a forum for young people who are thinking of police work? Several police officers indicated their availability as a resource, especially on restorative justice.—From report by **Maurice Martin**

Can a story end a war?

The prophet Isaiah believed that the story of God's kingdom has the power to change the world. These familiar Advent texts present an ever-growing vision of hope in a war-torn world.

Can a story be so powerful that it can stop war? That question confronted me as I was listening to John McDiarmid sing an oft-told story of World War I. It was Christmas and, during a lull in the fighting, British troops heard singing from the German side. Recognizing it as a song of the season, they responded with "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

When the Germans replied with *Stille Nacht*, the Brits joined in with "Silent Night."

"In two tongues," sang McDiarmid, "one song filled up the sky." Soon, troops spilled out of the trenches and threw a party, complete with gifts and a game of soccer.

Could it really be that a story is so powerful that it can stop war? The prophet Isaiah seemed to think so. In the Old Testament readings for Advent he sketches that hope-filled and hope-generating dream for us. In the way these texts are presented, the dream keeps getting bigger and bigger, more powerful and more engaging, till one can barely hold the dream without bursting!

In Isaiah 2:1-5, the prophet pictures the Temple Mount as the centre of the world as it draws all nations to itself for instruction in God's ways. The result: swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks—an end to war.

In 11:1-10, we encounter a different picture but the same dream, grown bigger. Out of the royal line of David, now reduced to an almost dead stump, there will come a new king who is filled with the Spirit of God. The actions of this charismatic ruler will result in justice and equity. The text does not say how, but knowledge of God and God's ways will

sweep across the nations and all violence and danger will end. All will experience safety and security—in home, in community, in the world.

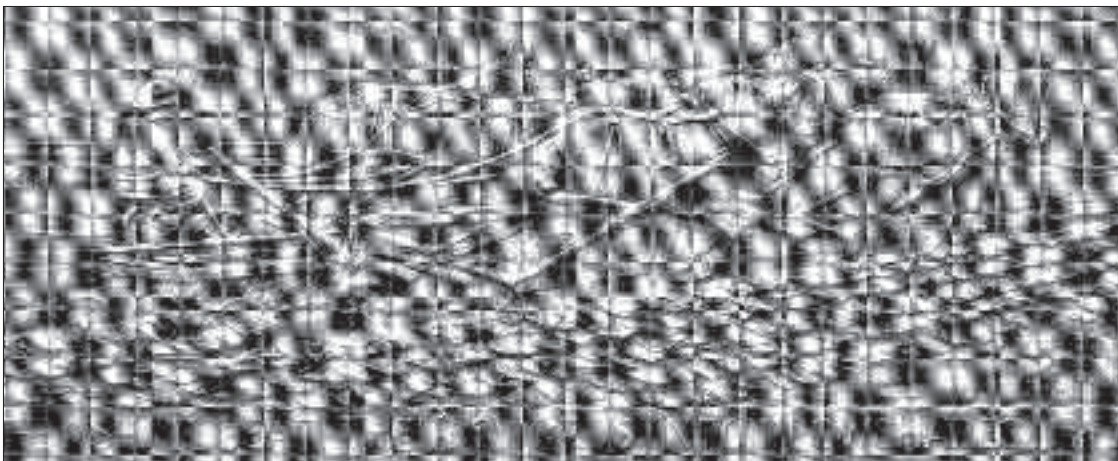
Chapter 35:1-10 enlarges the dream even further. Not only will there be an end to war, violence and danger. Now, God will reverse all the violence that humans have wreaked, and all the pain they have experienced. Creation, along with wounded human hearts and spirits—all will be healed. The desert will bloom, blind eyes will see, deaf ears will hear, speechless tongues will sing, and crippled limbs will dance.

With deep longing we cry out: Can this really be? How? The prophet tells us in 7:10-16: A child will be born, Immanuel, God with us. He will make the dream come true.

Advent and Christmas are times for dreaming dreams. In the music of the season, in the excitement of the children, in the hint of angels—we sense that more is possible than seems apparent to the naked eye. That very sense is an invitation to see beyond the immediate to what might be possible.

And yet, how easily reality imposes itself on us! War, brokenness, fear, despair are our regular companions. We become convinced that the dream cannot be, it is but a figment of our imagination.

Look again at Isaiah. He knew well the sounds of war and weeping, fear and despair. The dream that caught his spirit and sent it soaring was set in the middle of all that



Swords to Ploughshares, bronze plaque, John P. Klassen.

would kill the dream. The poem of chapter 2 comes right after the fearful judgement of chapter 1. Chapter 11 follows immediately upon the terror of 10:33-34.

The sign of the child—Immanuel—given in chapter 7 is given to a king who refuses to engage God in the possibility of hope. The real world is the context in which Isaiah's dreams burst forth with such incredible hope and healing. If Isaiah could dream the dream in his world, we can dream it in ours.

Even as Isaiah's dream fills our imagination, reading the Gospel texts for Advent assures us that God fulfills that dream. The instruction that Isaiah saw going forth from Zion (2:3) is the

story of Immanuel—"God with us." Knowledge of that story will make it possible for tanks to be transformed into combines and for children to play with wolf cubs. At the sound of the story, arthritic knees will be loosed in dance. Tongues will be freed and "one song will fill the sky."

The possibility of putting an end to war and bringing healing to the nations is seeded in that story. The telling of the story will cause the sprout to grow. By the power of the Spirit that moved Isaiah, the story can become real and fill the earth, "as the waters cover the sea."—**Ray Friesen**

The writer is a co-pastor, with his wife, Sylvia, at Zion Mennonite Church in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. This article appeared in Leader, a quarterly magazine for church leaders.

Resource for Christmas Eve

"Is it really possible?" is a script for a Christmas Eve service, written by Ray Friesen and based on the Isaiah texts for Advent. It is posted at www.leaderonline.org. The script works specifically with the question posed in this article: Can a story be so powerful that it can stop war?

Advent is about God's mission

Each year in November when the last dry leaves have scuttled to the ground, my heart turns toward Advent. As the barren landscape shivers in the early winds of winter, I find myself longing for the lights of Advent.

Not everyone feels the same as I do. Someone told me of a church member who accosted the worship committee and demanded that they eliminate Advent. He wanted Christmas in early December, not four weeks of waiting and preparation for Christ's coming.

I can understand the man's frustration. Something seems terribly out of joint when shopping centres are festooned with sparkling red-and-green banners and reverberate with merriment and jangling bells, while the church is draped in purple and lit by a few flickering candles while we sing our plaintive cry, "O come, O come, Immanuel." It isn't easy to live in such disparate worlds.

No season on the Christian calendar is likely more misunderstood than Advent. At no other time of the year do the church's values clash more uncomfortably with the surrounding culture. So why do we observe this season? Why doesn't the church join the December whirlwind and leap directly to the Christmas extravaganza? What was the ancient church thinking when they set aside four weeks of prayer and reflection to prepare their hearts to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child?

Advent is really about God's mission. The scriptures and songs of the season lay bare the yearning of God's own heart, God's passion for relationship, as was imagined in an 8th century hymn for Advent:

*Come, Sun and Savior, to embrace
our gloomy world, its weary race,
as groom to bride, as bride to groom:
the wedding chamber, Mary's womb.*

Yet it is so easy to lose the wonder of God's desire for us. We forget how astonishing is the gift of a child who breaks open our prison of isolation and fear and unites us with the Lord of Love and with one another. And living as we do in wealthy North America, we forget how many of the world's poor and oppressed are still desperate for dignity, freedom and release.

And so for a few short weeks we go backward in time to the season of Israel's captivity. We join with the people of God longing for a Messiah who will deliver them from their enemies. With out-stretched arms, they shout, "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence!" (Isaiah 64:1)

If at no other time of the year, then at least during Advent we stop to reflect on how barren our own lives would be without God's gift of grace and truth in the Babe of Bethlehem.

And in such a pause, a way is opened for a deeper, more transforming celebration of Christmas. A way is

opened for the church to see more clearly that this season—and every season—is a time when we are invited to join God's mission of justice and reconciliation in the world. What God is looking for during the Advent season is a people ready not only to receive the wondrous gift of God's own presence and peace, but ready to share that gift wisely and generously.

Mennonites are not required to celebrate Advent. In our free church tradition, no external authority regulates our worship calendar. But the Advent season offers a recurring reminder that, despite our unfaithfulness or unworthiness or even our inattention, God is at work in the world in amazing ways.

A song I sing to remind myself of God's dream for our world is a text by Scottish song writers John L. Bell and Graham Maule:

*Who would think that what was needed
to transform and save the earth
might not be a plan or army
proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
that a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.*

I will light the candles of Advent in our home—a sign of remembering and gratitude and hope. Will you?

—**Marlene Kropf**

The writer teaches Spiritual Formation and Worship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The song, "Who would think," is #907 in Hymnal Subscription Service 1998:1, available from Faith & Life Resources.

Finding God through art

As a lover of both art and theology, I continue to discover how the two complement each other. The more I learn through both formal study and life experience, the more I see the intricacy with which the two are woven together.

I once heard the artist described as one who has the capacity to be awakened by the very elements of life that are often missed by others. As an artist, I see my calling as one of challenging and ushering those around me into a greater experience of life and truth.

I long to see others drawn into the beauty they may otherwise overlook. One of the most beautiful aspects of life for me is the loving heart of God as revealed through Jesus Christ, and I long to help uncover the treasures of that mysteriously beautiful love.

My thoughts on art and faith have not always been synchronized. In fact, for most of my life, faith did not seem to find a place aside from the limited Sunday morning experience. The study of art history in my high school Visual Arts class corresponded with a time of deep soul searching, and thus awoke something more than intellectual knowledge within me.

As my head dissected the work of the Renaissance artists my heart was drawing near its own re-birth. Themes of forgiveness, grace and resurrection began to connect between my mind and my heart as my search for meaning in life continued. Art played a significant role in my life, as it was my passion, my expression and a great deal of my identity.

A year later, I came to a monumental realization in regards to the meaning of worship. The setting was not a crowded church, and involved no hymns or music. Rather, I was alone in an art studio with blank canvas before me, a powerful symbol of the chance to become as clean as the canvas I worked on.

I prayed that God would take my hands and accept them as an offering, and that God would be the artist

behind and before me. The experience began in my heart and continued in my head. I came to understand the very heart of worship that day, as God, the creator of all, desires it to be.

As I painted an image of my freedom in Christ, I began to experience that freedom lived out in my own life. It should come as no surprise to me that the Lord spoke to me in a powerful, life-transforming manner through this very medium, and used it to draw me closer.

I cannot help but be drawn into the presence of God through my senses. To me art is an intrinsic vehicle by which theology is promoted and expressed. Expansion of the venues in which I look for God and his messages has allowed me to move from a Gnostic and divisive lifestyle to a more holistic one.



Although I am still human, and often miss out, I find that I have been challenged and changed by God time and time again through the arts.
—**Dana Honderich**

The writer is a third-year student at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C.

Toews wins top award

Miriam Toews, a Winnipeg writer who has created a stir with her new novel, *A Complicated Kindness*, has won the 2004 Governor-General's Literary Award for fiction. The winner was announced on November 16. "It's hugely gratifying and astonishing," said Toews who was stunned that her book was selected over Alice Munro's. (Munro is a three-time G-G award winner and beat out Toews for the Giller Prize.) *A Complicated Kindness* is the story of teenager Nomi Nickel who lives in a strict and dreary Mennonite community in Manitoba (see *Canadian Mennonite*, Aug. 23, page 11). "Nomi, a wannabe hip New Yorker in a small town that seems allergic to desire, is hilariously cynical and sweetly compassionate," said the G-G jury. "An unforgettable coming-of-age story, this novel is melancholic and hopeful, as beautifully complicated as life itself." The winner of the non-fiction award was Romeo Dallaire for *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*.—From Nov. 17 *Globe and Mail*



Toews

Finding Mennonite-Catholic common ground

Gerald W. Schlabach, ed. *On Baptism: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium (2001-2002)*. Pandora Press, 2004

Ivan Kauffman, ed. *Just Policing: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium (2002)*. Pandora Press, 2004.

Beliefs and practices on baptism and just war/pacifism are longstanding differences among Mennonites and Roman Catholics. For this reason, these topics were selected for discussion by theologians and ethicists under the auspices of the Bridgefolk movement—a group of Mennonites and Catholics who want to learn from each other.

These books are important for two reasons. First, because they address issues of concern for the church's faith and life. Second, they model dialogue within the divided body of Christ.

Traditionally, Catholics have emphasized both the need to wash away original sin and the primacy of God's grace in the act of faith. They hold that infant baptism reflects these concerns.

Mennonites have traditionally charged that infant baptism is linked with a state church in which citizenship and church membership were the same thing. For the church to be a community of disciples living in contrast to the world requires adult commitments, that is, believers' baptism.

On Baptism opens with the argument by Frederick Bauerschmidt that Catholics share with Mennonites the desire that baptism lead to discipleship. Furthermore, in the present secular context, whether a person becomes a disciple in the church depends not on the age at baptism, but on whether the Christian community that nurtures that person exists as a contrast to the world.

Mennonite theologian Thomas Finger argues that the New Testament, "rebirth" is linked with conscious intention. Yet, Anabaptists still maintain God's initiative here, says Finger. The decision to receive water baptism follows a prior baptism by the Spirit. All writers agree that Mennonites and Catholics alike need to do a better job at teaching the faith

and forming disciples.

In *Just Policing*, Gerald Schlabach says that pacifists agree that "someone somewhere" has to maintain political order but have not often considered how. International "just policing" might be common ground for Mennonite pacifists and Catholic just war thinkers.

His basic point is to emphasize the difference between war and policing. If just war theory is stringently applied, it looks more like policing—bringing an (international) offender to justice and preserving order.

Mennonites and Catholics both disagree with Schlabach. Catholic ethicist Joseph Capizzi says that Mennonites and Catholics remain divided on the justification of force. As a Mennonite, J. Denny Weaver criticizes Schlabach for attempting to justify a little bit of violence. For Weaver, an "almost pacifist" is no pacifist at all.

Schlabach responds that Mennonite ethics should not be preoccupied with remaining pure. "For me to say that I am willing to be convinced by stringent just war thought, duly rectified as just policing, is not to say that I have

been convinced. Yet, nonviolence itself requires me to contemplate the possibility." Both dialogues exhibit careful clarification, logical argument, wit, bite, misunderstanding and reconciliation. They show which are important questions to ask: How do we read the Bible? What are the lessons of history? How is God at work through our churches and in worldly institutions?

At times there is as much disagreement within a tradition as between them. There are no definite conclusions.

The question here is not, "Should my tradition change its position?" Rather, each author asks whether there are aspects of these issues we agree on, and on which aspects disagreement is acceptable. What can each side learn from the other so that together we can be more faithful to our Christian calling?

The 2005 Mennonite Church Canada prayer week material is on unity in the body of Christ. These two books model a unity through dialogue and would make excellent study guides.—**Jeremy M. Bergen**

The reviewer is a doctoral student in theology at the Toronto School of Theology.

Arts notes

Art exhibits

- The Beatitudes is the theme for this year's juried art exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg. The exhibit is showing from November 26 to January 8. Over 20 artists are represented.
- "Jonah and the Cow, Jesus and the Healing Tree: Love Letters to Earth" is an exhibit by Bob Haverluck showing at the gallery from January 14 to February 26. Haverluck's whimsical, cartoon-like art comments in a fresh way on Bible stories and truths. He is a pastor and educator.
- "In God's Image," the art collection first shown at Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe in 2003, will be showing at the gallery March 4 to June 4. It was showing in Europe for the past year. The exhibit features about 100 pieces of art from 17 countries. The gallery is open

Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday from noon to 5:00 p.m. Ray Dirks, curator, is available for speaking and gallery tours. He can be contacted at (204) 888-6781 or e-mail: rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca.—From Gallery release

Movie on Luther

A new movie on Martin Luther, the sixteenth century reformer, began showing in theatres across the country in late October. "Luther" stars Joseph Fiennes as Luther, with an international cast (the late Peter Ustinov plays Prince Frederick the Wise). The movie was directed by Eric Till and produced by NFP Telear of Berlin. See www.lutherthemovie.ca for more information about the movie and a list of theatres where it is showing.—From reports

Mennonites have gifts for our culture

God, why did you wait so long to make me a Mennonite? This question is part of the debate that John, a newly-minted Menno at the age of 60, has with the Lord Almighty.

Though rather unusual discourse, it is questions such as this that compel me to work to see new Mennonite churches planted, and established churches find meaningful ways to be invitational in their neighbourhoods.

I believe God has brought us to this time and place with some purpose in mind. Although trying to fully grasp all that God intends is an impossible game to win (see Job), I find myself dabbling in it nonetheless. For much of our history we strove to be faithful and separate from the rest of the world. We were the “quiet in the land” and we still have Anabaptist cousins who remain faithful to that understanding of humbly living out one’s faith.

Yet as part of the constituency that reads *Canadian Mennonite*, we find ourselves immersed in contemporary culture. We may be quiet on occasion, but we are no longer separate. To this I say, “Thanks be to God.”

It is God who has brought us to this place in the midst of Canadian culture, and maybe God is now asking, or expecting, us to speak to our secular neighbours and colleagues in meaningful ways.

We have a long history of practising and developing Anabaptist core values of community, peace and justice, discipleship, prayer and service. There are many others in our culture, like my friend John, who are thirsty for what God has taught us. We have much to offer them.

When I relate to my colleagues from more evangelical denominations, I am fascinated to hear them ask how the

people in their churches can live more faithful lives. I’ve heard them decry the fact that their people just want to talk the talk, but don’t seem to have the desire to walk the walk of faith. There is puzzled amusement when I say that Mennonites may know how to walk the walk, but talking scares us just a little.

Maybe standing shoulder to shoulder with our secular neighbours and colleagues is a prime position in which God has placed us. God invites us to take risks and let people like John know that they too can be Mennonite. We must set our hearts to the task of inviting and including, so that our unchurched and non-Menno friends can experience God in new ways, and find belonging in a faith community.

—**Brian Bauman**

The writer is Minister of Mission for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

Letters

This section is a forum for discussion and discernment. Letters express the opinion of the writer only, not necessarily the position of *Canadian Mennonite*, any of the five area churches or Mennonite Church Canada. Letters should address issues rather than criticizing individuals and include the writer’s contact information. We will send copies of letters discussing other parties to the named individuals or organizations to provide the opportunity for a response. Letters can be sent to letters@canadianmennonite.org or to “Letter to the Editor,” Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7.

Researcher seeks Hmong refugee stories

I am doing research for a book I hope to write on the Hmong people in Canada, and would like to hear from anyone in the Mennonite community willing to share reminiscences of their involvement with this group during their early settlement in Canada, from 1979 to 1983.

Mennonite churches and Mennonite Central Committee in Ontario played a leading role in assisting Hmong families on their arrival in Canada as refugees. Subsequently, the Hmong people established a Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener.

I would be delighted to hear from anyone who may have interesting recollections or documents covering these events. Please contact me by e-mail at mbrem@yorku.ca.—**Maxwell Brem, York University, Toronto, Ont.**

Toews’ novel is not picture of Mennonites

Miriam Toews’ novel, *A Complicated Kindness*, is a remarkably well-written rant. The central character, Nomi Nickel, is just graduating from high school. At first I am angry for her juvenile raving, but Toews wins me over to feel a good deal of sympathy

for Nomi.

If we could leave it as a disaffected Mennonite girl coming of age and bowing out, I could enjoy the novel. Unfortunately, Toews denigrates a religious faith and a thinly disguised prairie town.

Do I worry too much about our Mennonite image? The main character is not, in my mind, a credible witness through whom to view Mennonitism. Her chosen alternative of freedom and licence are unappealing even to her.

Social satire is to have a redemptive function, causing us to see our foibles and failings and to change. Toews’ inaccurate use of Mennonite history, theology and practice, her character’s overblown rhetoric, and her blanket labelling of all Mennonites, make it hard for me to see myself within her pages. I see little change coming from reading Toews.

Nomi rants, “We’re Mennonites. As far as I know, we are the most embarrassing sub-sect of people to belong to if you’re a teenager.... The mark of the

beast. Streets paved in gold.... I dream of escaping into the real world." We may forgive a teenager for generalizing, but we need to take it as one fictionalized, very immature, voice.

It is harder to forgive a literary critic for jumping to the conclusion that a book of fiction can delineate a whole religious movement. I checked some internet reviews. To Karl Allen (About), "it seems Menno Simons, the religious founder, was not so big on explanation but very big on damnation." He read it in the book.

Why not generalize that all Mennonites were commanded by Menno to go to bed by nine? It's in the book.

Fiction thrives on conflict. This novel has a fictionalized setting, situations and conflicts that have been contrived, and a character with parents and relatives who are fictional. We dare not try to read in it an accurate history of a real-life town or a religious movement.—**Alvin G. Ens, Abbotsford, B.C.**

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The gift of self

At this time of year, many North American Christians are engaged with two dimensions of gift-giving. As days shorten and darkness deepens, we enter the season of Advent, and ponder the miracle of God's self-giving love, assuming human form in the person of Jesus. God is an extravagant giver, bathing us with more sweet love than we can absorb.

The second form of gift-giving is that of the Christmas gifts we exchange. Driven by seemingly irresistible forces, we are compelled to give materially, swapping our cash for stuff often made by people with little cash who labour in oppressive circumstances. We justify our practice by twinning it with God's gift of Jesus.

The impulse to give is commendable. We are called to practise generosity. There are many good reasons to place a gift in the hands of loved ones this season. In my family, the annual gift exchange organized by drawing names enables the diverse and far-flung members to connect and celebrate with each other. In that spirit, I have already secured a great new strategy game for

my young nephew, which I hope to play with him.

What we yearn for, though, is meaningful relationship. The best gifts are those of our selves. This is how God made us, and this is one of the lessons God offers us in Jesus. "I love you!" God says. "I want to be in relationship with you. Look! I give myself to you."

When my dad was asked what he

Family Ties

Melissa Miller



wanted for Christmas, he invariably replied, "I want happiness and I've got lots of that. Just being together is enough of a gift for me."

What steps can we take away from gifts of things towards gifts of our selves? How can we help each other banish the oppression of materialism and claim the free love of God? We learn from others, particularly

those generous souls who live in places rich in relationships.

When my husband travelled to Africa for Mennonite World Conference in 2003, he was overwhelmed by the warmth of people he met, who embraced him and named him "brother" and "Papa." People like Pascal Kulungu of the Congo, a Mennonite administrator and peace educator, gave generously of themselves.

This season I want nothing more than to be with those I love—to sing carols Christmas morning with my grandmother at the nursing home, to play a few wickedly competitive games of Dutch Blitz, to laugh and love and embrace. The money my husband and I normally put towards material gifts for each other will be given to support Pascal in developing the Centre for Peacebuilding, Leadership, and Good Governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in appreciation of his friendship and dedication.

In these dark months, let us turn and find the light of God in each other.

The writer is a counsellor, writer and teacher from Winnipeg. She is currently a master of divinity student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Vietnam church leaders sentenced to prison

On November 12, the People's Court here handed down sentences to six Vietnamese Mennonite church workers in a four-hour trial.

Nguyen Hong Quang, a pastor and general secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, was given three years imprisonment for obstructing officials carrying out their duties. Evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach was given a two-year sentence. The others were sentenced to nine to twelve months in prison.

About 200 Christians reportedly came to show their support for Quang, including many from persecuted ethnic minorities in the central highlands. None was allowed into the courtroom, though some were permitted to enter the courtyard which was guarded by an estimated 300 police.

A few family members were allowed inside the courtroom. International diplomats and foreign reporters were not allowed in.

In an interview given to BBC after the trial, Quang's wife, Le Thi Phu Dung, said that her husband was judged very harshly. Asked if she would appeal the sentence, she said that is her intention. She and 45-year-old Quang have three children, all under 10 years of age.

Mennonite World Conference sent letters to Vietnamese authorities after the trial date was announced, asking that the six persons be given fair trials.

Quang has been a leader within the evangelical Christian house movement for many years. In 1998, he affiliated with the Mennonites. He has been a mentor to many young evangelists, and he and his group have nurtured Christians among ethnic minorities in central Vietnam.

These groups, together with Mennonites in other areas, came together in July 2003 to form the Vietnam Mennonite Church. Quang was chosen as vice-president and general secretary.

Trained in law, Quang was head of the legal committee of the Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship (VEF), an association of some 20 house church groups. He routinely documented and reported government harassment against churches in many parts of the country.

In December 2003 he publicly called for the release of persons arrested for handing out Christian literature in Ho Chi Minh City. Then he reported to police that he was being followed and threatened. The arrests of the church leaders began following these incidents.

Nghia, an evangelist, was arrested and beaten in jail. When his brother, Nhan, and two other church workers went to inquire about Nghia, all three were detained. Quang was arrested on

June 8 when he was lured from his home by police posing as land agents. In July, Le Thi Hong Lien, a female

church worker, was also arrested.

Authorities insisted that these arrests had nothing to do with religious freedom. They called together people from the community to denounce Quang and the local church. In early July, newspapers, TV and radio reports called Quang a thug and criminal. These accusations

were rejected,

both by local Christians, and by the international Mennonite community which called for the release of Quang and the others.—From Mennonite World Conference and Vietnam Ministries



Vietnamese Ministries photo

Nguyen Hong Quang has been sentenced to three years in prison in Vietnam.

Pleiku City, Vietnam

Mennonites harassed in central Vietnam

On November 6, four Mennonite leaders were summoned to the town hall here and told to terminate their relationship with the Vietnam Mennonite Church. Authorities described the church as a heretical religion and a "reactionary clique opposing the state."

Y Djik reported that when he insisted that he had made a commitment to the church, he was slapped in the face and a security officer tried to force his hands into tiny handcuffs.

"I cried out in pain," wrote Y Djik. "I was being treated as a common criminal." He was given nothing to eat or drink all day while officers "worked him over." Eventually he broke down

and signed a statement that he would leave the church, though he had no intention of doing so.

The next morning he and three other men, Y Kor, Y Kat and Y Yan, were forced to read their self-criticisms to the townspeople. Everyone who had gathered in Y Djik's home for worship was fined 200,000 dong, a half-month's wage, and ordered to leave the Mennonite church.

The four men were placed under surveillance for three months, and warned that they will be arrested and sent to a prison reform camp for two years if they violated the orders not to meet in their homes for worship.

Though the security police denied

Winnipeg, Man.

New partnership with Africa takes hold

For the first time ever, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) will have leadership based in Africa instead of North America.

Mission leaders from both continents met September 22 to October 7 in Burkina Faso, South Africa and Botswana to iron out structures and appoint leaders to new posts. AIMM has been a major channel of Mennonite ministries in Africa since 1912.

“The growth and maturation of the church in Africa has led to a keen desire to include African church leaders in the decision-making level for missions,” said Peter Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada Witness Mission Partnership facilitator for Africa and Europe, and past chair of AIMM.

In the new AIMM, an International Central Council (ICC) will undergird a set of Partnership Councils from an African home base. The councils will relate to the various church bodies in the six African countries:

The ICC chose Siaka Traore of Burkina Faso as its first chair, Komuesa Kalunga Adolphe of the Congo as vice chair, and Peter Rempel from MC Canada as secretary. Its primary function will be networking and providing resources for the councils and the missionaries. It will meet once a year.

The African Mennonite churches

participating in the new AIMM are the Evangelical Mennonite Church of the Congo, the Mennonite Brethren Church of the Congo, the Mennonite Church of the Congo, and the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso. The partners from North America are MC Canada, Evangelical Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Church USA.

The AIMM mandate has excluded the starting of Mennonite churches in southern Africa.

Only MC Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network (MC USA) are working with African Initiated Churches (AICs) in southern Africa.

The councils strongly urged an increasing focus on training Bible teachers rather than providing the Bible teaching, as well as continuing attention to HIV/AIDS.



Photo by Peter Rempel

Siaka Traore, chair of the new AIMM International Central Council, greets Susan Allison Jones, Canadian mission worker, in Botswana.

During the Partnership Council meetings in Botswana, Glyn and Susan Allison Jones, Witness workers from Ontario, brought together some enthusiastic leaders for an evening of conversation.

“People’s lives have been changed because they have encountered the risen Christ through [Bible] studies,” said Susan. “But they are also committed to passing on what they have learned to others. They have discovered something exciting and they want others to discover it too!”

In response to the restructured AIMM, Janet Plenert, executive director of international ministries for MC Canada, wrote, “We have much to learn from each other. This may mean that African missionaries or visiting pastors come to minister among our churches, calling us to repentance, to renewal. We must let go of our need to make decisions, and rather trust the collaborative wisdom of the new international, inter-Mennonite partnership councils.”

More information on AIMM is available at www.aimmintl.org.
—MC Canada release

mistreating anyone, an officer admitted that they are under orders to deny believers the freedom to meet unless they are an official group in a designated building.

In May, two Mennonite pastors in this region were sent to a detention camp because they refused to terminate their relations with the Mennonite church.

On November 15, the Vietnamese government was to implement a new law which specifies that religious activities can only be carried out on church property. Since house churches do not own properties, their leaders fear that the law will further restrict their activities.

Though Vietnam’s constitution guarantees freedom to follow a religion

or no religion, the ruling party has stated its intention to manage religious groups.

Many house churches in Ho Chi Minh City have been able to meet openly and officials have talked about the possibility of registering some of them. In August, the bureau of religious affairs contacted Mennonite leaders about registration of the Vietnam Mennonite Church. At that time, six Mennonite leaders, four with no charges against them, were in prison.

House church leaders today are not optimistic about current government policies, particularly since the jailed church leaders received prison sentences.—Mennonite World Conference and Vietnamese Ministries

Winnipeg, Man.

Mission work in Africa involves travel adventures

Mission workers, already away from their homes in North America, are also frequently away from their homes in their ministry locations.

This past year has taken Bruce Yoder, whose home base is in Benin, to Ghana, Togo and Nigeria to teach. Yoder, and his wife, Nancy Frey (from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church), work under a Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network partnership. Frey provides leadership at the Benin Bible Institute.

In Ghana, Yoder taught Anabaptist history for three days to Ghana Mennonite Church leaders from six districts, using Arnold Snyder's book, *From Anabaptist Seed*. Yoder wrote, "We looked at what some 15th century Anabaptist leaders said about topics like: discerning God's will, salvation, baptism, church discipline, the Lord's supper, foot washing, truth telling, economic sharing, and pacifism."

Discussion on each topic eventually got around to teachings and practices in the congregations represented. One of the mostly lively interchanges centred on church discipline, specifically who decides who should be disciplined and how. One example was polygamy.

"While polygamy may not be a hot topic in Mennonite congregations in North America, the issues around church discipline, what deserves discipline, how it should be implemented and who makes those decisions are just as alive today among western Mennonites as they are in Africa," says Yoder.

Yoder's itinerary for Nigeria involved leadership training, visiting churches and connecting with Mennonite Central Committee workers involved in education and peace-making.

Travel in West Africa is "often an adventure," reported Yoder, explaining how a car breakdown led to another delay.

"The following morning we started off early, only to run into a student riot. At one point the 'students' (not all of them were students!) wanted to get



Pastor Victor UmohAbasi leads a seminar at a Mennonite Church in Nigeria. Bruce Yoder arrived late due to "travel adventures."

into the vehicle and suggested we should let them use it. Matthew Tangbuin (an MCC worker) finally arranged with one of the students to join us in the vehicle and he negotiated us through the roadblocks that his fellow demonstrators had established. Once we got safely through, we sent the student on his way with a small gift as a token of our gratitude."

A common theme in Yoder's experience is gratitude and the impact of prayer.

"Please pray for us and the different ministries across West Africa," he wrote. "We are encouraged by what we see God doing here and believe that your prayers are a part of the mix that makes it all possible."—MC Canada release



Building on the Past

Mennonite Architecture, Landscape and Settlements in Russia/Ukraine is a treasure of photographs, information and insights.

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Surrey, British Columbia

Cows provide fertile soil for church plants

A couple with eight years of experience in Thailand told mission leaders here in October that it takes a village, and a cow or two, to grow a church.

Speaking to mission planners in Canada and the United States, Pat and Rad Houmpham, MC Canada Witness workers, outlined a long-term approach to reaching a predominantly Buddhist migrant people in Thailand.

The area inhabited by the Isaan people, mainly descendants of Laotian immigrants, is the poorest region of Thailand, because of a lack of fertile soil and insufficient rain. Yet 90 percent of the population ekes out a living through farming.

"As we reach out to the Isaan people, we are not only concerned about saving souls but are also concerned about their physical needs," Pat Houmpham said. Using seed money from North America, the Houmphams have developed rice banks, fish projects and a cow-lending project.

In the Living Water Church of Borabur, they lent a cow to a member of the congregation, who will raise the cow for three years to generate three calves, keeping two and returning one calf and the mother cow to the church. The calf and the cow are then passed onto two families and the cycle begins again.

"We hope that the project will help to generate an income to raise the standard of living. It is hoped that when the income increases, [the church member] will give back a portion to God and to support the worker and the needs of the church," Pat said.

Nearly 22 million Isaan people live mostly in villages in northeastern Thailand. Despite nearly two centuries of mission work, only one percent of the population is Christian.

Since the mid-1990s, the Houmphams have planted two congregations: a church of 85 people in Det Udom and one of 65 people in Borabur. The village-based approach is necessary because residents are spread out and transportation between villages is difficult. Several villages may meet together every six weeks for common worship.

While the Isaan people's physical

needs are great, their spiritual needs are even greater.

"The fear of demonic power has caused Isaan people to practise animism. They believe spirits exist in all places," said Pat. "The solution...is to present to the people that Jesus has power over demons and evil spirits.... Jesus can take away fear and bring peace."

Since Isaan families consider it devastating for a relative to convert to Christianity, the Houmphams use Isaan culture to interpret Christianity.


"We conduct the service in Isaan-Lao language, sing Isaan songs and do Isaan dance using traditional *maw-lum* music, and use sticky rice and

krajep juice for communion," Pat said. "The purpose is for the Isaan to see that Christianity is not only a western religion. This will increase the chances of people being more open-minded toward the gospel."—From MC Canada release by **Tom Price**





Photo by Tom Price

Pat and Rad Houmpham talk about their ministry at the joint meetings of Mennonite Church Canada Witness Council and the Mennonite Mission Network.



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Canadian Mennonite November 29, 2004 Volume 8, Number 23

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Steinbach, Man.

Delegates discuss issues in absence of quorum

Begun four years ago as information meetings and for the past two years as delegate sessions, the October meetings of Mennonite Church Manitoba have become important decision-making times.

However, not enough delegates were present at the October 23 session at Steinbach Mennonite Church to form a quorum.

"The meeting is still beneficial to pass on information to you and the churches," said Bernie Tiessen, moderator.

However, the approval leaders sought for two decisions concerning next year's budget will be requested instead at the February delegate sessions.

113 out of the required 181 delegates were present, representing 37 of the 48 churches. Edgar Rempel, executive director, wondered if the churches have not recognized the importance of the meetings and if more publicity is needed.

John P. Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries, opened with a devotional.

Reflecting on the increased attention given to vision statements, he contrasted present day responses—task forces, agendas, goal setting—with the responses of the early church when it received its "vision statement" to go out and proclaim the gospel.

"The disciples go to the upper room and pray. Although there is work to be done, they go and pray. We are so eager to get things done that we neglect to wait and pray."

Delegates took time for prayer around their tables before they discussed the issues.

Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries, shared information about a new adult study series he is developing, "Rooted in the centre—Living on the edge."

The six-session curriculum is to help groups and congregations look at what is the centre of what we believe and who we are in a changing landscape.

"Jesus models and calls us to an expression of faith that is close to the centre but lives creatively and coura-

geously on the outside edges," he said.

Voth asked the delegates, "What are the practices and disciplines that demonstrate what we hold as the centre of our faith and what are the edges you currently live on?"

The responses from delegates will be incorporated in the curriculum, which will be available at the February delegate sessions.

A discussion of the budget followed. Unable to call for a vote on the 2005 congregational giving budget of \$763,400 (a three percent increase over last year), and unable to approve in principle the total 2005 budget, the board invited feedback.

Three new programs are proposed in the new budget—church planting initiatives, growth opportunities in leadership and pastoral support, and restoring in part the funding that had been cut to *Canadian Mennonite*.

Delegates expressed concern about knowing what the priorities are.

"Nobody says where we will cut when the money doesn't come in," said one, concerned about the previous cut to *Canadian Mennonite*.

Some worry that although receipts are ahead of last year at this time, the conference is still a ways from meeting the budget for existing programs.

Part of the deficit reflected in the budget is due to a Winnipeg School Division's decision to withdraw its use of Camp Assiniboia.

"We are in a discernment process in formulating policy" for Camp Assiniboia, said Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries. "We are asking your input as to the policy we want to implement."

Delegates suggested that the policy state "what we stand for rather than



Photo by Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries, makes a point at the Mennonite Church Manitoba delegate session. Seated are MC Manitoba Board member Peter Epp (left) and executive director Edgar Rempel.

listing the things not acceptable."

"If we close the door to some, how do we relate to them?" asked one delegate. "Can we modify the policy to open the door to non-church groups with the hope that some would return and be open to faith discussion?"

The Listening Committee, consisting of Peter Zacharias and Esther Peters, reported what they heard.

"The camp issue is one where we feel very strongly about the centre, but uncertain about exploring the edges," they said, referring to the theme of the new study curriculum. "We need more work in identifying what our camps are really supposed to be," they concluded.

The annual delegate session will be held at the Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church on February 18-19, 2005.

The next fall delegate session will be on October 22, 2005.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Kitchener, Ont.

Fundraiser supports housing project

Housing should be at the head of the line of social concerns, says Larry Smith, University of Waterloo economist. "It is the platform, the foundation of any humane, functioning society."

Smith was the speaker at a House of Friendship fundraising banquet on November 5 for Charles Village, a new apartment building for low-income, single adults. The event was held at St. Aloysius Catholic Church.

The facility will include 22 one-

illustrate how fundamental secure housing is to the wellbeing of individuals and their families. It can break a cycle of dependence and despondency.

"Affordable housing is what makes all our other charitable endeavours practical, effective and lasting," said Smith. "Without a decent and secure place to live, you will not recover from illness, the treatment is wasted.... Whatever we do, in education, counseling, etc., it is all ineffective or wasted if we don't have affordable housing."



The new Charles Village facility being built by House of Friendship in Kitchener.

bedroom apartments, as well as activity space and offices. Its model is the Eby Village supportive housing project that opened in 1990. The \$2.4 million project is receiving regional and government funds, leaving over \$1 million to be raised. The goal is to raise \$650,000 this year.

Gary Chard, fundraising coordinator, remarked that fundraising is also about relationships that are formed as people work together to provide affordable housing. Recently, someone whose acquaintance had used the services of House of Friendship found the agency on the web and donated over \$200,000. That brought total donations to 77 percent of the goal.

Smith offered three stories to

In the spirit of volunteerism which pervades the House of Friendship, most of the food for the banquet was donated. It was prepared under the leadership of Eleanor Snyder from Breslau Mennonite Church, with volunteers from Breslau and St. Aloysius Catholic churches.

House of Friendship is an interdenominational agency which has served the community for 65 years. Founded by Mennonites, it is strongly supported by Mennonite churches. It operates 16 programs, including a men's hostel, food hampers and support for people with addictions. It has 130 staff, 55 of them full time.

—From report by **Maurice Martin**

Neighbours oppose housing project

Supportive housing for low-income people is not always welcomed by the neighbours. That's what the House of Friendship discovered when it proposed the Charles Village apartment building for the Cedar Hills neighbourhood of downtown Kitchener.

Residents in the neighbourhood argued that, although they support affordable housing, their community is already saturated with subsidized housing and group homes, including the House of Friendship shelter for men and housing for mentally ill people.

And residents were angry that a federal housing study branded them as NIMBY (not in my back yard), people who do not want needy people in their neighbourhood.

"Our community is the antithesis of NIMBY," stated one resident (*Kitchener-Waterloo*

Record, July 30, 2003). The neighbourhood has worked hard to

keep its schools open, shut down drug dealing, and keep the area liveable for families.

A long-time Mennonite resident of the neighbourhood circulated a protest letter, with copies to the House of Friendship and others, including *Canadian Mennonite*.

"I am a supporter of the House of Friendship, as are most of my neighbours," wrote John Bergen in the letter. But such a high concentration of social housing cannot but be harmful to the health of the neighbourhood. "This is a good project in the wrong place."

Brian Hunsberger, development director for House of Friendship, disagrees. "We believe from an agency point of view that it is a good location," he said. "It is close to downtown. It is close to other programs we run... and it is largely on land we already owned.... It's not as though it will involve an influx of...people into that neighbourhood."—Compiled by **Margaret**

Loewen Reimer

'This is a good project in the wrong place.'

Master of Theological Studies

at Conrad Grebel University College 



“One reason to explain the vitality and dramatic growth of the MTS program at CGUC since its beginning in 1988 may be that we (faculty and staff) have sought quite deliberately to combine serious intellectual inquiry and spiritual formation in a way that is welcoming to a wide range of denominational traditions. Ours is truly an ecumenical environment, with Mennonites studying alongside Catholics, Pentecostals, Reformed, and students from other mainline and evangelical groups seeking personal growth, training for ministry in the church, or preparing for further academic studies.”

- Professor A. James Reimer,
Acting Director of the MTS program

The Program

Conrad Grebel’s Master of Theological Studies (MTS) is a two-year interdisciplinary degree program designed for students preparing for further graduate work, pastoral ministry, or for personal enrichment. To foster and sustain the academic study of the beliefs and practices of Christianity, particularly the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition, Grebel’s MTS program draws on the College’s larger academic strengths, including the teaching and research areas of Theology, Biblical studies, Mennonite studies, music, peace studies, and the liberal arts. In the Ministry Option, the MTS program also draws on the wealth of experience and training of persons primarily engaged in ministry within the church.

The Need

The need for trained church leadership is critical. Many congregations have pastoral vacancies. MCEC Leadership Commission chair, Leroy Shantz observes that “nurturing gifts for leadership in our congregations and church institutions is a key investment. The partnership between MCEC and Grebel in the MTS program is a wonderful way of working together in the task of pastoral training for our churches.”

Grebel is committed to responding to this need with graduate programs designed to train pastors and church leaders. Since the MTS program was initiated in 1988, it has graduated 43 students who now serve the church and its institutions in many ways.

In 1997 MCEC asked Conrad Grebel to add a ministry component to its Master of Theological Studies program to help prepare people for pastoral ministry. To assist the College with the expanded MTS program, MCEC offered to work with the College to establish a \$1 million endowment in honour of Ralph and Eileen Lebold. A total of \$433,000 has been collected in gifts and pledges to date. The Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training supports the Ministry Option of the MTS program - e.g., Coordinator of Leadership Formation, courses in pastoral education, supervised experience in ministry, internships, etc. The Ministry program is being developed in cooperation with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN.

MTS Program Growth

	1998/99	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Enrollment (full time equivalent)	9.5	22	22	23
Annual Course enrollments	59	135	142	165

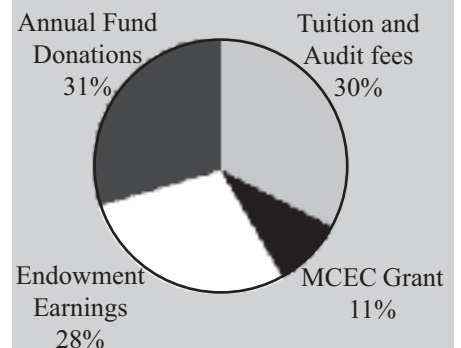
Enrollment

Grebel’s Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program currently has 54 students enrolled, the equivalent of 23 full time. Of these students, 34 are taking courses this term, an increase of 36% from last year. The program has grown rapidly in recent years. Approximately three quarters of MTS students are in the Ministry stream.



Sessional Instructor Derek Suderman teaches an Old Testament Exegesis class on the Psalms. Derek is an MTS graduate and a PhD candidate at Toronto School of Theology.

MTS Revenue



Total Expenses 2004-2005
\$126,176

MCEC and Grebel Create Staff Position for Leadership Formation *by Henry Paetkau*

Pastoral leadership development is high on the agenda of both Conrad Grebel University College and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. That's why Grebel and MCEC collaborated in establishing the Ministry Option in the MTS program seven years ago. The Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training, which helps to fund this part of the program, is also a joint endeavour.

That cooperation is now moving a significant step further with the shared appointment of a half-time **Coordinator of Leadership Formation**. This position builds on and expands the role of the former staff person for the MCEC Pastoral Leadership Training Commission. The expanded role will allow the new staff person to work more actively at coordinating and promoting the pastoral leadership education activities of both the conference and the College. This role will build connections among students, congregations, the seminary in Elkhart, as well as with other graduate programs. This position is an important and innovative joint venture in providing the necessary resources and training for leaders and pastors in our congregations.



*CGUC President,
Henry Paetkau*



“During my undergrad studies, I took some Sociology of Religion courses and became really interested in the topic, writing a paper on Feminist Theology. Outside of my studies I was hearing God’s call to explore Youth Ministry as a career option. With these two interests in mind, enrolling in the MTS program seemed a natural step. I am able to explore theology and other ministry related topics while gaining practical experience in my Associate Pastor position at Listowel Mennonite Church.”

-Beth Ann Lichti

Women of MCEC Award Winner

Sarah Pinnell, Conrad Grebel Master of Theological Studies student, has been awarded the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Theological Studies Award. This award is given annually to a female student, preferably from an MCEC congregation, who shows interest in a church related vocation.

As a student in the Biblical/Theological stream, Sarah was drawn to the MTS program because of her previous studies at Grebel and her interaction with the Grebel faculty. As she took more courses at Grebel in her undergraduate years, she “realized the depth of theological studies and the amount I did not know, but wanted to know.”



Sarah attends First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario and helps with Thursday night youth programs there. She also is writing the multi-age curriculum for the *Gather 'Round Curriculum* which will be released in 2006 for all Mennonite Churches in Canada and the USA through the Brethren Press and the Mennonite Publishing Network. In her future, Sarah sees a combination of more study and continuing church involvement and development.



“Students in the MTS program are a good community and we are getting to be more comfortable and close with each other. Also, the professors here are wonderful. I’m very impressed by their intellect, and the integration of it into their lives.”

-Nak Sun Kim

Conrad Grebel Master of Theological Studies Faculty

Conrad Grebel Faculty include: Marlene Epp, Lowell Ewert, Nathan Funk, Kenneth Hull, John W. Miller (Emeritus), A. James Reimer, C. Arnold Snyder, Hildi Froese Tiessen, Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld (Director, Graduate Theological Studies)

Adjunct Faculty include: Brice Balmer, Arthur Boers, Peter Frick, Lydia Neufeld Harder, Gary Harder, J. Laurence Martin, Marianne Mellinger, Susan Clemmer Steiner



“I appreciate the chance to define, reconsider and challenge my beliefs with students and professors who have a broad variety of beliefs and life experiences within and outside of the Mennonite tradition.”

-Taylor Martin

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Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6
519-885-0220
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Letters from Colombia

Janet Plenert, director of International Ministries, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, is living in Colombia with her family for several months. The following is from a recent report. The first letter was in the Nov. 1 issue, page 21.

I had stated that I would travel from Colombia to Venezuela with the church delegation. I did not know that it would mean an extensive bus trip (15 hours), then a flight.

Foreigners can be targets of violence in Colombia. The bus trip was at night—not normally considered wise. We were stopped by military police; otherwise it was a very smooth trip.

The next day, two conversations confirmed my decision. The church president, Peter Stucky, asked if I was glad I had come in the bus (this while we were hot and sweaty and negotiating an amazingly tedious border crossing into Venezuela). I said I was, without a doubt. He seemed pleased.

Later—about 28 hours into the 30 hour trip—Alix Lozano, president of

the Mennonite Seminary in Colombia, asked why I came with the group when I could have flown the whole way. I said that I came to Colombia to be a part of the church, even on a trip like this. It looked like a light went on in her.

At the conference, 10 Anabaptist denominations from Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela gathered for four days to study, worship and work together at the agenda of the church in this region. The Peruvians and the indigenous leader from Ecuador were



Plenert

denied visas—a recurring theme.

One story that sticks out came from a Chinese-Venezuelan Mennonite Brethren woman, Stella. In January she was kidnapped and held for eight days. She struggled to communicate with her captors. Every day she prayed for them, and the Chinese church prayed for her.

She was released with a strong commitment to learn Spanish better and to plunge into the Bible and her faith so that she would be able to better explain her faith in difficult situations. She must have managed to share her faith, because her captors asked her to pray every day for them. Her husband became a Christian through this difficult experience.

A week before Jack Suderman and I were scheduled to meet in Cuba to teach a course, our religious visas were denied and the location was switched. While this might be considered chaos in Canada, it is “par for the course” in Latin America. We decided to go anyway. I was let into the country after rigorous questioning by four officials and talking my way around why I had Sunday school curriculum packages if I was a tourist. The Colombia stamp in my passport must have made me look suspicious.

It was a wonderful group of keen, committed and thoughtful pastors and church people. They embraced new ideas, history and all the challenges

we threw at them. Groups stayed up late at night discussing the material.

One student (one of the many well-educated and highly-motivated Cubans who have worked hard for society through government channels and are now checking out the church) read two books during the week (*Mennonite History* by C.J. Dyck and a John Driver book). People like him have a thirst for integrity and will not settle for pat answers.

Among the sharpest students was a young pastor couple. Alexander spent four years in a Baptist seminary and makes around \$15 a month as a pastor—when the money is there. Aisha was a journalist who recently gave up her job to dedicate herself to the work of the church. How they live is a mystery to me.

Alexander was enthralled with the Radical Reformation. Aisha struggled to understand peace and nonviolence and, perhaps more than any other student, saw the implications for the church in Cuba.

Jack and I had a potentially tragic experience—we were walking at night and approached from in front and behind by two young men; the one in front pulled out a knife. But nothing happened and it ended very quickly with one man running and the other slowly backing away.

Our guest house hostess tried to insist that we not go out again at night. We simply told her that our lives are not controlled by fear.

—**Janet Plenert**

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Corrections

The article on Anne Garber Kompaoré (Oct. 18, page 22) stated erroneously her degree (she has a Master of Arts of Theological Studies) and the position of her husband, Daniel. He was was founding director of the National Bible Translation and Literacy Organisation from 1992-98.

We incorrectly identified Neil Rempel's last name. He was one of the speakers at MC B.C.'s Walking in Grace seminar (Nov. 15, page 13). Also, we've received numbers for the session: 170 people attended.

FOCUS

Mission & Service

Peru roadblock turns into a prayer meeting

CUSCO, Peru - Just before a delegation of Eastern Mennonite Missions workers, national church leaders and visitors left for a ten-hour trip from Cusco to Santa Teresa, they received a warning. Area farmers, angered by the unfair price the government was paying for their coca, had called a strike and blockaded the

only road through the region.

With counsel from national pastor Rubén Carrasco, who was part of the group, the team decided to proceed on toward Huayopata, the first major town on the other side of the mountain.

Sure enough, on the edge of Huayopata, the group hit a roadblock of rocks and tree branches. Villagers swarmed around their van and truck, completely blocking the road. "Not even a mosquito will get through here," a

woman who seemed to be in charge warned the travelers.

Pastor Rubén spoke with the leading striker. "We really need to get through, but we understand your situation. You can let us through or not—it's up to you."

The stalled mission team spilled out of their vehicles and struck up conversations with the strikers. They sang Christian songs in English and Spanish, first with the children, then with the adults who gathered. The mission

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team unpacked food they had brought along and shared it with the crowd.

But as darkness settled, the mission team climbed back into their vehicles and decided to abort the trip.

Suddenly some of the villagers ran up. "No, no, don't turn back," they shouted. "You've been good to us. Go on through."

Before we go, we want to pray a blessing over you," EMM missionary José Lopez said. Pastor Rubén gave a short message, expressing sympathy for the farmers' difficult situation and explaining the gospel.

Villagers began to respond to the message. Dozens lined up, requesting prayer. Even the woman in charge of the roadblock began to cry and asked to receive Jesus. Several villagers invited some of the group to come to a nearby house to pray for a sick man. When the team discovered that the village had no church, they arranged to come back later to show *The Jesus Film* and minister through the Peruvian Mennonite Church's mobile clinic.

CPT Iraq invitation to prayer

The Christian Peacemaker Team in Baghdad, Iraq invites you to join with us every Tuesday for a day of prayer and fasting that will continue until Easter week. You are invited to participate as you feel led either by joining us in fasting (the team will do a bread and water fast) and/or participating with us in a time of joint prayer. At 9:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (1400 GMT) on Tuesdays the team will gather for an hour of focused prayer. You are invited to join with us for the entire hour or for as much time as you have to spend.

CPT Iraq asks that you take the suggested action between Tuesday and Thursday so that the team and CPT constituents can be working together.

"Suddenly instead of being enemies, we were friends," said Steve Shank, representative to Latin America for EMM, who was among the traveling group as part of his administrative visit. "It almost felt like we had the beginnings of a church plant in the town. Rubén's Christlike attitude and spirit as he approached the situation helped to turn the tide. We heard about others in a different area of the same blockade who had been beaten up and shot at when they tried to get through."

As the team prepared to proceed through the roadblock, the villagers

even pointed out a little-used shortcut through the jungle that would allow them to circumvent the next town where the strike was expected to be even worse. They reached Santa Teresa by midnight.

But that wasn't the end of the story. When the group returned to Cusco, Peruvian church leader Roland shared the roadblock story with his congregation. Only then did he learn that the church group had felt strangely burdened to pray for him and the team exactly over the time of the roadblock. —Eastern Mennonite Missions release

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Winnipeg, Man.

MCC honoured with university global award

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) received the University of Winnipeg's inaugural Global Citizenship award at a graduation ceremony on October 17. The award is the initiative of Lloyd Axworthy, the new president of the university.

MCC was chosen "for its work creating a more just society," said Axworthy, as well as its "defence of truth and justice" and its "understanding that seeds of peace are sown not with clenched fists but with open hands."

Axworthy recommended MCC for the award. "In my work as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, I found myself in many desperate situations in remote and war-torn corners of our world," said Axworthy. "And, more often than not, there before other relief or government agencies would be an MCC worker."

MCC participated in a conference on global issues held the same weekend at the university. Ron Mathies, executive director of MCC, and Don Peters,



Photo by Ilana Simon

Ron Mathies and Don Peters of MCC accept the Global Citizenship Award from Lloyd Axworthy on October 17.

MCC Canada director, responded at the award dinner. Mathies also addressed the graduates at convocation.

Mathies accepted the award on

behalf of all MCC workers who serve as peace witnesses in refugee camps, and in areas of civil unrest and natural disaster. They have adopted MCC's commitment to integrate peacemaking into relief, service and development.

"Graduates, don't turn your backs on your people—the people of the globe," Mathies stated. "Rather, 'do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.'"

The University of Winnipeg Global Citizenship Award will be presented annually to an individual or group who lives out the responsibilities of a global citizen.—From MCC Canada release by **Elmer Heinrichs**

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Montreal, Que.

Business leaders visit refugee shelter in Montreal

On the Labour day weekend in September, several Mennonite business leaders came to share their knowledge with the Maison de l'amitié (House of Friendship) here as it faces some major decisions.

The Maison de l'amitié has been offering shelter and assistance to refugees for many years. But security concerns and new government legislation have led to a big decrease in refugee claimants. As a result, beds at the home have not been filled and it can no longer rely on previous levels of government funding.

In addition, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) has been forced to reduce its funding over the next three years.

These changes have forced the home's director, Luke Martin, to reflect on how the Maison de l'amitié can continue to serve marginalized people in this city through self-sustaining ministries.

"MCEC has been encouraging its supported missions to seek out greater sustainability through mission-related business development," says Martin. "This is a new area for us, and we need help in taking up the challenge."

To explore the possibilities, Martin contacted a business group from the Waterloo, Ontario, area. Members of the group included Milo Shantz and Marcus Shantz of the Mercedes Corporation in St. Jacobs and active in the MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Corporation), and Bert Lobe, now with Habitat for Humanity. Other participants included Ron Loeppky of Winnipeg, former principal of Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools, and local board members.

The visitors toured two of Montreal's poorer neighbourhoods, asking leaders in these communities about their needs. The board shared ideas it has been working on, such as establishing a restaurant or a guesthouse.

The visit was important because it allowed Maison de l'amitié to establish links with other Mennonites who will continue to provide guidance.—From report by **Pierre Chetelat**



This group met in September to plan the future of the Maison de l'amitié in Montreal. From left: Bert Lobe, Ron Loeppky, Carmen Suarez, Oscar Cardoso, Martha Lobe, Peter Hargraves, Marcus Shantz, Luke Martin, Milo Shantz, Philippa Wiens, Lucille Marr.

News briefs

United Church clergy leading union drive

A number of stressed-out ministers are making a bid to unionize the clergy in the United Church of Canada. The Canadian Auto Workers union has agreed to represent them. This would be a first in North America. The ministers say that clergy in Canada face slander, harassment, sexist abuse and reneging on contracts, and the church is not addressing these problems adequately. *The Observer*, the United Church magazine, said that one in five of its ministers is on stress leave. According to Jim Evans, one of the organizers, 60 percent of clergy are experiencing high levels of conflict with their congregations, and 87 percent feel they have no peer support. The church's national office says that less than 2 percent of its clergy are on leave for emotional reasons.—From Nov. 4 and 11 *Globe and Mail*

Maestro and minister team up in Jerusalem

A Christian televangelist and Jewish music director from Canada teamed up in November to inaugurate the newly-furbished Jerusalem Pavilion in Israel with a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. David Mainse, former host of 100 Huntley Street, and Boris Brott, director of the National Academy Orchestra of Canada, are long-time friends. Brott conducted the performance; Mainse participated because his former TV associates, Wayne and Ann Hilsden, refurbished the pavilion as part of the ministry they now direct in Jerusalem. "Curiously, Handel's *Messiah* is not often performed in Israel," said Brott, even though Israel is where Jesus was born and had his ministry.—From Nov. 6 *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*

Winnipeg, Man.

Young adults examine meaning of community

Many young adults are transient, moving around to pursue academic and professional careers. What does it mean to be part of a community in this context?

The North American Young Adult retreat (NAYA), held here October 1-3, addressed this challenging question under the theme, "Community: Living the tension."

The first step in understanding community is to get to know one's own community, and there's no better way to do that than eating together. Everyone worked together to prepare evening snacks, but then were told they would have to wait to eat.

As they waited, Pierre Gilbert from Canadian Mennonite University provided a framework for the topic by speaking of community as "Christ's most basic project."

"Community is the greatest thing ever invented," Gilbert stated, highlighting various types of community, from Christian community to a nudist colony. Who is part of these communities? What are Christians called to do in this community?

Using Matthew 5 and Luke 14:34, Gilbert stressed the importance of the individual in community. He spoke of being the salt of the earth and bringing healing and life to a world marred with trouble and pain. "We are the fertilizer," Gilbert said.

The evening concluded with a coffeehouse featuring Thirstborne, a rock band that tours for the Mennonite Mission Network, and a local group called Knackzoats. And, yes, we did get to eat our snack.

The next morning, Aiden Schlichting Enns and Miriam Minders presented counter arguments on media and what they say about community. Enns discussed how movies present a "fake community," where we are "never given citizenship or allowed to voice our opinion." This is not helpful in building community, he said.

Minders argued that movies can



Photo by Jennifer Szambecki

Young adults participate in a footwashing service at their October gathering.

bring us together as they encourage us to re-examine our lives and motivate us to change.

Both Enns and Minders presented video clips showing how Hollywood presents community and how the same movie can affect each person differently.

Both advocated being "active subjects, not passive objects" when movie-watching.

The afternoon included discussion on what the Bible says about community, following a tour of a Hutterite colony. Jacob Hofer did an impressive job of showing the group around.

"I learned so much," David Becker said. "He almost talked me into joining the colony!"

The day concluded with a panel discussion featuring Menno Wiebe, Leo Driedger, Travis Unger and James Friesen who presented different perspectives on community.

On Sunday, the group gathered for final worship. Instead of closing with communion, the group participated in foot-washing.

Over the course of the weekend a new community was formed. With 39 participants, the retreat was an intimate affair.

"We were hoping for 50," said Peter Epp, a member of the Young Adult Fellowship planning committee. "We were surprised by the lack of Manitoba participants, but encouraged by the number of Americans." —**Tamara Rempel Petkau**

CANADIAN
Mennonite

Christmas schedule note:

Our next two issues are coming out on

Dec. 20 and Jan. 10

Kelowna, B.C.

Sharing a building, building a relationship

Several Mennonite congregations in British Columbia share their buildings: Wellspring Christian Fellowship and Clearbrook Mennonite in Abbotsford, Sherbrooke and Vancouver Vietnamese in Vancouver, Peace and Peace Chinese in Richmond, to name a few.

But one Mennonite church is not only sharing its building but is doing so with a congregation from another denomination.

First Mennonite Church in Kelowna has been sharing its home with the Korean Presbyterian church for about four and a half years. The Korean church is a group representing about 100 people in the Okanagan. Three out of four Sundays a month, a small group from the Kelowna area meets, while the fourth Sunday all are together for a larger Sunday service and a fellowship meal.

During the week, the Presbyterian group also uses the building for morning prayer, Wednesday evening Bible study

and office space. They conduct their services on Sunday afternoon and use the gym for their fellowship meals and “lots of ping pong.” They also share volunteer cleaning services, alternating weekly.

Clare Neufeld, pastor at First Mennonite, says that the congregations don’t do many things together because of language barriers, but there have been some joint efforts around seasonal services.

“We have often invited them to share our Christmas evening program and this year they will join us,” Neufeld says. “They will do some potluck food from their tradition and have one item for the program, which First Mennonite is planning.”

Neufeld says he has noticed that the Korean group shares some of the struggles that Mennonites have experienced.



“They struggle with differences between recent immigrants, Canadian-ized Koreans, students here on short term. Sound familiar?” he asks.

The relationship has been working well and there may be room for more interaction in the future. Their joint Mennonite/Presbyterian English/Korean Christmas program was scheduled for December 4.—**Angelika Dawson**



When worship and work became one

Several years ago we heated our house with a wood burning stove. In the rhythm of life as a pastor, I enjoyed the change of pace of the outdoor experience and much needed exercise of cutting firewood with my trusty Homelite chainsaw. Hard work was recreation for me! It was a different kind of work, more like play.

One early December as I was cutting firewood from deadfall trees, my mind was on Sunday’s sermon which I had written the day before. It was based on Isaiah 11:1: “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.”

Wearied from my work, I brushed off the snow and sat to rest on an old stump, evidence of someone else’s labour years ago. Something brushed against my shoulder. Looking around, I realized that just such an evergreen shoot as Isaiah described had grown from the side of that rotting stump!

I turned around, started my chainsaw, and cut the stump off at the ground. I took it to church later that day. Set in a basin, it became a visual aid for the sermon on Sunday, and remained at the front of the church beside the pulpit for the rest of Advent. That Advent for me “worship and work (and play) became one.”—**Maurice Martin**



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Waldheim, Sask.

Saskatchewan women focus on hospitality

The Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat was held on October 15-16 at the Shekinah Retreat Centre, located on the beautiful banks of the North Saskatchewan River. A total of 93 women registered. The theme was "Hospitality," based on Matthew 10:8: "Freely you have received, freely give."

The ice-breaker on Friday evening consisted of choosing a woman of the Bible to be your guest, ushering us into the topic of hospitality. Holly Olfert, back from a recent trip to China with her husband, showed slides of their trip. She pointed out the warm hospitality they had enjoyed.

The Penner sisters—Linda Neufeld, Marianne Froese and Laura Wiebe—shared their gift of song both days and enhanced our time of inspiration.

Audrey Bechtel, our guest speaker, presented two talks on the topic "God's gracious gift of hospitality, a gift given, a gift received," based on Luke 10:38-42 and John 13: 2-17.

Decked in an apron, with a towel in hand, Audrey demonstrated Martha's hospitality. She then laid aside apron and towel and slipped a shawl over her shoulders. She now represented Mary's hospitality. Is our hospitality like Martha's, caring for the physical needs of our guests, or like Mary's, visiting with our guests, listening to the conversation?

Hospitality is much more than eating, Audrey pointed out. Among her helpful reminders were: feel comfortable and relaxed, be authentic and flexible. Make your guests feel at ease. Don't sit in the pew on Sundays fretting over the roast in the oven. Make simple meals: a bowl of soup, freshly baked bread.

Audrey also touched on hospitality in the church. Welcome strangers and don't assume that others will do so. Invite them to sit with you. In reaching out, you may experience pleasant surprises.

In her second presentation, Audrey stressed the receiving end of hospitality. When Jesus wanted to wash Peter's feet, Peter protested. Was Peter telling his host, "I cannot accept your hospitality?" By refusing to accept an

act of hospitality, we are denying our hosts' offer of it.

Jesus is our role model. He was dependent on the hospitality of others as he journeyed throughout Palestine. To Zachaeus he said, "I want to be your guest." We must be vulnerable enough

to be on the receiving end as well.

Hilda Epp from Tiefengrund, and Lavonne Dyck of Glenbush, illustrated ways of making beautiful table centre pieces with simple objects to welcome guests.—**Helen Kornelsen**

Tablegrace: A Christmas Eve tradition

Even in these times of war and terrorism, we can celebrate the birth of new possibilities with expressions of love around food and song and cheer. Our Mozambican friends, in the early 1980s, taught us that celebrating was especially important during times of war and famine because it renews the spirit and re-creates hope.

With that in mind, I offer my recipe for "Tourtiere," a French Canadian meat pie which has brought our family comfort and joy on Christmas Eve for many years.

I first tested this recipe in 1973 during a teaching assignment in Zambia. We were feeling homesick for friends and family in Canada as we approached the holiday season, and so we planned a Canadian meal which included this French-Canadian tradition.

Since then, tourtiere has become the centre-piece of our family's Christmas celebrations which draw on a rich variety of culinary triumphs, including Native Canadian, Russian Mennonite, East Indian and African flavours.

As Rubem A. Alves, a Brazilian theologian and writer of children's stories, has written: "Food delivers pleasure magically, without words, without understanding.... One eats and one's body is resurrected.... Without the fire of hunger, of desire, longing, imagi-

nation there cannot be any hope of resurrection."—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Christmas Eve Tourtiere

In saucepan, combine:

1 1/2 pounds lean ground pork (or beef or veal combination) *As a vegetarian option, use mushrooms and lentils*
 1 cup finely chopped onion
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 cup finely grated potato
 1/2 cup water (more if needed)
 1 bay leaf 1/4 tsp cloves
 1 tsp salt 1/4 tsp pepper
 1/2 tsp thyme 1/4 cup bread crumbs

Bring to boil and cook, stirring constantly until meat loses red colour. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes or until very tender, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Take out bay leaf and skim off fat and other liquids as it cools. Stir in bread crumbs to bind.

Fill previously prepared, unbaked 9-inch pie shell with cooled meat mixture and cover with top crust. Seal and flute edges. Slash top and decorate with pastry shapes if desired. Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes. Then reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake 15-20 minutes longer. Serve with cheese sauce, leafy greens and avocado salad, french fries or wild rice and mushroom casserole.

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Rosthern, Sask.

RJC turns sod for building project

Staff and students, board members and supporters met on the Rosthern Junior College (RJC) campus on October 25 to break sod for phase one of the building/renovation project.

In opening the ceremonies, principal Erwin Tiessen said, "The conviction of many of our Mennonite people has long been that the church, family and school work together to educate a child." He reminded the group that a 1903 meeting in Eigenheim determined that Mennonites needed a school.

"In keeping with the vision of that first meeting, we commit ourselves to an as-yet-unfinished dream, and this project seeks to keep the vision alive."

George Epp, board chair, introduced Roger Bueckert and Peter Schroeder, who will direct the construction. Charles Olfert is architect for the project.

The current phase is estimated to cost \$440,000, despite the volunteer labour. It will include completion of the residence entrance with public washrooms, new change rooms as an addition to the school building, and new public washrooms in the school.

Phase one fits into a plan to enlarge the public area of the school, add a chapel and relocate the offices to the first floor. Under a plan approved at a March 1 RJC Corporation meeting, 75 percent of the funding for each phase must be in hand before beginning.

According to Paul Tiessen, board treasurer, response to phase one has been good, and a strain on the operating budget is not anticipated. Good news is that SaskLearning cover 20 percent of this phase. Supporters came forward with another \$7,200 at the sod turning.

The sod turning was done by students Stephanie Bird, Bryn Olfert, Billy Yuen and Marlie Regehr, representing the First Nations, Mennonites, the international community and local communities—a snapshot of the RJC family in 2004.

The ceremonies concluded with a

prayer of blessing by alumnus and retired pastor, Benno Klassen. Richard Janzen led in singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Coffee and doughnuts in the school dining hall was a welcome antidote to the snow outside.—From RJC release

Students representing the RJC family in 2004 turn sod for the new addition.



RJC photo

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Teaching the spirituality of discipleship

Tim Froese is a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Seoul, Korea, where he directs the Korea Anabaptist Center. The following is from an article he wrote in the November 5 Mennonite Brethren Herald.

A close reading of the Great Commission reveals only one command: to “make disciples.” The method appears simple: “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey...” (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Baptizing seems obvious, but what are we to make of “teaching them to obey” or what some call “obedience oriented education?” In our individualistic world, how do we get someone to voluntarily obey Jesus’ commands? And exactly what commands are we talking about?

Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment and responded, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). The first thing that we can do, then, as we consider making disciples is to ensure that our commitment to God is genuine and all-inclusive.

It has always surprised me that after Peter’s amazing confession of Christ, the disciples are ordered to silence and Peter is rebuked as the voice of Satan. His first confession of Christ lacked understanding of the things of God and was therefore insufficient to accept Christ’s death or anticipate His resurrection.

The Korea Anabaptist Center had its beginning in the invitation of the Korean people to learn from the Anabaptist tradition in order to bring renewal to the Korean church and its mission to Asia. I regularly meet people who hear about Anabaptism/Mennonites for the first time. Many tell me they are impressed by our “spirituality.” This response puzzled me for some time, since our “spirituality” is tame in comparison to the fervent prayer and fasting and praise

singing of the Korean church.

As time passed, I perceived that what was meant by spirituality was what we would call discipleship—living out the Christian faith at home, school and office. True spirituality enables us to transform the worship service into the “service of worship”

groups of people: neighbour (Leviticus 19:18), enemy (Matthew 5:44), wife (Ephesians 5:25) and stranger (in Romans 12:13, “hospitality” literally means “to love strangers”).

Mennonites first responded to Korea in 1952, during the Korean War. For the next 20 years, Mennonite Central



Tim Froese tells stories of his work in Korea at Charleswood Mennonite Church on Remembrance Day. The Korean congregation at Charleswood catered a traditional Korean meal, complemented by musical entertainment. The event was one in a series of “Taste of Mennonite Church Canada” events held across the country this year.

(Romans 12:1-2) wherein we present “our bodies as living sacrifices.” To fulfill the commandment to love God with our entire being is what it means to be a disciple.

Great as the first commandment is, it is interesting to note the opinion of the New Testament writers regarding the commandment that is “like it” (“Love your neighbour as yourself”). Paul calls it the summation and fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:9,10; Galatians 5:14), and James calls it the “royal law” (James 2:8).

Missiologist Jon Bonk has pointed out that for all of the grandiose mission plans that exist to evangelize the world, God never commanded Christians to love the entire world. We are, however, commanded to love four

Committee ministered there. Today, men search me out to express their profound thanks for the love and assistance given to them “while we were yet strangers.”

As I consider these people whom I am commanded to love—neighbour, enemy, wife and stranger—I am able to put faces to my prayers and feet to my actions. I am also aware that where love exists, the result is peace.

Although many of our Korean Christian friends have difficulty with the Anabaptist commitment to nonviolent peacemaking, many non-Christians have come to us to get help in resolving conflicts. We have had more opportunity to explain our faith because of our commitment to peace than any other “typical” form of

Calgary, Alta.

Peace festival for elementary students

Seek peace and pursue it, says 1 Peter 3:11. How do we instill in our children a desire to be proactive agents in creating peace?

Around Remembrance Day, Menno Simons Christian School here takes a full day from the regular schedule to focus on peacemaking.

If you had peeked into our school on November 5 you would have seen a hub of activity centring on our year-long theme, "Building community—being community." Throughout the day, a variety of games, videos and crafts helped students think about how we create peace in our community.

Students worked cooperatively to untangle knots, to put their names on a giant scrabble board, and to get their group from one end of the gym to the other using cardboard pieces in a simulation game. They also made friendship bracelets that they delivered to a student in another grade, and reflected on *The Wounded Spirit*, a video by Frank Peretti.

Menno Simons school has as its motto, "Working together to become

evangelism. To be a Christian and missionary in today's interconnected but hostile world is to be an advocate for nonviolent peacemaking.

Before leaving his disciples, Jesus gave them a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you." The most common perception that Koreans have of Anabaptists is the emphasis on community. Said another way, the ability to form deep, caring relations between people on the basis of a shared faith is extremely attractive.

One of the things most needed by those we are called to love is a community of welcome and caring. Jesus added that, "by this all will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

The common element in these commandments is that we are continually called to love. Love is the most contextualized, most relevant form of mission there is.—MC Canada release by **Tim Froese**



Students at Menno Simons Christian School work cooperatively to untangle knotted skipping ropes (above) and make friendship bracelets (below) during their peace festival.

PEACEMAKERS." The PEACEMAKERS acronym stands for: Participants, Enthusiastic, Accepting, Christ-like, Encouraging, Mentors, Aspiring, Kind, Excellent, Responsible, Servants.

This acronym, displayed on a large sign in the school atrium and also in each classroom, is a constant reminder of the goals of our school community. The peace festival helps students to see that peacemaking is an active verb. We are called to take action if we see injustice or disputes in our own community or around the world.

Menno Simons school includes preschool to grade nine. It is our hope that our students will become life-long peacemakers.—From school release



Pontius' Puddle



Calgary, Alta.

Calgary installs youth pastor

First Mennonite Church here installed Craig Wiens as youth pastor on September 26, and accepted Craig and Janelle into the congregation. Craig replaces Trevor Ens who served the congregation for the past four years.

At the service, the congregation greeted family members such as Craig's parents, Gary and Anne Wiens, who are former members of the congregation. Jodie Doerksen, sister of Janelle, sang a solo, accompanied on the piano by Janelle. Obviously, Janelle brings a gift of music to the church.

In her children's story, Ruth Griffeth reminded the little ones of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and introduced Craig as a shepherd who will be guiding the youth of the church.

Marv Thiessen, lead pastor, based

his sermon, entitled "The apprentice," on Paul's letter to Timothy. He encouraged Craig to build on the good work of his predecessor because "untended fires soon become a pile of ashes." He also challenged the congregation to support and be gracious to their young pastor.

Ted Regehr, chair of church council, read the profile of Craig and Janelle Wiens as they were accepted as members of First Mennonite. Craig was raised on a farm near Tofield, Alberta. He attended Rosthern Junior College and Columbia Bible College where he met Janelle Doerksen. He graduated in 2004 from Rocky Mountain College, an inter-denominational college in Calgary, with a theology degree.



Craig and Janelle Wiens became members at First Mennonite in Calgary on September 26, when Craig was installed as youth pastor. Their son, Nathan, was born July 4.

It was fitting that John Kroeger, Craig's grandfather and retired pastor, spoke the blessing.

In his response, Craig said he is looking forward to working with the youth. As one of their first projects they have already made a practical contribution—they laid the sod on the church yard. He will also work at developing a young adult group and preach occasionally.—From report by **Irene Klassen**

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Buy Nothing Christmas: The Musical

Those who “buy nothing” for Christmas are often accused of being Scrooges and crushing other people’s holiday fun. This month, I had the chance to see *A Christmas Karl*, an enjoyable and funny musical that put the “Scrooge” on the other foot. Giving, it turns out, has very little to do with stuff and more to do with time and care—not surprising, but surprisingly hard to do.

The script was written by Scott Douglas and the score is the work of his brother, Andrew. Aiden Enns, co-founder of the Buy Nothing Christmas project [ed. Aiden Enns is a member of *Canadian Mennonite’s* board of directors], asked the brothers to “take a deadly serious message and package it with humour, romance, and music.”

At a time of year when people are caught between the blizzard of messages about buying that perfect gift for everyone who is even remotely connected with your life and the guilt we feel for over-spending, over-eating and over-doing-just-about-everything, it’s nice to have the chance to laugh about it for an evening.

Janis Folkerts plays Chase, a young activist who is frustrated by the fact that she can’t even convince her own mother to kick the “shop ‘til you drop” Christmas habit. While Janis protests

against commercialism outside the local Ubermart, her mother, Abby (played by Kim Brown), is overwhelmed by trying to fill a Christmas list that would make Santa Claus envious.

Outside the Ubermart, Chase

around the character of Simon, Chase’s Jewish boyfriend. He seems caught between Chase’s uncomfortable activism and his own questions about consumerism. Of all the characters, he also seemed to be the one most concerned about what the outcome was for



Photo by Karen Schlichting.

Janis Folkerts plays Chase, an anti-consumer activist, and Kim Brown plays her shopaholic mother, Abby, in the new musical *A Christmas Karl*.

bumps into a homeless man, Karl (played by Aiden Enns). The day-to-day circumstances of Karl’s life (Chase meets him while he is going through trashcans for food) put the shopping frenzy happening around them into perspective. Inspired by her conversation with Karl, who believes he is an angel messenger, Chase decides to deal with her mother’s over-consumption using the time-honoured three ghosts of Christmas that first visited Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*. Chase drafts her reluctant boyfriend Simon (played by Brent Hirose) into helping her.

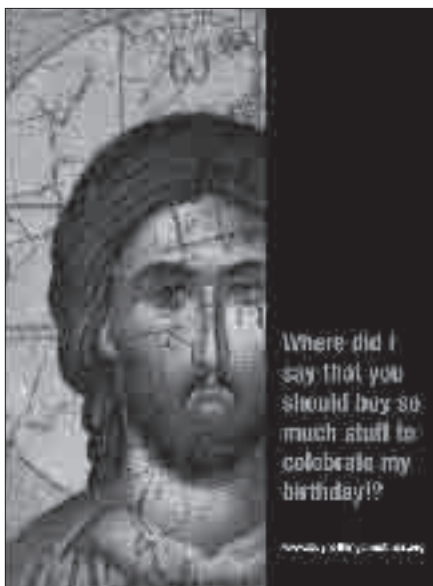
The humour and the music balance out the seriousness of the play’s message; the cast was obviously having a lot of fun up there and the audience responded enthusiastically to it (there was a full house). Strangely, the funniest scenes seem to revolve

real people: for Chase and Karl, for people whose jobs depend on consumption, for the stressed-out Abby. I found that I resonated most with Simon’s confusion over the weird mixed messages of faith and commercialism around the celebration of Christmas.

The musical was released well before Christmas in order to give people time to see it and then time to think and react. I think it succeeds at this.

A Christmas Karl: A tender tale of commercialism, compassion, and fruitcake has one date left to play: December 15 at Steinbach Regional Secondary School Theatre. Admission is free, which dovetails nicely with the musical’s message, although they are accepting donations. All performances begin at 8:00 pm. More information is at www.buynothingchristmas.org.

—Erin Morash



www.buynothingchristmas.org poster

People & Events

Saskatoon, Sask.—The Saskatoon chapter of MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Association) elected new leaders at a dinner on October 27. Leaving the executive are John Elias, president, Anne Guenther, Elfrieda Enns and Bill Kruger. Doris Thiessen and Dave Ratzlaff have been elected. The new executive of the Saskatoon chapter aims not only to support the international work of MEDA, but also to encourage fellowship among and support for local Mennonite business people.—**Karin Fehderau**

St. Catharines, Ont.—St. Catharines United Mennonite Church held an installation service for Grant Gordon as intentional interim pastor on October 17. During this interim pastorate, Gordon will facilitate a review of the life and vision of the church and prepare it for calling the next pastor. Bert Flaming, a member of the Leadership Commission of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, conducted the installation service.—**Henry Hildebrandt**

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Driedger—to Amy and Tim, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Bryson Michael, Oct. 29.
Dueck—to Marianne and Uwe, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Tessa Briana, July 9.

Ens—to Jenny and Calvin, Warman Mennonite, Sask., a son, Calum Malachi, Oct. 11.
Friesen—to Tania and Sean, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a daughter, Paige Marie, Oct. 27.
Hangle—to Lisa Dueck and Kurt, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Lucas Dueck, Oct. 24.
Healy—to Jayne and David, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., a son, Jack Arthur Henry, Oct. 15.
Janzen—to Jen and Trevor, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., a daughter, Catherine Grace, Oct. 13.
Jeske—to Glenda and Kevin, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a daughter, Geneva Soleil, Oct. 25.
Neang—to Venny and Sau Somkhong, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Chrystian Somkhong, Oct. 25.
Rawsthorne—to Christa and Peter, Bethany Mennonite,

Virgil, Ont., a son, Nathan Kyle, Oct. 22.
Regier—to Machon and Cory, Cornerstone Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., a daughter, Julia Madison, Sept. 8.
Sayavong—to Yorn and Wanhchai, Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask., a daughter, Alena Gen Chinba, Oct. 10.
Truderung—to Naomi and Karl, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Nathan Karl, Oct. 4.
Zacharias—to Terri and Steve, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a daughter, Janae Joy, Sept. 30.

Marriages

Giesbrecht-Dueck—Erich and Helga, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 18.
Martens-Enns—Robert and Kristina, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Oct. 23.
Peters-Reddekopp—Morgan and Daneen, Warman Mennonite, Sask., Nov. 6.
Smillie-Wilson—Matthew and Joanna (First Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta.), in Edmonton, Oct. 16.

Deaths

Boshart—Florence, 99, Poole Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 2.
Derksen—Walter Ron, 67, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 2.
Janzen—John K., 94, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., Oct. 28.
Koerber—Verna, 69, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Oct. 27.
Mierau—John, 76, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Oct. 26.
Roth—Alma, 96, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Nov. 5.
Vale—Sarah (Bauman), 78, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 31.
Wiebe—Jacob C., 93, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Oct. 14.

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



Photo by Dale Herman

HIV-positive patients and their caregivers in Kamuli, Uganda, sing their greetings to a team bringing them mosquito nets, mattresses and blankets. MCC funding helped the AIDS Education Group for Youth purchase these supplies for 26 women and 4 men. Malaria, carried by mosquitoes, is the number one cause of death for those living with HIV/AIDS here. The mattresses will help protect them from skin infections. MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) is involved in malaria control in Uganda by selling insecticide-treated mosquito nets.—From MCC release

Mennonite Church Canada

Charlotte 2005 will be a family reunion

Charlotte 2005 will be a "family reunion," the first time that Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA have met together since the transformation in 2002 of the former General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church.

"We made commitments to each other at St. Louis '99 about meeting together, and I think it's really important that we honour those commitments," said Pam Peters-Pries, executive secretary of Support Services for MC Canada. "Even though each denomination has its own structures and concerns, we still share a lot of history and shared ministries with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Publishing Network.... The best way to keep these relationships alive is at a shared assembly."

"I look forward to reconnecting and worshipping with all the people that I don't have the opportunity to see very often," said Craig Friesen, pastor of Rosthern Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. He mentioned particularly the friends he made at seminary.

Mildred Roth of New Hamburg, Ontario, said she hopes Charlotte 2005 will give people a larger perspective.

"I hope many Canadians will come to this assembly to experience what the Mennonite Church means beyond their context," she said. "I also look forward to the joint worship. There's nothing like singing and praying with hundreds of other Mennonites."

Joint planning also allows the two churches to share ideas. Canadians have talked about the faith family festival that generated enthusiasm at the Winkler assembly last summer. Planners are using that idea to develop a carnival-festival in Charlotte.

"What Mennonite Church Canada did with this idea has

a lot of appeal," said Jorge Vallejos, director of Convention Planning for Mennonite Church USA.

Charlotte 2005 also has the potential to build bridges across ethnic, national and theological boundaries.

"Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA constituencies represent the entire theological spectrum," said Vallejos. "But people all along the spectrum can embrace the focus of Charlotte."

Charlotte 2005 will be held July 4-9.—From MC Canada and MC USA release

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Funding conversation for national church

"God has enough [resources] to do what we are called to do," said Al Rempel to the MCEC representatives who met at St. Jacobs on November 16 for the "national church conversation on funding" initiated by Mennonite Church Canada. He

added, "This doesn't mean we sit back and say 'If it's God's will, it's God's bill!'"

Rempel, development director for MC Canada, and Dan Nighswander, general secretary, spoke of the partnership of MC Canada and MCEC. MCEC is the only area church that has a funding formula whereby a percentage of givings from congregations are forwarded to MC Canada instead of being sent directly by churches.

MC Canada reported that of the budgeted \$4 million, there is a projected shortfall of \$120,000 by year end. MCEC is projected to give \$76,000 less than last year. This is so because givings from congregations to MCEC are less than last year. The changed funding formula adopted at the MCEC spring delegate sessions also has a significant impact on this projected shortfall.

"It is not profitable to look for blame," said Nighswander. "Let's look for solutions. It's not finally about numbers; it is about ministry."

Advent invitation to 'walk in the light of day'

I've been preparing Advent and Christmas worship materials for our church and appreciate the theme for this year: "Come! Walk in the light of day!" This call to my congregation to explore what that means is a powerful one.

The materials invite us to think about walking in God's harmony, healing and salvation. These are especially meaningful to me as I reflect on worship in my church in light of our vision as Mennonite Church Canada.

The General Board of MC Canada met in Saskatoon in mid-November and in many ways was working with the same calling—how do we encourage each other as individuals, congregations and area conferences through our structures in Canada to walk in the light of day.

One of the ways we talk about our denomination is that it helps us do

together what we can't do alone. The themes of salvation, healing and harmony infused our conversations at the meeting. We spent time reflecting on the conversations delegates had around tables at the assembly in Winkler this summer. Delegates shared with each other their vision of what we could be doing together.

This information will guide the General Board as we discern direction we can give to delegates next year on defining the purpose and priorities of MC Canada.

The delegates' discernment will also help the General Board make recommendations on a process for addressing theological and ethical concerns in our denomination, and on how often we should have assemblies.

We heard reports from area conferences about the ministries they are involved in with their congregations, and spent time discerning ways we can increase the harmony that already exists in our

From our leaders

denomination and where we need to do more work on a unifying vision for our work in Canada.

Finally, this invitation to walk in the light of God's new day also informed our conversations on the Global Gift sharing project of Mennonite World Conference. It helped us think about the many gifts we have in MC Canada and encouraged us to think about what gifts we need from our sisters and brothers around the globe.

This year as I move into Advent, preparing for the coming of "the light of the world," I am sustained by the strength and faith of our congregations in Canada, as we together continue to respond to God's invitation to "Come and walk in the light of day."

Henry Krause, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada



He talked about how the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* has been translated into Chinese by Winfred Soong, with administrative assistance from Multi-cultural Ministries in MC Canada. The Spanish translation of the Confession has been so well-received in Cuba that a Pentecostal and a Baptist church have asked whether they may use it!

In keeping with Nighswander's invitation to "look for solutions," people huddled in small groups to find ways to encourage giving to MCEC and thereby to MC Canada. One person invited MC Canada to focus less on the down side and more on strategies to boost giving. "Always pushing down is depressing," he said. "Where is the updraft?"

There was a call for face-to-face contacts, linking people in congregations more directly to Witness programs, and encouraging a sense of belonging to the wider church.

It seemed clear to people that pastors are the main gatekeepers to the broader church. Someone wondered whether younger pastors are as engaged with the broader church as their predecessors were? Also, are pastors from non-Mennonite backgrounds less inclined to promote Mennonite Church programs? Some pastors unabashedly say: "All I really care about is my congregation."

Brian Bauman, Missions Minister of MCEC, and Al Rempel are building a relationship so they won't compete with each other for donations.

Ester Neufeldt, treasurer of MCEC, says: "We see ourselves representing both MCEC and MC Canada. Hopefully the partnership will only get stronger."

Mennonite Church Manitoba

New season of winter retreats

The popular MMYO (Manitoba Mennonite Youth Organiza-

tion) Junior Youth Retreat offers three choices: January 21-23 at Camp Koinonia, and February 11-13 or March 11-13 at Camp Moose Lake. The MMYO Senior Youth Retreat will take place February 4-6 at Camp Koinonia.

A Young Adult Retreat at Camp Koinonia on January 7-9 will focus on the topic "The interplay of faith and culture."

The "Families with a Mentally Handicapped Person" annual retreat is planned for March 4-6 at Camp Assiniboia. This long-standing retreat which offers fellowship and support has been a meaningful event for many families over the years.

For more information or to register, contact Mennonite Church Manitoba at (204) 896-1616, or e-mail: office@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Details from proposed budget

At the October 23 Mennonite Church Manitoba delegate session, lack of a quorum meant that the proposed 2005 budget could be presented to the delegates as information only. Ratification will take place at the February delegate session.

Tom Seals, treasurer for MC Manitoba, reported, "We have budgeted for a three percent increase in regular congregational giving, from \$721,400 in 2004 to \$742,400 in 2005. We are encouraged by the level of giving that we have received so far in 2004. While we have a ways to go to meet our target, we believe that our budget for 2004 will be achieved, and that the proposed congregational giving budget for 2005 is realistic.

"Also included in the 2005 budget is a 1.5 percent increase in congregational giving to fund new programs in the areas of Leadership Ministry and Evangelism and Service Ministry. As well, this increase will assist in meeting our commitment to the *Canadian Mennonite*. This portion of the congregational giving budget will only be

spent if it is received."

The Annual Delegate Session will take place February 18-19 at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Advent concerts by Faith and Life choirs

The Faith and Life choirs will present two Advent concerts on December 12. The Male Choir, under the direction of Ben Pauls and Alan Janzen, and accompanied by Loren Hiebert, will join with the Women's Chorus to sing new Christmas music and old favourites. The women's chorus is conducted by Shirley Bestvater and accompanied by Kim Bestvater Sidorchuk.

An afternoon concert will take place at 3:00 p.m. at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. The evening concert at 7:30 p.m. will be at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. A freewill offering will be taken.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

RJC is in centennial year

Rosthern Junior College (RJC) is in its centennial year, notes a recent report from the RJC board, and principal Erwin Tiessen.

"As we look back at the history of the German-English Academy and RJC, we can't help but be struck by the tenacity with which obstacles have been met and overcome. With God's help we have weathered every storm...."

Enrolment last year was 130; this year it is 114. While the curriculum is extensive, the number and variety of classes taught is limited by resources and staff.

The board had hopes that the projected deficit for 2003-2004 would be reduced, but it was larger than anticipated. Contributing factors were sharp increases in utility costs, substantial salary raises and the weak performance of investments. Drought and BSE

(mad cow disease) contributed to lower donations.

At the same time, the Legacy fund saw \$145,000 added to the endowment for tuition support. Phase one of the campus upgrading project is going ahead (see page 29).

A balanced budget for this year was achieved through reducing hours of some staff and negotiating a 5 percent payback of salary with staff.

Last June, the school said its farewell to Pat Cooley who anchored the English department for 27 years. This fall, Diana Epp-Fransen and Matt Love succeeded Fion Ko and Garry Koop as deans.

Under Tammy Forrester's guidance, committees are busy preparing for centennial celebrations in July. Centennial projects include a cookbook, a quilt with contributions from many communities, and a set of CDs with the music of RJC through the years.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Seminar on church polity

The next seminar presented by the Mennonite Church B.C. Ad Hoc Committee, the MCBC Polity Seminar, will be held on the evening of February 25 and morning of February 26 at Peace Mennonite Church.

This seminar on church polity will consider the issues of structure and governance as they relate to theological discernment and ministry in our churches.

The seminar will examine how the local church, MC B.C. and Mennonite Church Canada can work together to provide theological discernment, guidance and accountability in various areas of belief and practice. The seminar will be part of the MC B.C. annual sessions held that weekend and is open to all.

Annual MC B.C. delegate sessions will be held on Feb. 26 in the afternoon, also at Peace Mennonite Church.

Notice of 34th Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (Canadian Mennonite)



Notice is hereby given that the 34th Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (the non-profit association that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*) will be held on February 5, 2005 at First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver at 4:00 p.m. The meeting will include editorial, circulation and financial reports, elections, and reports from the Board. A banquet follows at 6:00 p.m. at the church. Anyone is welcome to attend. Voting will be limited to Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service members. These are individuals who contributed at least \$25 in the past year, and board members. (See names and nominating bodies below.)

Members who are unable to be present may complete the proxy form and mail it to: *Canadian Mennonite*, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board:

- British Columbia:* Henry Neufeld, chair (Mennonite Church B.C.)
John W. Goossen (Mennonite Church Canada)
- Alberta:* Jan Wilhelm (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service)
Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (Mennonite Church Alberta)
- Saskatchewan:* Bernie Thiessen (Mennonite Church Saskatchewan)
- Manitoba:* Paul Krahn (Mennonite Church Canada)
Aiden Enns (Mennonite Church Canada)
Bernie Wiebe (Mennonite Church Manitoba)
- Ontario:* Ester Neufeldt (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service)
Mary Lymburner (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service)
Brice Balmer (Mennonite Church Canada)
Larry Cornies (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)

Jan Wilhelm, Secretary, Canadian Mennonite Publishing

Proxy

As a member of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, I hereby appoint

as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service on February 5, 2005.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send me a copy of the Annual Meeting reports

Employment opportunities



Canadian Mennonite University, a provincially chartered, innovative Christian university in Winnipeg, Manitoba is inviting applications to fill several tenure-track positions beginning August 1, 2005.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN MUSIC THERAPY

Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate courses in music therapy, including music therapy techniques and competencies.

Qualifications:

- A minimum of a Masters Degree in Music Therapy
- Certification with the CAMT
- Significant music therapy clinical experience
- Successful teaching experience at the university level is preferred

ENGLISH • HISTORY • PSYCHOLOGY • SOCIOLOGY / HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

We are seeking to fill two tenure-track positions in the Humanities and Social Sciences. These two positions are subject to funding.

For more information about these positions, please contact the VP & Academic Dean at gzerbe@cmu.ca or visit our website at www.cmu.ca.



Menno Simons College, a college of Canadian Mennonite University affiliated with and located on the campus of the University of Winnipeg, is inviting applications for a tenure track position in

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STUDIES

Qualifications:

- A doctoral degree in conflict resolution or related field.
- Teaching or applied experience is highly desirable.

This position is subject to funding. For more information about this position, please contact the VP & Academic Dean at dpeachey@cmu.ca or visit our website at www.cmu.ca.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. CMU is committed to equity in employment. The successful applicant will be expected to have a commitment to the church and the mission of CMU.

Applications comprised of a cover letter, curriculum vitae and contact information for three references should be submitted to:

Director of Human Resources, Canadian Mennonite University, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 2N2 or e-mailed to swarkentin@cmu.ca.

Coming up...

December 20

**January 10
Focus on Finance**

**January 24 Focus on
Post-Secondary
Education**

**CM Christmas cycle:
Issue every 3 weeks**

For sale

Caskets and urns handmade in Winnipeg. Call Rick at (204) 228-4741 or visit www.thevillagecasketmaker.com

Registration beginning for Charlotte 2005

Charlotte, N.C.—Youth and adult assembly planners for Charlotte 2005 met in early fall to continue planning for the July 4-9 event. The planners expect that about 10,000 Mennonites from the United States and Canada will attend.

The assembly will include events for young adults and conventions for children, junior high youth, high school youth and adults. Activities will include worship, servant projects, seminars, recreation, a hymn sing, and separate and joint sessions for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA delegates.

"I've seen many miracles, holy moments, in the midst of our planning," said Jorge Vallejos, director of convention planning. "People who come to conventions can have no idea how many thousands of details we have to hammer out.... I compare the process to the biblical account of Jesus searching for the lost sheep.

We need to care about the needs of that one, while stilling being hospitable to the 99."

Charlotte is a mid-sized city about the size of Winnipeg. The last MC USA assembly in Atlanta was held in a much larger venue. Here, adults, youth and children will probably rub shoulders a lot more, as they share more spaces.

Paper registration forms for Canadian adults, junior youth, and children will be sent to churches early in 2005. Beginning December 6, Canadians can also register online at www.charlotte2005.org/. Pre-registration is an absolute requirement for Charlotte 2005. The deadline for registration without a late fee will be April 29.

For more information contact: Karen Peters at Mennonite Church Canada, phone 1-866-888-6785. For more information on the Youth Assembly, contact Anna Rehan, phone (306) 249-4844, e-mail: arehan@mennonitechurch.ca.—From MC Canada and MC USA release



Assembly planners tour the Charlotte 2005 convention site. From left: Ron Byler, associate executive director for Mennonite Church USA; Shana Boshart, youth minister for Central Plains Conference; Scott Hartman, convention planning staff; and Anna Rehan, youth ministries facilitator for Mennonite Church Canada.

CANADIAN Mennonite

Christmas schedule note:

Our next two issues are coming out on

**December 20
and
January 10**

Annual meeting hosted by Vancouver church

Vancouver, B.C.—First United Mennonite Church here is hosting the 2005 annual meeting and banquet of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, publisher of *Canadian Mennonite*. The meeting will be held February 5 at 4:00 p.m. The banquet will begin at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting includes reports and election of board members. Anyone is welcome to attend. Voting is limited to members—members are those who contributed at least \$25 in the past year.

The church is located at 659 East 52nd Ave., Vancouver. For tickets to the banquet, phone Angelika Dawson at (604) 870-0494, John Goossen at (604) 940-8208 or Henry Neufeld at (604) 946-3961.

Male and female pastors in MC Canada

There are currently 305 pastors serving in Mennonite Church Canada congregations, according to statistics from denominational minister Sven Eriksson. Of these, 222 are male (73%) and 83 are female (27%). In area conferences, the statistics are as follows:

Alberta: 14 males (78%), 4 females (22%)

British Columbia: 42 males (93%), 3 females (7%)

Eastern Canada: 71 males (63%), 41 females (37%)

Manitoba: 62 males (79%), 16 females (21%)

Saskatchewan: 33 males (63%), 19 females (37%)

Calendar

British Columbia

December 12: Christmas concert at Yarrow United Mennonite Church featuring Calvin Dyck and Betty Suderman, 7:00 p.m. For details call (604) 823-4451.

December 12, 24: Advent program with children's chorus at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church, 10:00 a.m. (December 24 at 6:30 p.m.)

February 5: Annual meeting and banquet of Canadian Mennonite at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver. Meeting at 4:00 p.m., banquet 6:00 p.m. For tickets phone Angelika Dawson at (604) 870-0494 or John Goossen at (604) 940-8208.

February 11, 12, 18, 19: MCC B.C. fundraising banquets. Details to come.

February 12-20: MCC Arts and Peace Festival.

February 25-26: MC British Columbia Polity Seminar at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

February 26: Mennonite Church British Columbia annual delegate sessions at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

March 19, 20: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (19), Knox United Church, Vancouver (20), 8:00 p.m.

Alberta

January 21-23: Junior high

Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua. **January 30:** Skate-a-thon for Menno Simons Christian School at Olympic Oval, Calgary.

February 18-20: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua. **February 25-26:** Mennonite Church Alberta annual delegate sessions at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

February 25-27: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

March 4: Peace Fine Arts Festival for youth, sponsored by MCC Alberta, at Rocky Mountain College, Calgary.

March 12: Sweet Interlude at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

June 5: Benefit evening with Stephen Lewis for MCC's Generations at Risk program. Details pending.

July 15-16: MCC Alberta Relief Sale in Sherwood Park, Edmonton.

Saskatchewan

December 12, 17: Buncha' Guys concert, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, 2:00 p.m. (12); Timberlodge at Shekinah, 7:30 p.m. (17).

December 22: Christmas concert at Rosthern Junior College, 7:00 p.m.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Rosthern Junior College.

June 25-26: Camp Elim 60th anniversary celebrations.

July 23-24: 50th anniversary celebratons at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina.

Manitoba

December 9, 16: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas programs, 7:00 p.m. Aggasiz at Bethel Mennonite Church (9); Bedson at Immanuel Pentecostal (16).

December 11: Advent concert by NKMC Quartet at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, 7:00 p.m.

December 12: Advent concert by Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus, at First Mennonite, Winnipeg (3:00 p.m.), Springfield Heights Mennonite, 7:30 p.m.

December 12: Sargent Ave.

Mennonite Church choir presents "Light Eternal," with soloist Kevin Neufeld, 10:00 a.m.

December 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

December 16, 17: Christmas program at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, 7:30 p.m. (16), 1:30 p.m. (17).

January 7-9: Young Adult Retreat at Camp Koinonia on "The interplay of faith and culture."

January 20-22: Refreshing Winds, conference on worship and music at Canadian Mennonite University. Visit www.cmu.ca for details.

January 21-23: Junior Youth Retreat at Camp Koinonia.

January 23: Alumni concert at Performing Arts Centre, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

February 4: CMU choirs and Winnipeg Symphony premiere Patrick Carrabr s "In the Beginning" at New Music Festival, Centennial Concert Hall.

February 4-6: Senior Youth Retreat at Camp Koinonia.

February 11-13: Junior Youth Retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

February 18-19: Mennonite Church Manitoba delegate sessions at Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

March 6: Choral Connections concert at CMU, 7:30 p.m.

March 11-13: Peace-It-Together youth conference at Canadian Mennonite University.

March 11-13: Junior Youth Retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

April 23-24: Graduation weekend at Canadian Mennonite University: Spring concert (23), convocation (24).

Ontario

December 3, 4: Menno Singers/Mass Choir performs "Messiah" at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

December 4: Report on Molochna Bicentennial by Paul Toews, at Conrad Grebel University College, 2:30 p.m.

December 4, 5: Christmas

concert by Pax Christi Chorale at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, 8:00 p.m. (Sat.), 3:00 p.m. (Sun.). Call (416) 494-7889.

December 5: Christmas concert at United Mennonite Educational Institute, 7:30 p.m.

December 12: Concert by Lifted Voices at First Mennonite, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

December 16: Christmas concert at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

December 18: Kitchener-Waterloo Philharmonic Choir performs Bach's Christmas Oratorio at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m.

December 21: Carol sing with

Grebel alumni at Conrad Grebel University College, 7:00 p.m.

February 15-17: School for Ministers and Chaplains at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

March 16, 17: Bechtel Lecture with Fernando Enns of Germany at Conrad Grebel University College, 7:30 p.m.

United States

January 24-27: Pastors' Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

July 4-9: Charlotte 2005, Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA assembly and youth convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Subscriber services CANADIAN Mennonite

How to subscribe:

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

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3. Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

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

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Have a sacred
Christmas
and a safe and happy
New Year

—*Canadian Mennonite staff*