

C A N A D I A N

# Mennonite

**February 7, 2005**  
Volume 9, Number 3

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## Wrestling with peacemaking

**T**he Mennonite peace position is an area where our church clashes with society around us in a very visible way. During World War II (WWII), two Mennonite churches in Vauxhall, Alberta, were burned and one in Leamington, Ontario, was ransacked due to anger against German-speaking, pacifist Mennonites.

This struggle over values also reaches inside the church. Mennonite leaders were bitterly opposed to Canada's WWII military conscription law. In a confrontation with officials in Ottawa, Jacob H. Janzen, a Russian immigrant living in Ontario, barked, "Listen, General, I want to tell you something. You can't scare us like that. I've looked down too many rifle barrels in my time to be scared in that way. This thing is in our blood for 400 years and you can't take it away from us like you'd crack a piece of kindling over your knee. I was before a firing squad twice. We believe in this."

Some Mennonites heard a rumour that married men were less likely to be drafted. Numerous weddings followed!

Other Mennonites didn't agree with their church's position. In Canada, about 4,500 ethnic Mennonites either volunteered to fight or entered the military through the draft in WWII. About half that number claimed conscientious objector (CO) status.

I wanted to hear something of the other side to the CO story, and went to speak with a Mennonite who volunteered.

Jim Cressman was attending the Blenheim Mennonite Church near New Dundee in Ontario when WWII started. He signed up to serve in the Air Force. With a copy of *The Encyclopaedia of Aircraft* on his coffee table and pictures of aircraft in his living room, Jim told me, "I just wanted to fly."

Jim's two brothers signed up too. When word got around,

his bishop and pastor came to visit the family. "In plain English, they kicked us out of the Mennonite Church," Cressman said. "What they were doing was what they more or less have to do. They are following the rules of the book."

For Cressman, the example of other Mennonites sent him a message—both in their personal response to violence and in their observance of church teachings in other areas of life. He still remembers another Mennonite young man who punched him in the nose during an argument.

**'Some heard a rumour that married men were less likely to be drafted. Numerous weddings followed!'**

"Now a lady in the Mennonite Church can wear a wedding ring; they can dance. This is why we left," he said. "We were more honest. We didn't hide the fact we went to a show while these others, they were going to shows that no one knew anything about."

What Jim did is contrary to the peace teachings of the Mennonite Church, but his experience says something important about how we need to keep working out what we believe in our daily lives. Article 22 of the Confession of Faith states, "As disciples of Christ, we do not prepare for war, or participate in war or military service." However, it continues, "The same Spirit that empowered Jesus also empowers us to love enemies, to forgive rather than to seek revenge, to practice right relationships, to rely on the community of faith to settle disputes, and to resist evil without violence." Both sentences equally apply to all of us, every day of our lives. I hope the teaching and the personal stories in this issue provide some light for your own grappling with what biblical peacemaking means for you.

**Delayed issue:** Our apologies for the late arrival of the Jan. 10 issue to about 200 subscribers. Our label company's printer skipped some labels. We needed to re-label and reship those issues.—**Timothy Dyck**

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### Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the February 21 issue by February 17.

**Cover: Diane Janzen, working with Christian Peacemaker Teams, is pictured south of Hebron, helping with the olive harvest. Photo submitted by Diane Janzen. See story, page 10.**

Winnipeg, Man.

## Adventurer helps people find spiritual resources

**A** 3,000-kilometre cycling trip from southern Ontario to the Maritimes convinced Arlyn Friesen Epp of what he already suspected: people are fundamentally good. The 1994 tour took Arlyn and his wife Judith on a route through the USA, culminating in an 800-km tour of Prince Edward Island.

Two things about the trip stand out for him: how little one actually needs to survive, and the hospitality of the people they encountered along the way. Strangers opened up campgrounds in the midst of pre-season preparations, welcomed them into their homes to watch hockey finals, and loaned them a car to shop for groceries.

The two-month trip bridged the time between ministry in Vineland United Mennonite Church in Ontario (a position he shared with Judith), and a return to student life.

“The bike trip certainly helped shape some of our lifestyle ideas,” says Arlyn of the adventure that had them packing only a few clothes and a tent. It also happened to be good preparation for a return to frugal student living, and later, as a thrifty stay-at-home dad.

Broad-ranging interests in sports, astronomy, outdoor life, theology, history (he has a history degree), two stints as youth minister in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, and a term with Mennonite Central Committee in New Orleans, Louisiana, belie Arlyn’s youthful 35 years.

A theology graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University), his passions are especially fired up when congregational, social, and community ministry are combined with drama to bring a message home. He struggles with the tension of a tug toward pastoral ministry and a desire for artistic expression.

Now the manager of MC Canada’s Resource Centre, Arlyn directs his life

experience and education toward helping others in their lives and ministry.

A typical day begins by responding to e-mail and phone messages requesting help in finding resources. Pastors,



Photo by Dan Dyck

**Arlyn Friesen Epp manages the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre. “The goal is that the conversation and the resource will be nurturing,” he says.**

worship leaders, Sunday school teachers are his usual customers. On rare occasions, callers are seeking personal help. Some are looking for “ready-made” resources to help them solve a problem, perhaps with a spouse, child, or even a church conflict.

Sometimes he ends up referring a caller to other MC Canada resource people, or to other resource centres in Canada and the USA.

“Sometimes there is an expectation that there is a ready-made resource that will help solve the problem, but, of course, that is not always the case, nor is it always the most helpful,” says Arlyn.

Seasonal worship resources, small

group resources, and Sunday school materials are the most popular requests, but inspiring moments come when people first discover the centre—especially those that are outside Mennonite or church circles. This segment appears to be growing as others discover the unique Anabaptist flavour of the centre’s 7,000 titles. Arlyn clearly regards introducing newcomers to the array of Anabaptist resources as a ministry.

MC Canada’s recent emphasis on being a missional church (discerning God’s mission for the world and aligning with it) has sparked numerous calls from congregational leaders.

“Callers are searching for a missional understanding of the church, and are looking for handles to put on those ideas,” he says. “Others represent congregational mission leaders seeking help in developing a vision for their local setting.”

For many, the Resource Centre is the first point of contact with denominational ministries. Dave Bergen, executive secretary of Christian Formation, says, “The Resource Centre is the most popular, most used, and most widely recognized expression of the Formation program. Our work in Formation is all about nurturing faith in the home and congregation. And it’s important to say that the centre is not just for church leaders. There are many terrific resources here for individuals and families, and I would like to see those resources used more.”

All the centre’s titles are listed at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/). The catalogue is updated regularly, and resources can be requested online.

Increasingly, though, Arlyn is being called upon to put a face to the resource list by visiting congregations, delivering workshops, and interacting with worship leaders and pastors. The soft-spoken and reflective father of three describes the most enjoyable aspect of his work as connecting with

**Resource Centre facts:**

- An on-line searchable index of all titles can be accessed at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/)
- The centre is the storefront for all Mennonite Church Canada products (Prayer Week materials, At-Home Advent and Lent resources, Missional Church and other pastoral resources).
- It is the sole distributor for Canadian Women in Mission materials (Bible studies, Group Idea Books, history book).
- Phone calls to the centre are free (1-866-888-6785).
- Loans are free; postage is paid by the centre both ways (except videos). Consultation is free.
- Monthly resource updates via Equipping (all church mailing) highlight seasonal and new resources.
- Submissions of original worship resources are welcome.
- The Resource Centre provides over 2,000 loans per year, with books and videos ranking in the top two most frequently loaned items.
- Nearly 300 loans per year are provided to non-MC Canada borrowers.
- Use by area conference ranked by frequency: Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Eastern Canada, British Columbia.
- Top five groups using the centre (outside of MC Canada) are Mennonite Brethren, non-denominational, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Anglican, Baptist.
- Free email subscription to the *Resource Update* can be requested. Send your name, email address, congregation and phone number to [resources@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:resources@mennonitechurch.ca). Write "Subscribe Resource Update" in the subject line.—MC Canada release

people and getting a sense that he is making a difference.

"The rewards are in the feedback I receive—that what was sent was helpful, what was said was helpful, and that I understood the caller's needs."

Arlyn's dream for the centre is to increase awareness and accessibility, and to get feedback about the usefulness of his recommended resources.

Another dream is to deepen the relationship with Faith & Life Resources (Mennonite Publishing Network), and other Anabaptist resource providers.—From MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

North Newton, Kan.

## Fretz was first president of Grebel

**J**oseph Winfield Fretz, 94, died on January 24 after a brief illness. He was living at the Kidron-Bethel Retirement Center here.

Fretz was the founding president of Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario, leading the college from 1963-73. He remained as a sociology professor at University of Waterloo until 1979. Fretz taught at Bethel College in Kansas for 21 years (1942-1963) before coming to Grebel. He was acting president of Bethel College for a year, and of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary from 1983-84.

J. Winfield Fretz was born in 1910 in Bedminster, Pennsylvania, the ninth of 11 children. In 1930 he entered Bluffton College in Ohio, where he discovered a life's vocation under the mentorship of C. Henry Smith, noted Mennonite historian. Here he met Marguerite Geiger and they were married in 1936.

In 1936, Fretz began graduate work at the Chicago Theological Seminary, and later at the University of Chicago. His master's thesis focused on mutual aid and cooperatives, as illustrated in the Mennonite community of Mountain Lake, Minnesota. These subjects continued to interest him throughout his life. He also earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree with a thesis on Mennonite institutions in Chicago.

In 1941 Fretz received his PhD in Sociology from the University of Chicago. Fretz received two honorary doctorates—from the University of Waterloo (1989) and Bluffton College (1987).

During the early war years, Fretz spent two years of voluntary service with Mennonite Central Committee. His first assignment was to visit C.F. Klassen in British Columbia, who was working for the Canadian Mennonite

Board of Colonization. Fretz's report was published by MCC as *Community Building in Canada*. He also published two books on Mennonites in Paraguay. After retirement he wrote *The Waterloo Mennonites: A Community in Paradox*.

Fretz was preceded in death by his

wife of 65 years, Marguerite (2002), his son Burton D. Fretz (2001), and a granddaughter, Amy, in 1989. He is survived by three children, Stephen (Fresno, California), Thomas (Olathe, Kansas) and Sara Fretz-Goering (Silver Spring, Maryland) and their families.

Fretz had a lifelong interest in people and a knack for connecting with them through his friendliness, unflin-

cheerfulness, and humorous anecdotes. In the 1950s, while teaching at Bethel College, he established a restaurant called The Guest House, which tested many of his economic, sociological and religious beliefs. The restaurant was one of the first in Newton to break down racial barriers.

At Grebel, Fretz sought to establish an Anabaptist-Mennonite community on the university campus. In hiring faculty, he sought "renaissance people who had a liberal breadth to their learning," according to Leland Harder (see [www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/harder.html](http://www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/harder.html)). His most popular course as a professor was "The sociology of Mennonites."

In 1972, Fretz had his first paid sabbatical during which he and Marguerite took a trip around the world, visiting missions and MCC projects in 20 countries. He said it was a highlight of his life.

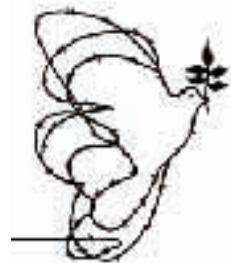
A memorial service for Winfield Fretz was held February 12, at Bethel College Mennonite Church.—From obituary and other reports



**J. Winfield Fretz**

# When righteousness and peace kiss each other

*We are proud to be members of a 'peace church,' observes this Mennonite theologian from Indonesia, but do we really know the full extent of God's peace?*



**A**s members of the “historic peace churches,” we are often proud to be perceived by others as forerunners in peacebuilding. We feel honoured when, in the midst of so many conflicts and wars in the world, churches turn to us and ask for our wisdom.

Because of this heritage, we often assume that we understand the meaning of our claim to be peacemakers and its implications. But are we really aware of what it means to take our claim as peace churches seriously?

A careful look at the Bible shows us that peace has a wide variety of meanings. Peace is not simply the absence of war or the reduction of violence—though both are certainly involved. Peace also refers to well-being and material prosperity, made possible by the absence of the threat of war, disease or famine (Jeremiah 33:6, 9). Peace refers to just relationships between people and between nations (Isaiah 54:13-14). And peace refers to the moral integrity of a person who has no deceit, fault, or blame (Psalm 34:13-14).

Peace in the Bible is related to the wholeness of human beings and all creatures. It is related to the physical, relational and moral, as well as spiritual, dimensions of humankind. So as Christians we should not be satisfied just because there is no overt conflict or war around us. We may not have war in our context, but as long as there is economic, social or political oppression and exclusion, peace has not yet prevailed. We also may not have overt conflict with

John Warkentin, a Mennonite Brethren pastor in Wichita, Kansas, uses a peace continuum in his classes for new church members. The continuum extends from the individual's peace with God to peace with one's enemies.

In this continuum, the most important question to start with is whether we have peace with God (Romans 5:1). If so, peace then ripples out and begins to impact all our other relationships, including those in the family, workplace, and internationally. Peacebuilding always starts with peace with God.

But God, who is the source of peace, also wills peace for all creation. God wants us to move from peace with God to peace with our neighbours and, ultimately, with our enemies. We see this will of God very clearly in Jesus Christ, who demonstrated the way of peace through his life and ministry.

If on one pole of the continuum we find peace with God, on the other pole we find peace with enemies. This is

indeed the most difficult peace to achieve. We may be at peace with God, but we may not be at peace with our enemies, especially enemies who have hurt us physically or emotionally. This

explains why Christians who have been involved in bloody conflicts—such as those in Indonesia, Ireland, or South America—have difficulty reconciling themselves with people they perceive as their enemies.

**Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called the children of God**

our neighbours, but as long as our life is full of deception and fault, we have no peace.

In short, as long as there are dimensions of biblical peace that do not exist, that can only mean peace has not prevailed in our life and context, and there is work we need to do in order to transform that condition.

## Two disciplines

How can the church empower its members to work for peace? There are at least two basic disciplines that we need to consider to become peacemakers: the discipline of discernment, and the discipline of a radical Christ-like life.

When we commit ourselves to be peacebuilders, the first discipline in which we need to train ourselves is that of discernment. We need to be critical of the conditions around us to see whether all dimensions of peace are present. As Christians, we need to realize that our confession of the lordship of Christ is more than just an individual or sectarian choice. It is a claim about the cosmos.

In that confession we proclaim that there is no realm in the world that is not under the lordship of Christ; there is no dichotomy between Christ and culture, creation and redemption. There is no socio-economic-political realm that can be avoided by the church and left alone to be governed by its own values and norms. The whole world and all aspects of humankind are under the lordship of Christ. There is no exception.

This can only mean that, even though we are to have positive attitudes toward the world, we need clear criteria by which to judge whether an event is the work of God or the work of the devil; that is, whether it brings peace or evil. And it is in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we get the criteria we need.

Thus, the church is the discerning community where we as Christians decide together God's will for us and the world. When we see the meaning of Christ in a particular event, then we can confirm it. But when we do not see the meaning of Christ in that event, then we have to confront it.

Peacebuilding starts from the understanding of the character and will of Christ, not from the description of the reality of the world and our effort to fit the gospel into that reality. Even while we confess the incarnation of Christ, we have to realize that incarnation does not mean a blind ratification of all human activities.

Incarnation means that God has entered the world to show us what we can bind and what we have to loose (Matthew 18:18).

The second discipline we need to develop is that of a radical Christ-like life. We need to be aware that inside every person there is always capacity and limitation. Because we have capacity, we can develop ourselves and become creative. At the same time, because we have limitations, we need to be humble.

With the capacity we have, we can form ourselves to be peacebuilders if we want to. But because we have limitations, we should also discipline our wants that tend to bring us to things in contradiction to peace.

Developing a radical Christ-like life is not something that can be forced from outside, nor can it happen automatically. If we choose peace as our way of life, we have to do it voluntarily, without force. The way of life oriented to peace is not an obligation to be fulfilled because of external force. At the same time, we also have to discipline and train ourselves so that peace becomes our habit wherever we are, in all situations.

## Individuals and structures

To help develop the radical Christ-like life that leads to the way of peace, the church must work with both individuals and structures:

- **Individuals:** We need to think seriously about how we can shape individual character so that Christians can become peacebuilders through social practices in the church. For example, we need to reevaluate the material we use in classes for new church members, to see whether it will equip new members with the insights and skills necessary for peacebuilding. By the same token, we need to reconsider our Sunday school material to see whether we have equipped church members—adults and children alike—to live out a peaceful way of life.

So with our worship. We need to re-examine whether we have made peace central in our worship. If we have many occasions in the church calendar to address various issues, such as mission month, family month or ecumenical Sunday, we need to ask whether we also have peace month or peace Sunday. And how about prayer and fasting for peace? Or a pilgrimage for peace?

We need to train our pastors, elders, deacons and all church members with the insights and skills for nonviolent conflict transformation. We need to struggle together with biblical texts related to peace and to design curricula for peace education in the church and in our Christian schools.

- **Structures:** Besides empowering individuals, we also need to work with our structures. Here we need to think, for instance, whether we have intentionally established a mechanism in the church to solve the conflicts that emerge inside and outside the church. Many churches that do not have such a mechanism only accumulate conflict. It then becomes a time bomb that eventually tears apart the whole church.

We also need to take a closer look at our church organizational structure. If we have a youth committee, women's committee, mission committee or worship committee, we

**Continued on page 8**

**[T]here is no realm in the world which is not under the lordship of Christ; there is no dichotomy between Christ and culture, creation and redemption.... The whole world and all aspects of humankind are under the lordship of Christ.**

**Peace** From page 7

need to ask whether our church also has a peace committee in charge of educating and training our church members for peacebuilding inside and outside the church. Committee members could also function as mediators to transform conflict nonviolently in the church and society.

For us who are members of the historic peace churches, there is much work we need to do for peace. Some will be difficult and demand high commitment from us. Some is ordinary work that we are able to do in our everyday life. Whatever the situation we are facing, peacebuilding is not simply a dream. It is a concrete vision that we need to strive

for as long as we claim to be Christians.

Then justice and truth have met together; righteousness (justice) and peace have kissed each other (Psalm 85:10).—**Paulus S. Widjaja**

*The writer teaches theology at Duta Wacana Christian University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He also serves as secretary of Mennonite World Conference's Peace Council. This article first appeared in The Courier.*



## A series on peacemaking

*This issue concludes a two-part series of personal reflections about peacemaking. For previous stories, see January 24 issue.*

## Conscientious objectors share their stories

**A**s the world remembered the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp last month, four Mennonite men met in the home of Norman and Sue Weber in Elmira, Ontario, to tell their stories of being conscientious objectors (COs) during World War II.

"My parents taught us not to be involved with soldiers," said Oscar Martin, who attends the Waterloo-Markham Meetinghouse in Elmira of his reason for refusing military service. Henry Martin, a member of the Martin's meetinghouse in Waterloo, said his parents had a clear conviction that when the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill," that is exactly what it means, including not going to war.

Norm Weber, from the Elmira Mennonite Church (MCEC), recalled that at his baptism the emphasis was not to be involved with the world. In church membership classes he studied the 18 articles of Dordrecht, which included the instruction, "Love your enemies." "How can you love them and kill them?" Weber asked.

Morgan Baer, from Shantz Mennonite Church (MCEC), pondered the possible link between a stance of noncon-

formity and Mennonite pacifism. "Non-conformity includes a lifestyle, and that includes a lifestyle of peace," he said.

These men are in a long line of Mennonites who chose the way of peace in times of war. While a million Canadians signed up to fight in World War II, 10,000 young men chose another path – not to bear arms or go to war.

The general draft was aimed at young men 19 to 21 years old, or older if they were not married. Being married made one exempt. Another exemption was if one was needed to work on the farm. In most of Canada,

men had to appear before a judge to ascertain whether they must do military service.

While there was considerable public hostility towards Mennonites who sought an exemption because of their religious beliefs, government documents dating back to World War I showed Mennonites and Brethren in Christ had been given exemptions at that time, though they paid dearly for this privilege by paying for bonds.

Any member of a historic peace church simply needed a letter from his pastor, to indicate that he was indeed

a member of such a church. When they received their draft notice from the government, the young men had to go to the doctor to be checked regarding their suitability for the army.

Henry remembered that visit well. "My brother had a little hernia, so he was exempt. The doctor turned to me and said, 'You're the one that's going.'"

Henry did go, but – thanks to the letter – it was into alternative service at Montreal River.



**Mennonite conscientious objectors during World War II: Clayton R. Shantz, Henry Martin, Oscar Martin and Norman Weber.**





**Norm Weber and Oscar Martin recall their CO experiences of 60 years ago.**

Norm recalled that the minister of agriculture at the time was highly sympathetic to the young Mennonite farm boys and their desire to do alternative service. He saw their usefulness in many sectors – planting trees in British Columbia, working on farms in Ontario, building roads in the north, and working in mines, among other duties. And he needed the farmers to keep the farm economy healthy.

For the four men who met around that dining room table in January, it was a reunion, since they all had been assigned to do their alternative service at Montreal River, where the Trans-Canada Highway was being built. As far as they understood at the time, they would be there for the duration of the war. As it turned out, they were there from December 15, 1942, to the following April or May.

Their assignment was to move a hill into a valley, by breaking the dirt and rock with picks and shoveling the fill by hand into four dump trucks. They worked from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with one hour for lunch, at the rate of 50 cents per day.

“Sunday evenings the Russian Mennonite boys would sing for us,” said Henry. It was four-part gospel music. He recalled that David Wiens was in charge of some services as well.

It might be debated whether what they did had any real

meaning – moving dirt from one pile to another. Years later, the road was completed, using heavy equipment. “Our work was in vain,” said Norm. “They needed a make-work project to get us out of the public view.” Nonetheless, he has several times stood at the completed site and felt good about his contribution.

Henry commented of their alternate service work after Montreal River until the end of the war: “They decided we would be worth more on the farm.” If conscientious objectors had no family farm to return to, they were placed on other farms in Ontario, including tobacco farms in the Chatham district. Oscar worked in a factory in Brantford,

canning vegetables. The policy was that half their wages was given to the Red Cross.

Many of them continued to contribute to the Red Cross afterwards. Weber sees that the alternative services program gave impetus to, or was foundational for, future Mennonite Central Committee relief efforts, the work of Mennonite Disaster Service and Voluntary Service. It created a “habit of the heart” for the next generations to emulate, he said.

The men reflected on their peers at Montreal River. Most of the men had girlfriends back home. Henry married his in 1945. Oscar married “a different



**Henry Martin and Morgan Baer talk about their CO experiences.**

girlfriend” in 1947, he said.

Not all of the men were Mennonites. Oscar remembered that one of the camp administrators was a Baptist—Jack Bieman—who had initially joined the army for active duty. When he saw his first bayonet practice, he knew he could never do that to a man. So he was sent to Montreal River to do non-combatant duty.

The question that lingered in the air as the conversation around the dining room table in the Weber home came to a conclusion was: What would our Mennonite young people do today if there were once again a military conscription?—**Maurice Martin**

## Defying the law

**L**ast summer I committed a federal crime. When I turned 18 and was required to register with the Selective Service System, I did not do so.

Failing to register is a criminal act punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. I am willing to be prosecuted but do not expect it. The primary punishment has been the withholding of financial aid for college.

Registration is a prerequisite to the draft and therefore intended to facilitate war. If I registered I would be considered a war asset because there is no option for conscientious objectors on the registration form.

I wouldn't want my compliance or silence to imply my consent with the war machine that endorses killing as a solution. Instead of joining the military, I'd be willing to go to the Middle East to engage in nonviolent mediation and direct action.

Ultimately, my objection to registering stems from my allegiance to God and Jesus Christ. When choosing between inflicting suffering upon others or taking it upon myself, I strive to follow the way of Jesus.

I'm committed to pursuing peaceful solutions. In doing that I'd be willing to die, but not to kill.—**Jason Shenk**

*The writer is from Goshen, Indiana.*



**Shenk**

Photos by Maurice Martin

## Sometimes peacemaking feels 'like sand in the mouth'

I grew up in the pacifist Mennonite tradition, attending Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek, Alberta. In the back of my mind I was always interested in the peace side of my church tradition, but it wasn't until I graduated with an engineering degree that I started to think about how peacemaking was a part of living my faith as well.

I joined a Mennonite Central Committee Work and Learn Tour to El Salvador in 2001, and in learning about that country's conflict-ridden history, I started to think more about what Mennonites might be doing to actively reduce violence around the world.

I discovered Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) through the Mennonite Church Canada website, and decided to go on a CPT delegation to learn more about this organization. While on a CPT trip to Colombia I was drawn to CPT's spiritually-based, intentional-community style of being a presence in a conflict situation and actively working to "get in the way" of violence.

After some time back home in Calgary thinking and praying about what I was to do with this experience, I decided to quit my job as a computer programmer and join CPT full time. I participated in the month-long CPT training in January 2003 and committed myself to three years working full-time with CPT. I spend about two-thirds of each year working on a CPT project, and the times in between speaking about my CPT experiences, as well as resting.

Soon after training I joined the team in Hebron, where we provide a presence for the civilian population, and work with Palestinian and Israeli peace groups to reduce the violence that is a result of the military occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

You may have read about the two attacks on CPT members near Hebron

by masked Israeli settlers while we were accompanying Palestinian children from their village to the village where their school is located (Oct. 18, page 23). Maybe your question is: What in the world is CPT still doing there if it is not safe?

My simple answer is that as CPT members we are aware that violent acts might be committed against us; however, this doesn't stop us from getting in the way of violence. But we do not "seek" violence. We have many discussions about situations, our actions, and what might happen. As foreigners, we have the choice to leave.

Who stays behind if we do that? People who cannot leave and who are without witnesses from outside who can spread their stories to the world. One CPT trainer says our situation often feels "like sand in the mouth."

While I believe that God is calling me to work with CPT right now, I get scared and intimidated. The natural

reaction is to retreat and go to a safe place. Going beyond this fear takes prayer and convincing by your inner self, and it tastes like sand in the mouth.

It's going out the next morning after being attacked and walking through the same hills with the school children. It's talking with the Israeli soldiers who stop you and tell you they cannot provide for your safety if you go with the children.

The strength for doing this work comes from many different places. The strength comes from following the example of Jesus in showing another way to respond to violence. The strength comes from knowing that my friends, family and church respect my calling to this work and support me financially, through prayer, and in showing interest in my work.

And the strength comes from remembering that there are many other people in history who have worked nonviolently towards peace, and that there are still more working today all over the world.

—Diane Janzen



Janzen

## My journey toward true peacemaking

The Anabaptist reformation started in the 1500s and in 1954, and in every year between and since, I suspect.

In 1954, my father was the pastor of a small Baptist church in Arizona. When I was five, my father asked me if I wanted to follow Jesus in entering the waters of baptism. God, however, impressed it upon me that this was not what he wanted me to do at that time. In this way God began the Anabaptist reformation in my life.

When my best friends were sent to fight in Vietnam, I began to meditate on the saying of Jesus, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were my servants would fight." My mother pleaded with me to apply for conscientious objector (CO) status.

Long before the war, I had been certain that God's plans would take me to Canada. For me, the draft was getting in the way of seeking the kingdom of God's Messiah and his righteousness.

In the essay required for my CO application, I asked: Can the army

provide me an opportunity to serve the work that the Prince of Peace began in the world? I sat before a panel of men who looked like ex-marines.

The one with my file asked in a quiet, angry voice, "Did you write this essay?"

"Yes," I said. He pointed and said, "There is the door."



Kirk

Another man asked, "Are you a Jehovah's Witness or a Quaker?"

"I am a Baptist," I said. The panel coldly dismissed me without a further word.

My parents seemed to believe in the logic of the

Cold War. My father, a veteran himself, reminded me that my mother's first husband died liberating France. "Had we not fought the Germans," he said, "all the Jews in the world would have been exterminated."

"If great armies of people were willing to give their lives fighting against the

## Colombian youth leaves violent past behind

**M**y name is James Alberto Benitez Ortiz and I am 18 years old. I am the second of three children, and live with my siblings and my mother. For six years, I've been attending the Community Mennonite Church of Peace in Armenia, Colombia, and one year ago I was baptized there.

My life's journey has been surrounded by much violence. First of all, in a culture where abuse is more common than peace, my father raised me with a machismo attitude and a lot of violence. It was very hard for me to understand that problems were not to be solved with force, even when I knew that violence was not necessary.

Although it was painful to experience the leaving of my father at an early age, it was a relief to not have to live with the daily violence at home. Three months after moving from



Bogotá to a small pueblo near Armenia, my favourite uncle was shot to death in front of his family. The violence we had tried to escape in Bogotá confronted us again. Although the pain was great, and the temptation to take vengeance was real, I began to realize at the age of nine that the road to violence had a dead end. I was full of doubts, however.

In 1999, shortly after the earthquake rocked our region, I was invited to attend the Mennonite church in Armenia, and I started my Christian life. From the beginning I involved myself in this church, wanting to understand the doctrine and theology of the Mennonites. In October of this same year, I attended a National Mennonite Youth Convention in Cachipay, where I was introduced to the theology of nonviolence, and I fell in love with it.

I began to look for courses and training related to human rights, nationally and internationally. I was a Red Cross volunteer, and certified by a non-governmental organization in democracy and politics which was

**Although the pain was great, and the temptation to take vengeance was real, I began to realize at the age of nine that the road to violence had a dead end.**

focused on nonviolence. I participated in marches for bread and peace, and attended workshops on sanctuary churches and how to promote security in Colombia.

I also became part of our church's leadership program, and was trained as a conciliator. I studied inner healing, justice and peace, how to interpret the Bible, and much more.

**Continued on page 12**

causes of war, instead of for them," I responded, "perhaps that war and the Holocaust never would have happened." I had never heard of Mennonites or Anabaptists, but the Anabaptist reformation was blazing in my heart.

Once in Canada I sought people who were looking for a civilization whose saviour was not the nuclear bomb. It was no easier in Canada for young radical idealists to find work than it was in the United States. I picked a plant from the forest used by florists for about 25 cents an hour, and ate discarded produce from behind supermarkets. I could not get welfare for five years.

Living in the world of Canadian poverty I learned about the deep

**'If great armies of people were willing to give their lives fighting against the causes of war, instead of for them, perhaps that war and the Holocaust never would have happened.'**

relationship between broken-spirited people and the Gospel. I was baptized in my early 20s in the Georgia Strait off B.C.'s Sunshine Coast. Some years later, I attended Northwest Baptist Theological Seminary, searching desperately for a language of the Gospel of peace that could meet the need of the severely damaged people I was working with.

My search took me into the early centuries of the Free Church movement, then to the Anabaptist Reformation. It was only a matter of time before my family and I found Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford and made it our home church.

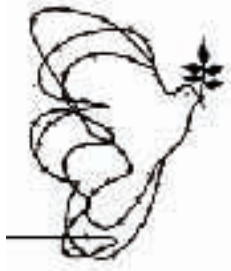
Now in my middle years I understand that the way God overturned the process of baptism in my life was a message about the nature of his upside down kingdom. Our greatest witness to peace is our own

adult repentance. Because of this, I do not labour for a gospel that simply helps those who are good at helping themselves. I seek to serve the Messiah about whom Mary sang: "The powerful he makes to stand aside. He lifts the poor up out of the ditch; he fills the hungry spirit with his own goods. For those who are satiated with wealth he has no gift."

On my journey toward peacemaking I have learned one thing: When the worldwide vote for peace is finally held, they shall say, Peace! Peace! But there shall be no peace. But when the poorest spirits throughout the world are helped to understand the Good News as Mary did, and rejoice with her that the salvation of Israel is come despite all human failings, then world peace will truly have come.

For me, Mary's anthem is the true conscientious objection to the true cause of all violence, and this is the fire that burns at the core of the Anabaptist reformation which will never be quenched.—**Max Kirk**

*The writer is a mediator in private practice in British Columbia.*



## Berta becomes peace witness in Mozambique

I first met Berta Sengulane in 1981, in war-torn Mozambique, when she was young and beautiful, with laughter-filled eyes. She was married to Dinis, recently-appointed Anglican Bishop of Lebombo.

They were both new to leadership and Berta, especially, found this difficult since she was shy and timid. She preferred to stay at home, welcoming guests and creating a loving “nest” for her husband and four pre-school children.

One day the bishop and Berta were invited to attend a church celebration in a remote and dangerous war zone. A church building which had been closed down by the Marxist government several years earlier had been given permission to reopen.

The congregation, which had grown in the interim while meeting outdoors under a tree, was marking the occasion with a celebration, including the baptism of hundreds of people. Naturally, they wanted their bishop and his wife to be present. So the Sengulanes prepared for the journey.

Berta became more and more afraid of taking that trip. She kept thinking of all the people who had been ambushed on that road—terrible stories of old men, women and children being stabbed, shot, decapitated, burned alive. She couldn’t face the risk of that journey.

After her husband left by himself, Berta sat down for her devotions and was led to read from the Old Testament. The passage spoke to her about God watching over his people in times of danger, and that even if harm should come, God would be there to comfort and to care for them. She felt as though the words were spoken directly to her.

Suddenly, her fears for her own safety were gone and she thought only about the joy her presence would bring to her husband and the isolated church community in that war-ravaged part of her country. So she packed her bags, arranged her transport, and with all four children, set out on a perilous journey, trusting that

God would look after her.

And God did. She made it safely and was welcomed with great joy. One could say her action was foolhardy, but to those who experienced her coming, it must have shone like a great light of courage and hope in the midst of much darkness.

That journey was the first step in the development of a seemingly fearless faith which we witnessed over the next 15 years. After that, Berta often travelled with her husband, sharing “the good news of peace through Jesus” with people in desolate circumstances. Criss-crossing the country, they not only preached peace, but lived it.

They organized reconciliation workshops and set up a program to beat swords into ploughshares—turning guns and children’s war toys into candlestick holders! They hosted weekly evenings in their home where people were encouraged to share stories and signs of peace that they were seeing. We attended one of those evenings and were deeply moved as stories and drawings of flowers and doves and other things were held up to symbolize peace.

In late 1998, we got a letter from the bishop informing us that Berta had been killed in a car-crash in a remote area of the country. She died in her prime, on the road, as she had feared, but not before she had become a peace witness extraordinaire and a leader of women.

Her husband wrote that she was “the founder of several congregations and the revitalizer of others.” She had especially delighted in plants and flowers because they were “God’s things.” She requested that half the money for flowers at her funeral be given to people and projects to minimize human suffering.

Her “contagious smile and laughter delighted all of us,” wrote the bishop, and she “must now be delighting God and the angels...we really thank God for Berta.”—**Leona Dueck Penner**

### Colombian *From page 11*

All of the above experiences—familial, social and ecclesial—have given me the conscience necessary to confront the huge military war machine here in Colombia from a conscientious objector stance, something as a child I never dreamed of.

I feel at peace with myself, with our society, my family and, most of all, with God, about my decision to exchange military arms for social work. I hope I can encourage other youth to believe that this war can be exchanged for justice and peace and love.

People make fun of us, calling us cowards. Some say my religion has brainwashed me. I am ready to confront people who would make fun of me for my stance, both my friends and military officials. I tell these people that I am at peace with God and myself, and have no need to be a “Rambo,” showing my strength and killing others. I know that many of our youth are suffering greatly by being obligated to serve their country in a violent way.

I am grateful to our Mennonite church and to JustaPaz, our church’s justice and peace organization, for giving me the opportunity to become a conscientious objector. I now understand what Christ meant when he preached his Sermon on the Mount and taught the Beatitudes to people who at that time were also mistreated in physical, emotional and spiritual ways.

I am entering into college to study biology, to fulfill my goal of being a doctor. Having Jesus Christ as my foundation, I am not interested in only alleviating pain in a physical way, but also in a spiritual sense that will have implications on patients’ social life as well.—**James Ortiz**, as told to **Frank Albrecht**

# Peace resources

## Resources for children:

*And to Think That We Thought We Would Never Be Friends.* Crown Publishers, 1999. This story in rhyming verse takes on quarrelling and its consequences.

*The Big Book For Peace.* Dutton Children's Books, 1990. Anthology of 17 stories, pictures, and poems about many kinds of peace.

*Children and War, Children and Peace.* Project Peacemakers, 2001. A curriculum with a video and stories of children caught in warfare and people building peace.

*Finding the Fruits of Peace—Cain and Abel.* Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001. The biblical story is recast in a way that invites a conversation about anger.

*Folktales of Peace.* Mennonite Central Committee, 1996-97. Two videos with peacemaking stories from around the world. Suited for kindergarten to Grade 6.

*Kids and Conflict: Resolving Problems the Jesus Way.* Faith and Life Press, 1997. A Vacation Bible School program on how Jesus handled conflict.

*The Sun and the Wind.* Faith and Life Press, 1983. A fable about power.

## Parenting:

*But Why Don't We Go to War: Finding Jesus' Path to Peace,* Herald Press, 1993. Six sessions for children and their parents.

*Growing Toward Peace.* Herald Press, 1993. Stories about children learning to live peacefully.

*Parent Trek: Nurturing Creativity and Care in Our Children.* Herald Press, 2001. A resource to help children live out the vision of enough for everyone.

*Parenting for Peace and Justice.* Orbis Books, 1990. A revised edition of a classic.

*Raising Peaceful Children in a Violent World.* Lura Media,

1995. An action book with down-to-earth examples for teaching children to become peacemakers.

## Youth:

*Bridge to Forgiveness.* Mennonite Media, 2001. This 13-minute video by comedians Ted and Lee depicts the story of Jacob and Esau, with youth sharing their experiences of forgiveness.

*Decide for Peace: A Guide for Personal Bible Study and Reflection on Conscientious Objection.* Faith and Life Press, 1996.

*Fastlane: Bible Studies for Junior High.* Faith and Life Press. Topics include "Peace heroes" and "Living without violence."

*From Kosovo to Colombine.* MCC, 2000. Four-session study on the roots of violence and the way of peace.

*Games that Byte: Helping Youth Evaluate Computer Games.* Faith and Life Press, 1998. Offers youth leaders outlines for three interactive workshops.

*Images for a Peaceful Planet.* National Film Board. Seven intergenerational films for peace studies, including "If you love this planet" and the perennial favourite, "The big snit."

*Leap, Twist, Spy, Listen.* Mennonite Church USA, 2001. This youth curriculum outlines the principles of nonviolence.

*Peace: Just Live It.* Faith and Life Press, 1995. Ten active sessions on biblical peacemaking.

*Peace: The Ultimate Trick.* MCC, 2003. 12-minute video featuring a skateboarder who talks about MCC's relief and peacemaking work.

## Adult groups:

*Change of Command.* MCC, 1999. A 42-minute video featuring stories of military veterans whose lives were changed.

*A Force More Powerful.* Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2000. A two-part documentary on how nonviolent power overcame

oppression in places such as India (Ghandi), USA (civil rights movement), South Africa (apartheid), Denmark (Nazis).

*Journey Toward Forgiveness: From Rage to Reconciliation.* Mennonite Media, 2002. A 60-minute video with seven stories of the process toward forgiveness.

*Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding.* Good Books, 2003. This series of short books presents key concepts and practices from the fields of restorative justice and conflict transformation.

*Making Peace with Conflict.* Herald Press. Practical guide to transforming conflict based on biblical and Anabaptist principles.

*A Mennonite Statement and Study on Violence.* Faith and Life Press. Includes a bibliography, stories and a study guide.

*Prayer: In the Peace of Christ.* Mennonite Church Canada, 2003. A five-week guide for worship, prayer and study.

*Second Mile: A Peace Journey for Congregations.* Faith and Life Resources. A 20-session guide for worship, study and action.

## Worship/Leadership:

*Bread for the Enemy: A Peace and Justice Lectionary.* Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee, 2001.

*Conflict in the Church.* MCC,

1999. Two-part video that offers helpful ways of dealing with conflict in congregations.

*Come and Eat: Invited to the Dinner Table; Called to be Peacemakers.* MCC, 2004.

This Peace Sunday packet with worship materials connects food and justice.

*Transforming Conflict in Your Church: A Practical Guide.* Herald Press, 2002. Practical workbook for the congregation on the nature of conflict and how to transform it.

## Web sites:

[www.mccc.on.ca/peaceandjustice/](http://www.mccc.on.ca/peaceandjustice/)—A new web site from the Peace and Justice ministry, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

[www.peace.mennolink.org](http://www.peace.mennolink.org)—Mennonite Church USA's Peace and Justice Support Network.

[www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/)—A catalogue of 7000 items, specializing in Anabaptist titles.

[www.mbicresources.org/](http://www.mbicresources.org/)—Resources from the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Resource Centre in Kitchener.

[www.ecapc.org](http://www.ecapc.org)—Every Church a Peace Church's web site, with resources for individuals and congregations.

*This list was supplied by the MC Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg. For more information, phone 1-866-888-6785 or e-mail: [resources@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:resources@mennonitechurch.ca)*

## Call to Prayer

Lord, as we gather, in our ordinary way,  
in your presence, and in the presence of one another,  
we are all too aware that much is amiss in the world.  
We are all too aware, that even in this quiet moment,  
some of your beloved people and parts of your beloved earth  
are being visited by death and destruction.  
For the sake of the world you love,  
we pray that our simple commitment to the routines of worship  
will not be an escape from life  
but a sacrament of hope  
that turns us back to the needs of the world  
more grounded in your love.  
May our attention to ordinary things  
be a way of saying that we trust you  
as the one who cradles the world and its people  
in your all-embracing arms.  
In Jesus' name,  
Amen.

—Mary H. Schertz

## Letters

### Persecution in Vietnam is understandable

Some time ago, when Jake Epp ran for federal election, we heard whispers: “Mennonites don’t belong in politics—religion and politics should not be mixed.” Sorry, but the two are inexplicably intertwined. Religion is political. And they are no more interconnected than in Vietnam.

In December, we brought four university students from Vietnam to our church. They had never attended a church service. One of our pastors informed them of the recent difficulties in Vietnam and they searched the details on the web. They were shocked and reacted defensively. It forced us to

**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](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org) or to “Letter to the Editor,” Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7.**

think “outside the box” and appreciate their perspectives.

In November, the courts in Vietnam handed down sentences to six Vietnamese Mennonite church workers (Nov. 29, page 12). How, after 30 years of peace work, have Mennonites found themselves in prison and their religious organization deemed to be illegal? Mennonite Central Committee was one of the few western organiza-

tions allowed to serve in Vietnam during some of the most severe times in its history. Now, as the Vietnamese government has been opening its doors, we find ourselves effectively shut out.

For 30 years, this small country was embroiled in a vicious civil war. The war was exacerbated by “Christian” nations. For example, the Americans dropped more bombs on Hanoi and its

## The play of relationships

We often hear that relationships require work. They also need play. Last February, for example, my husband and I went searching for romance at a snug, snow-covered cottage. Cross-country skiing, cozying up by the fire and Valentine chocolates added to the pleasure. My husband even indulged me in a game of Scrabble, a special sacrifice given who’s likely to win. All in all, the weekend provided a playful reprieve from the busyness, intensity and distraction that characterizes much of our lives.

All relationships benefit from moments of lightness—hugs, laughter, frolics, gentle teasing. My teenaged son and his friends colour the air with witty one-liners, which leave bystanders howling. This morning, I spent an hour with my friend, Sue, now in university, recalling outrageous stories from her childhood when she and her brother played with my young son. Routines with my mother include shopping at Wal-Mart, fingering the fabrics of our latest sewing projects, and a stop at the frozen custard shop for the world’s best ice cream.

At a different life stage, Lois inspired me with the way she broke into song when she was most frustrated with her children; it remains one of the best stress-busting strategies I know (though

perhaps less successful with teenagers). Lois also remarked that, given the choice of housecleaning or nuzzling her baby, she would baby nuzzle anytime. Young children are often the best play partners, for their days are punctuated by spontaneity and merriment. Apparently, pre-school children laugh 75 to 100 times a day. Adults, on the other hand, laugh on



average less than once per day. Bring on the kids!

The principle extends to congregations. People in churches need potlucks, retreats and pick-up volleyball games along with worship and committee meetings. In *In Tune with God*, Sally Weaver Glick uses play to describe one aspect of congregational discernment. She highlights four dimensions that “help keep conversation cooperative and playful.” These include: pace—slowing down sufficiently so clear

communication can take place; styles—offering multiple ways to “play” in light of different learning modes; intuition—including creative avenues such as art, music, and storytelling; and, finally, power issues—attending to the power dynamics so the boisterous and the quiet can participate in a balanced way.

It is easy to see their relevance in family relationships. Setting the weekend aside was a way of slowing down the pace, which allowed my spouse and me to communicate in a more relaxed way. My son’s humour may not always match mine, but we are both enriched by allowing room for each of our styles. Storytelling and laughter with Sue today brings our experiences from the past (not all of which were funny at the time!) into the relationship we share today. My adult interactions with my mother are shaped by changes we both have gone through, including shifts in power dynamics. Parents with positive relationships with their adult children note the importance of adapting to those changes.

What do you think? Care to play?

*Melissa Miller is a counsellor and author from Winnipeg. Currently, she is studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and serving as interim associate pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Indiana.*

region than all the bombs dropped during the Second World War. Today, men, women and children are still being killed and maimed by these bombs and landmines.

In the central and northern highlands, the U.S. military exploited independent minorities such as the Montagnard and Hmong peoples. Supplied with weapons, they fiercely fought the North Vietnamese. After the war, many escaped to Thailand as refugees and some found their way to North America.

Nguyen Hong Quang is a lawyer and a political dissenter. He has championed the cause of ethnic minorities and been active in evangelical work among them. In 1998, he "affiliated with Mennonites" and, in July 2003, he was chosen as general secretary of the Mennonite church in Vietnam. He combines an evangelical Christianity with political activism.

The court's response is not justified, but it is understandable. After the horrendous years of war, there is little tolerance for perceived threats to peace and stability. In recent years, our Mennonite leaders in Vietnam have shifted in strategy and we should not be surprised at the consequences.

The consequences have even affected my relationship with the four Vietnamese students.—**Joanne and Douglas Durst, Regina, Sask.**

### U.S. security officials interrupt carol singing

Thanks for your feature on Advent and the Missional Church (Nov. 15).

I and a dozen other Chicagoans sang updated carols at one of Chicago's federal buildings. We managed to wish "happy holidays to you and your enemies" to folks on some 15 of the building's floors. After Homeland Security personnel and dogs interrupted our merrymaking, took our info and escorted us outside, we sang some more.

I reworked two carols for the occasion. Lyrics are posted at <http://pages.prodigy.net/duane.ediger/christmascarols.htm>. Feel free to use them at future holiday gatherings! —**Duane Ediger, Chicago, Ill.**

### Taxing is not the same as tithing

In the January 10 issue, I found two items that show a somewhat naive view of our Canadian tax system.

The article "Taxes as tithing?" (Jan. 10, page 26) shows a failure to understand that each dollar collected by government is like a vote for an expensive government bureaucrat to administer the redistribution of that dollar. When those dollar votes reach a certain amount, the government hires another bureaucrat who is either paid out of the money already being collected—thereby reducing the amount of "tithing" (?) money available for the needy—or from additional money collected through increased taxes. The least efficient way to provide financial help for anyone is to leave the task to government.

I was extremely disappointed to learn that Mennonite Central Committee had been a party to the Kairos brief submitted to Parliament that, in part, advocates higher taxation for the wealthy (Jan. 10, page 20). Although the tax system does give some recognition to charitable donations, the Robin Hood approach to wealth redistribution does not otherwise discriminate between those of means who give generously to help the disadvantaged and those who may not.

I would say to the organizations behind Kairos, please do not bother to complain if you find the amounts you are receiving from your major donors decline when your recommendations are implemented by government. Although the fable about killing the goose that laid the golden egg is not from scripture, it teaches a valuable lesson.—**Clyde Ovens, Calgary, Alta.**

### MCC is a worthy charity

Further to my January 10 letter, I draw attention to the federal Charities Directorate at [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities), or 1-800-267-2384. You can learn there if a charity is registered. Other information is also provided, including financial statements, although it is by the charity itself, not an auditor.

A friend of mine told me her method of dealing with charity calls. She will consider supporting them if they send her a mission statement and their latest officially audited financial statement. Few ever do.

I hope people will remain generous despite the abuses of some organizations and individuals. There are good charities out there, such as Mennonite Central Committee, which enjoys a reputation for using money wisely. I praise those responsible for this.

—**Howard Boldt, Saskatoon, Sask.**

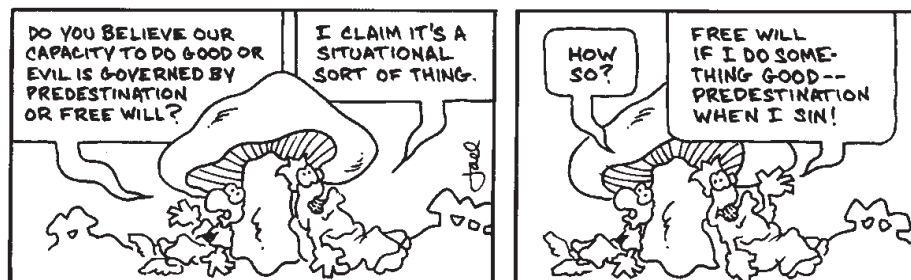
### Congregations, are you sending in your Transitions?

We welcome announcements of births, marriages, deaths and baptisms in your congregation. Send us your information by mail, fax or e-mail (addresses on page 2).

If you need a Transitions form for faxing or mailing, call 1-800-378-2524, ext. 223.

CANADIAN  
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### Pontius' Puddle



## Tsunami relief effort largest in MCC history

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) is responding to the Asian earthquake and tsunami disaster with \$12 million in aid, making it the single largest response to a natural disaster in MCC's 85-year history.

As of January 11, MCC had received \$5.7 million in donations for tsunami relief efforts. More financial aid is still coming in.

"The generous outpouring of donations and support has been humbling," says Ronald J.R. Mathies, MCC executive director. "We praise God for these gifts and will put them all to use bringing hope and dignity to people who have suffered so much."

Since the Boxing Day disaster, MCC has provided emergency food, water, supplies, medical aid and trauma counselling for survivors in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India. To date, MCC has provided nearly half a million dollars for immediate supplies in the affected areas. MCC assessment teams continue to work with regional partners to determine the church's continuing response.

In Indonesia's Aceh province, where the greatest destruction occurred, MCC is supporting the emergency response arm of an association of Indonesian hospitals (YAKKUM Emergency Unit, or YEU) which began relief work two days after the disaster struck. As of January 21, MCC had provided more than \$250,000 for the work of YEU.

Jeanne and Daniel Jantzi, MCC workers in Indonesia who hail from New York State, have had a chance to see the YEU work and were impressed by what they saw.

"We were overwhelmed by the commitment of these people to care for other people just because they are God's creation," the Jantzis reported just days after the tsunami, noting that the YEU staff replaced government health workers who fled the scene.

The YEU workers brought in their own mats, for everyone to eat and

sleep on. "We stayed with them there, with eight to ten of us sleeping on kapok mats on the floor," the Jantzis wrote. "The number of those sleeping was never stable because these folks were running on sheer adrenalin and cups of coffee. They would work until 2 or 3 a.m. and then drop to sleep just long enough to get the energy to work again."

MCC is asking for 20,000 relief kits to be donated by the end of February (see page 30). The relief kits will be distributed by YEU in Aceh province, where the survivors may not be able to resettle for at least a year. As well, Indonesian Mennonites are assembling 2,000 relief kits themselves, and European Mennonites have offered to contribute.

Through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MCC is preparing to provide

2,000 metric tons of wheat worth \$800,000 for food-for-work projects in India, to be administered by a long-time MCC partner, Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA).

**'The generous outpouring of donations and support has been humbling. We praise God for these gifts and will put them all to use bringing hope and dignity to people who have suffered so much.'**

In addition, MCC will provide 115,200 cans of turkey worth \$360,000 for tsunami survivors in Sri Lanka, to be shipped by Church World Service.

The remaining funds will be used for long-term relief and development projects in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. These projects continue to be developed by MCC assessment teams and partners in the region.—From MCC releases

### Akron, Pa.

## MCC sending trauma counsellors

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) is preparing to train indigenous trauma counsellors in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka, in the wake of the devastating tsunami that hit these countries on December 26. Counsellors from the U.S. will train groups of local people to attend to the psychological needs of tsunami survivors.

Karl and Evelyn Bartsch of State College, Pennsylvania, will conduct training sessions in the Indonesian province of Aceh, the region hardest hit. Carolyn Heggen, a psychotherapist from Oregon, recently served with MCC in Nepal, training teachers and trauma counsellors to work with victims of war. She will train counsellors for two months in India and Sri Lanka.

In addition, an MCC partner organization, West Bengal Volunteer Health

Association, is doing health assessments and trauma counselling on India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. MCC is supporting the project with \$13,300.

Dan and Jeanne Jantzi, MCC Indonesia co-representatives, reported from a January 6 visit to Aceh province that the loss of life has overwhelmed the ability of communities to mourn the dead.

"Most people we talked to in the camps are just numb," the Jantzis wrote in an e-mail. "They sit without any energy to rebuild or to do anything."

Evelyn Bartsch says that, although the scale of this disaster is overwhelming, healing can begin with the simple act of sharing one's experience with someone who cares.

"To listen to the story, I think that is universal," she says.—From MCC release by **Tim Shenk**



Abbotsford, B.C.

## B.C. churches respond to Asia tsunamis

**T**he devastating tsunamis that struck southeast Asia on Boxing Day moved many people to do something concrete to help those affected. In B.C., many churches held special offerings to send to Mennonite Central Committee and have held prayer meetings and vigils. Some congregations had members who were directly affected by the tsunamis.

Allen Harder of West Abbotsford Church left for Indonesia on January 12 to work with MCC in setting up aid there. His wife, Elsiana, is from Indonesia, but her family was not harmed in the disaster. To support Harder and MCC, the youth held a bottle drive, the church took special offerings and held special prayer meetings for families and aid workers.

Katie McBride, a young woman attending West Abbotsford, is in India

with Youth with a Mission. The area in which her team was working was not affected, but the team has gone to affected areas along the coast of India to help with relief efforts there.

At First Mennonite Church in Kelowna, members were asked to give above and beyond their regular giving to support the work of MCC, and the church executive decided to use their contingency fund to match that giving up to \$5,000. This congregation, like so many others around the province, also had special times of prayer for victims. Prayer seems to be the one ongoing response to a situation in which many feel compelled to do something tangible.

“Our prayers will continue to be with those affected by this disaster,” said Rita Ewert, administrative assistant at West Abbotsford Mennonite church.—**Angelika Dawson**

Kelowna, B.C.

## Tsunami candle

**A**t First Mennonite Church, Kelowna, B.C., the Epiphany service on January 2 included communion and a short memorial for tsunami victims. People were invited to share stories of friends or relatives who had been in that area.

Reatha Thiessen, the representative for Mennonite Central Committee, reminded the congregation of what MCC is doing. She then indicated a special candle, handmade by a local artist, which she and her husband, Jake, were given for Christmas. The candle had an inscription pasted around the base describing the term “tsunami.”

Reatha lit the candle, allowing the flame to remind the congregation of the prayers being offered on behalf of many affected by this event.—From report by **Clare Neufeld**

Edmonton, Alta.

## Edmonton group focuses on Honduras

**I**n 1997, members of three Mennonite congregations in Edmonton founded an organization called Christian Peacemakers International (CPI), growing out of their work with refugees from Central America. Today, CPI has a variety of programs in Honduras, working in cooperation with local leaders to provide education, low-interest loans and medical supplies in the poorest country in Central America.

Members of First Mennonite, Holyrood Mennonite and Lendrum Mennonite Brethren churches founded CPI to address the causes of conflict and violence in Central America. Through its programs in Honduras, CPI hopes to facilitate farming, small business and community leadership among men and women, thereby fostering peaceful co-existence.

CPI has recently expanded its membership to people of other denominations. It also works in partnership with other organizations, such as the Sombrilla Refugee Support Society, an Alberta organization involved in Central America. This has enabled CPI to get a

matching grant from the Canadian International Development Agency. Dave Hubert is chair of the board.

The CPI-Honduras board includes Mennonites, Catholics and Protestants—a rare cooperation for that country. CPI-Honduras received its government charter in May 2004. It provides services and opportunities to over 2,000 people. Felix Flores, a Mennonite agronomist with many years of community agricultural development experience, gives leadership to the programs there. Karina Cabrera and Jessica Jimenez work with women and children in four communities.

The financial aid program is being tested at the Buenos Aires Cooperative, where 24 families farm 120 hectares of land. CPI and the cooperative are working to diversify agricultural practices, and fund initiatives such as adult literacy, peace and business training. CPI helped build a Mennonite church in Buenos Aires and is now helping to build a Catholic church.

CPI is eager to partner with organizations that share its goals. It also

welcomes the formation of other chapters to undertake development in areas of the world experiencing conflict.

For more information, visit the CPI website at [www.cpi-cpf.ca](http://www.cpi-cpf.ca). To contact CPI, call (780) 462-6234, or email: [dehubert@telus.net](mailto:dehubert@telus.net).

—From CPI releases

## California diocese pays \$100 million for abuse

In the largest sexual abuse settlement in history, the Roman Catholic diocese of Orange County, California, has agreed to pay \$100 million to 90 claimants, and to release personnel files of those accused of abuse. The bishop, Tod D. Brown, apologized to the victims at Los Angeles Superior Court on January 3 as the agreement was finalized. That evening he led a prayer service for the victims and thanked them for the forgiveness they had shown him. Releasing the files of the alleged abusers brought praise from the victims and reportedly played a role in their agreeing to the settlement.—From media reports

Zurich, Ont.

## Mennonite church hosts Ipperwash commissioners

In the decade since the shooting of native protester Dudley George at Ipperwash Provincial Park, Ontario, Mennonites have been involved in the healing process along the way.

The latest instance occurred on January 14, when representatives of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario met with members of government inquiry commission at Zurich Mennonite Church.

George's sister, Cully George Mandoka, attended the event. "I want to emphasize that I felt so much better with all these people there. They accepted me, treated me normally," she said during the "talking circle."

"Elsewhere, we were treated badly by outsiders. Even other natives said, 'You give us a bad name,'" Mandoka said.

According to Don Procter, coordinator of Aboriginal Neighbours (MCC Ontario), the commission members were invited to Zurich in order to "show firsthand how ordinary people can be effective in reducing tension in a volatile situation, simply by extending friendship and building relationships rather than using confrontation."

Sidney Linden, the inquiry commissioner, and two of the commission counsel were present at the meeting.

Linden noted that the mandate of the inquiry is to ascertain what happened the night George was shot, and to come up with recommendations so similar things will not happen in the future. In speaking with MCC members, though, he added, "Now I know there is a third element yet, and that is to bring healing to the community. To somehow leave this community healthier than we found it, that to me is an important part of our work."

Following native tradition, the group sat in a circle and passed a piece of stone from the Crazy Horse monument (in place of an eagle feather) to those wishing to speak.

Jim Potts, an Ojibway and a retired police officer, was part of the circle. He commented, "In our native talking circle we say that if someone is going to say something angry, he or she

should pass the eagle feather to the next person to hold, so you don't say angry words over it."

MCC invited people from area Mennonite churches, who visited the Stoney Point community after the shooting of George, and people from Stoney Point to come. Five members of the Zurich Mennonite Church attended the meeting. The incident is still too raw for many natives from Stoney Point to talk about, and only one person came.

The Zurich meeting was part of the healing process for Mandoka. She came to show her appreciation as well as to let people know what it feels like to be native.

The fact that Jon Umble flew in from Oregon meant much to her and her family. In the summer of 1996, after the shooting, MCC placed Umble with the Stoney Point people in the native gardening program. Umble described how he shared lots of meals with Mandoka, including fried green tomatoes.

The confrontation at Ipperwash was about native land claims. During World War II, the army expropriated the land with the promise that it would be returned.

"Fifty years later, the promises to return the land had not been kept," charged Rick Cober Bauman, program director of MCC Ontario. "It was all about a constant dream of the scattered community to go home."

And come home they did, by occupying the land to stake their claim on it. Mennonites came there to be with them, and provided building materials so that several Stoney Point people could rebuild their houses."

When the community occupied Ipperwash in the mid-1990s, tensions intensified, resulting in the shooting of George.

Mennonites tried to be caring neighbours. Several MCC people talked to Stoney Point leaders and



**Cully George Mandoka talks about the role Mennonites played after the shooting of her brother, Dudley George, in 1995.**

observer teams did seem to alleviate some of the immediate sense of threat.

"The Stoney Point people felt that the police wouldn't shoot them now, not while we were there," said Cober Bauman.

Members of Zurich Mennonite Church attended the trial following the shooting. Linda Hendrich observed, "We became friends and neighbours." Guided by Phil and Julie Bender (then pastors of Zurich Mennonite), several members of congregation quilted with first nation women. Among them was Mandoka, a skilled native craftsperson. They shared meals and conversations.

One person from the church commented, "I felt it was nice to go there, people were so friendly. I got a different perspective. I grew up in the area, but had little contact with that community before."

Mandoka felt no closure was possible until the inquiry was held. "Nobody had listened to us; they just said we had no right to be there," she said.

Now she lives on her ancestral land and takes her grandchildren for walks. She is not worried about all the unexploded shells in the ground. "Just

Abbotsford, B.C.

## B.C. conference discussion at halfway point

In 2004, Mennonite Church British Columbia set up a committee to address concerns about B.C. churches' relationship with Mennonite Church Canada, and concerns about homosexuality. The committee met on January 8 with congregational representatives to report on its work and to seek further direction. It is now at the halfway point of its 18-month process.

Committee chair Ed Janzen directed the discussion on each issue: church accountability, structures for discerning matters of faith and belief, *Canadian Mennonite*, the lack of a process for dealing with congregations at variance with the Confession of Faith, the presence of BMC (Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests) at assemblies, and ambiguity regarding the call for dialogue with those who disagree with official statements on sexuality.

Some in B.C. have been critical of MC Canada's role in not disciplining congregations. It was clarified that area conferences have responsibility for implementing theology and dealing

with individual congregations. When congregations have concerns about theology and practice, these should be directed to the area conference.

George Hoeppner, referring to the Confession of Faith, said, "It depends how you interpret what is written down, but we're miles apart on some issues due to a lack of leadership at the top."

Some felt that "special interest groups" such as BMC should not be allowed at national assemblies.

Lorin Bergen, pastor of Living Hope Church in Surrey, said the key is how we deal with scripture. People emphasized the need to meet and study God's word. Phil Wheaton, pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church in Langley, said that "dialogue without decision is unbiblical; in Acts, it included clarity, decision and action."

Gerd Bartel, western director of Resource Development for MC

Canada, noted that our churches have a history of independence. "If more hierarchical power is wanted, then we'll need to be more subservient." Some want authority from the top down; others said they'd be unhappy with that kind of power structure.

"We should err on the side of tolerance rather than be authoritarian," one participant said. Some expressed a need for absolutes, for rules.

There was strong affirmation for *Canadian Mennonite* and the work of editor Tim Dyck. [Henry Neufeld from Ladner, B.C., is chair of the *Canadian Mennonite* board.]

Henry Krause commented that often we talk and talk with no change in our initial position. "We need to learn new things that move us forward in ministry," he said.

The committee will continue its work and report to an MCBC delegate session in October.—**Henry Neufeld**

treat them like poisonous snakes—beware!" she said, adding that she would like to build a house there someday.

"These people here have helped me be able to stay there," she said about the Mennonites present in the circle. "I am very grateful that they are still my friends, and check on me. They give me faith to keep going...."

At the end of the morning, Linden concluded, "This has been extremely valuable. Here's an example of ordinary people reaching out and how valuable and useful that experience is. All of you speak quietly and eloquently and movingly."

Cober Bauman reminded the group that many Mennonites are situated on lands under dispute in native land claims. How will we respond when it affects us? he wondered.—From report by **Maurice Martin**

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## Camps & Summer Education

### Squeah expands opportunities with Hidden Fir Lodge

Camp Squeah, near Hope, British Columbia, has been both a summer camp and retreat setting for many years. As the ministry has grown, so has demand for space, particularly for groups looking for weekend space. Along with camping and RV facilities, Squeah has several cabins, a large A-frame lodge, and a smaller lodge called “Edelweiss Hall” for smaller groups. But Edelweiss Hall books quickly, and the lodge is simply too big for small groups.

When friends of Rudy Kehler, executive director, talked about having to sell their home on Sumas Mountain in Abbotsford, Kehler began to explore the possibilities of solving two problems at once. The Isaak family home was built for a multigenerational family. It is tucked away at the end of a quiet road on 20 acres of cottonwood, fir and hemlock trees, with a creek running through the back yard. The home was built with wood from a 600-year-old Douglas fir log found on the property—hence the name “Hidden Fir.” Until recently, three generations lived together, sharing a common living and kitchen area.

But life brings changes. Mrs. Isaak passed away last spring. One daughter and her family moved away because of job opportunities. It seemed that they would have to sell the home. But when Mr. Isaak and his daughter met with Kehler, a new dream began to form. Perhaps Squeah could book some of its small retreats at Hidden Fir Lodge.



Camp Squeah’s new retreat centre, Hidden Fir Lodge.

“Our family’s dream when we built this place was to share its beauty and natural setting with others needing a place of refuge,” says Veronica (Isaak) Harms. “The opportunity to do this together with Camp Squeah is an answer to prayers, and we are

very excited about this new direction!” For details or to book a retreat, visit [www.squeah.com](http://www.squeah.com) and click on “Hidden Fir Lodge” at the bottom of the home page. —Camp Squeah release

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## Leadership training brings multi-cultural churches together

**A** congregational leadership training program and shared worship events are bringing good things to multi-cultural churches in this city.

"It's like a little taste of heaven," said John P. Klassen, director of Leadership Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, when the five multi-cultural congregations here come together. The Spanish, Chinese, Laotian, Vietnamese and Korean congregations have regularly met together for a picnic in the spring and for a multi-cultural worship service in the fall.

"Hearing scripture read, lots of singing and prayers in each of their languages is like a sampling of the Mennonite World Conference," said Klassen.

The multi-cultural leadership training program is another event that brings these churches together. Using materials provided through the Pastoral Studies Distance Education of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, MC Manitoba Leadership and Evangelism and Service Ministries offer pastors and lay leaders a foundational education in church leadership. Mennonite Church Canada provides funding for the teaching.

The current students will be completing their third 12-week unit in February. Beginning in the fall of 2003, participants studied "Church and ministry," followed by a unit on "Anabaptist history and theology" in the winter of 2004. February 12 will be the closing session of the unit on "The biblical story: Old and New Testament."

Each unit, involving 25 to 30 participants, begins with a full-day session led by an instructor who provides a foundational background. "It's fascinating to watch the discussion in the opening and closing sessions," said Klassen. "The benefit of these sessions is the fellowship that develops between these churches.

Each time, a different church serves the lunch. We experience some wonderful cultural foods. It is a rich experience."

Participants work through the remainder of the unit with their own language group. A closing session brings all the groups together to share what they have learned.

Luc Tran, a Chinese Mennonite who gives pastoral leadership in the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, has participated in all three units. "The first time, there were five participants from our church and now there are eleven. The response has been very good," said Tran. He appreciates the leadership that is developing in the church through this program.

"It gives them lots of new insights. For example, it gives them a better understanding of the leadership role and new ways of interpreting the Bible," he said.

"The program has been inspiring and stimulating, but it involves quite a commitment," said Klassen. Participants are required to meet once a week with assigned studying and reading between meetings. Tran points out that for many participants "the English language is not easy and they can't afford seminary training."

Ignacio Herrera of the Iglesia Jesus Es El Camino appreciates the leadership training because, as a guide and translator for the Spanish-speaking leaders, he has to do preparatory work as well. "We are getting closer together



**Norm Voth presents a certificate to Laotian Mennonite Church participants at the end of a leadership training unit.**

as a group, not just our Spanish group, but with the rest of the people," he said. "We are learning how to share the love of God.... The good thing about this is that we have the Bible in common even though we come from different countries and cultures."

Participants "really appreciate the foundational teachings. They found Anabaptism fascinating," said Klassen. "They really resonated with some of the peace teachings." One of their questions continues to trouble Klassen: "Don't our Anglo pastors need this training as well?"

"Some of our people don't have an understanding of Anabaptism.... We really lost a lot when our Bible schools closed," admitted Klassen. "A lot of lay people, Sunday school teachers, and congregational leaders were trained in basic foundational theology there. We have never replaced that."

Tran hopes that MC Manitoba doesn't "wait too long to start up the next unit." He sees other areas in which they face challenges and would welcome training; for example, ways to use music to minister better to young people.—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Guernsey, Sask.

## Sharon Mennonite Church remembered

In the summer of 1905, exactly 100 years ago, Mennonite pioneers here organized the Sharon Mennonite Church. They erected a church building in 1911.

On July 10 and 11, 2004, the dwindling congregation celebrated its history and officially closed. Friends and former members came from across Canada and the United States, as well as from the four corners of Saskatchewan, to celebrate the past and to mourn the loss of Sharon Mennonite. More than 300 registered for the event.

The ancient pulpit was brought up from the basement and used once more. People remembered things from the past: hymn books with shaped notes; men seated on the right and women on the left; the elderly seated in the “amen” corners; the addition of the balcony; the introduction of musical instruments, a sound system and coloured-glass windows; the headstones moved to the new cemetery; and two conferences held in the horse barn.

As six former ministers shared their memories and as the faithfulness of God was remembered, the closing celebration frequently referred to the congregation’s history.

In the winter of 1903-04, Peter and John Jansen of Nebraska, land agents for the Saskatchewan Valley and Manitoba Land Company, travelled to the Mennonite community in Waterloo, Ontario, encouraging people there to consider beginning a new Mennonite community in Saskatchewan. A delegation of five men travelled west in May 1904, but they were not impressed with the many sloughs full of spring run-off. In June of that year, a second group made the trip and they reserved a sizable block of newly surveyed unbroken territory in what was known as the Quill Lake Mennonite Reserve. Homesteads of 160 acres could be acquired for an entry fee of \$10 and a commitment to reside on the homestead for six months in each of the following three years.

On a Sunday morning in May 1905, about 30 Mennonites, newly arrived from Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario,

gathered in a tent for their first worship service. The tent was erected on the homestead of their deacon, Aaron Biehn. They worshipped God, thanking him for safe travel and asking for his blessing on their

swamp fever and other ailments. In spite of these difficulties, they established beautiful farms.

Eventually, attendance at the church diminished. A potash company bought up several farms, forcing some



Sharon Mennonite Church has closed after 99 years.

endeavour to establish a new community in a new land.

That day, Eli Hallman, a minister who accompanied them from Berlin, was affirmed as their minister. A short time later, a Sunday school was organized under the leadership of Israel Cressman.

The congregation met each Sunday at the Biehn home. In July 1907, the Waterloo school was built on the southwest corner of the deacon’s property. The next year, the Sharon congregation hosted the Alberta Mennonite summer conference in the Waterloo schoolhouse and became a member of the Alberta-Saskatchewan Mennonite Conference.

Their dream of a church building was realized in 1911, when a 30 ft. by 40 ft. building was erected at the crossroads, on land donated by the minister. Using volunteer labour, the cost of the building was \$2,300.

Over the years the people faced many hardships, including raging prairie fires, early frosts, hailstorms, tornadoes, drought and blowing sand,

families to relocate. When young people found employment elsewhere and when grain elevators, stores and schools closed, the congregation also suffered.

In 2003, the difficult decision was made to close the doors of Sharon Mennonite. The final service was held June 27, 2004.—From report by **Doreen Snider**

### News brief

#### Oh deer, there’s blood in the church

When Angela Smith, hospitality chair of the Mennonite church in Warsaw, Indiana, entered the building one morning last November, she found blood spattered on the walls and furniture, shattered glass and damage to the copier. In the sanctuary lay a dead deer that had leaped through the window. The church had been praying for a new copier, carpeting and paint job. It appears that the insurance will cover everything.—From *Gospel Evangel*

Saskatoon, Sask.

## A handshake bridges the cultural divide

**A**lma Kytwayhat, an aboriginal elder with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, spoke recently at a Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan-sponsored forum on aboriginal treaties about the meaning and value of covenants. After her presentation, I went to talk with her, offering my hand in friendship. She offered hers and we touched.

Kytwayhat's life demonstrated the importance of making a promise. As a young person, when she was afflicted with a deadly disease, her mother promised the creator that if her life was saved, her daughter would be a bridge-builder between peoples. Her life was blessed and her mission defined.

She now speaks with many people of how the Great Spirit lives and works in mother earth to grow understanding, respect and harmony. She uses the image of trees which grow above ground in a wonderful diversity of shape, size and colour. They thrive because of what happens unseen underground where the roots mingle and interact. There they co-exist in harmony, benefitting from each other's differences.

It's not so different for humans, she says, for under our skin we are the same colour and our lives will also thrive as we co-mingle with other people.

Her message, while using different word pictures, sounded very similar to what I had been taught at home and in Sunday School. One of the first songs I learned as a child was "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

Later, I memorized and believed what Paul says in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

As we spoke, I suddenly realized that we were still holding hands. It was not a firm handshake, nor was it limp and lifeless, but an intimate touch as compassion passed between

us, almost unnoticed.

We had just heard Stan McKay, former moderator of the United Church of Canada, predict that in Saskatchewan by the year 2015, 46 percent of the children entering Kindergarten will be of aboriginal ancestry.

First nation people are our neighbours in ever-growing numbers and we are called to live as followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of these dynamic realities.

Jesus also had something to say about neighbours: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second command is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" Mark 12: 30, 31.

Neighbourly love was first practised between aboriginal and non-aboriginal years ago when chiefs representing the first nations and political repre-

sentatives of European immigrants first entered into treaties, agreeing how the two peoples could co-exist in peace and harmony on Canadian soil. These treaties gave immigrants access to the land and assured the aboriginal peoples of land and education as their cultures were facing changes.

David Arnott, a judge and Saskatchewan's treaty commissioner, reminded those at the forum that the basis for living in harmony with each other begins with honouring the treaties that our forebears signed in the presence of God. He invited us to revisit these sacred covenants made in good faith by the government on our behalf, to reaffirm the commitments made in these treaties and to seek for practical ways to live out this covenanted relationship.

In the judge's words, "We are all treaty people!"—**Claire Ewert Fisher**

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## People & Events

**Steinbach, Man.**—The board for the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation met on December 14. The foundation was endowed by Delbert Plett, a lawyer and historian who died on November 4. Plett's research focused on Mennonites of the 1870s migration to Canada, especially Old Colony groups. Board members are Leonard Doell of MCC Saskatchewan; Kennert Giesbrecht, managing editor of *Die Mennonitische Post*; John R. Friesen of Canadian Mennonite University; Ralph Friesen, president of the Flemish Mennonite Historical Society; and Royden Loewen, chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. The board hopes to continue publishing *Preservings*, a history magazine that Plett edited, as well as carry on with projects that promote "the history and culture of the conservative and traditionalist Mennonites of Flemish Russian background."—From January *EMMC Recorder*

**Pune, India**—Union Biblical Seminary (UBS) here has new leadership, as well as a new Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker. After more than seven years of guiding the seminary, Leaderwell Pohsngap is turning over leadership to Samson Parekh. Pohsngap oversaw the construction of new buildings and new programs, including a new missions building and an elementary school for campus and neighbourhood families. UBS follows a path between mainline denominations and the growing Pentecostal movement. Studies in conflict resolution are growing out of this approach. Parekh was principal of Methodist Theo-



Wiebe



Photo by John F. Lapp

**Leaderwell Pohsngap points out a new building to his successor, Samson Parekh.**

logical Seminary. He earned a master's degree in theology from Princeton University and a doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary. He has been active in church leadership in India. Mennonites have been partners in the seminary since its beginnings. Ben Wiebe, former pastor in Ontario, has just been appointed Witness worker for special assignment. He will teach at UBS and at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies in Bangalore. He also hopes to visit Mennonite churches in India. Together with his wife, Patti, Wiebe will spend February and March in India.—From MC Canada release

**Plum Coulee, Man.**—A container loaded with blankets and school supplies for Malakal, Sudan, left the Mennonite Central Committee warehouse here on January 17. Responding to a request by the Sudan Council of Churches, MCC is sending 7,113 blankets, 5,820 school kits and 2,258 pencil cases to people displaced by conflict near Malakal. This conflict has been overshadowed by the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, and by the tsunami disaster. MCC is also contributing to ongoing aid

work in Darfur, where more than a million people remain displaced by a year of conflict. For more information, visit [www.mcc.org/sudan](http://www.mcc.org/sudan).—From MCC Canada release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Albrecht**—to Sandra and Paul, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Kieran Paul, Dec. 7.

**Brenneman**—to Katherine and Paul, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a son, Nathan Paul, Jan. 15.

**Cressman**—to Janet and Kevin, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., a son, Philip Eden, Dec. 28.

**Doell**—to Brenda and Ted, Carman Mennonite, Man., a son, Tyler John, Dec. 25.

**Dueck**—to Natasha and Cliff, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Abigail Joy, Jan. 13.

**Epp**—to Laura and Curtis, Fiske Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, Luna, Dec. 28.

**Gualtieri**—to Nancy and Ivano, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Evan Gravielle, Jan. 2.

**Hastings-Fuhr**—to Hannah and Adrian, Mannheim Mennonite, Petersburg, Ont., a daughter, Naomi Therese,

Dec. 23.

**Hecht-Enns**—adopted by Melinda and Albert, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Rebecca Xiuyi, Dec. 13 (born March 14, 2004).

**Jantzi**—to Donna and James, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Kyle James, Dec. 31.

**Kritzer**—to Marsha and Jeff, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Elizabeth Anne, Nov. 21.

**Loranger**—to Rose and Randy, First Mennonite, Edmonton, a son, Shane Jacob, Dec. 26.

**Peters**—to Karla and Jeff, Carman Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Tiffany Dawn, Dec. 30.

**Singhkaew**—to Maa and Denys, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Alexa Sunee, Jan. 15.

**Truderung**—to Naomi and Karl, Springfield Heights, Winnipeg, a son, Nathan Karl, Oct. 4.

**Wiebe**—to Cordelia and Rocky, Springfield Heights, Winnipeg, a daughter, Claudia Nicole, Dec. 30.

### Deaths

**Cressman**—Harold, 85, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Dec. 20.

**Driedger**—Jac, 86, Carman Mennonite, Man., Dec. 28.

**Ford**—Patricia, 55, of Hanover, Ont., St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 3.

**Friesen**—George, 92, Springstein Mennonite, Man., Jan. 11.

**Hunsberger**—David, 76, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 6.

**Kehl**—Phyllis, 75, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Jan. 21.

**Paetkau**—Marianne Helen Martyns, 66, First Mennonite, Edmonton, Jan. 3.

**Suderman**—Annie, 86, Steinbach Mennonite, Man. Jan. 20.

**Willms**—Kay, 91, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Jan. 8.

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

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### Dueck leads workshop on mental health

"The issue is not whether Christianity and mental health are congruent. As Anabaptists, for us the issue is whether the church that is called to reflect the character of God is, in fact, doing so.

Then it is capable of being truly healing," said Al Dueck in his keynote address to 220 participants at the annual workshop for ministers, deacons, elders and chaplains, adding, "I don't assume that being a Christian and being mentally healthy are incongruent. I am a believer in healing; I am a counsellor; I believe in therapy."

Dueck posited some "dead end ideas" (and suggested their fallacies):

- Jesus is the answer; psychology is irrelevant. (Why then are some people who pray sincerely still suffering from mental illness?)

- Psychology is what the church needs to be truly relevant. (Too often that means watering down the radicalism of the gospel. Don't trade in the gospel for a psychological "mess of pottage.")

- Psychology is not useful in bringing persons to Christ. (But when we do a work of healing, we, like Jesus, demonstrate the good news—the blind see, the lame walk.)

Dueck admonished Christians not to be "monolingual." For example, some people suggest that if people are mentally ill, they must be demon-possessed. The anthropology of the New Testament world viewed the person as a house that can be entered.



Dueck

Thus one can be "possessed" by good or evil spirits. When Jesus casts out demons, it is a sign of the reign of God emerging, and a shift in power.

Our understanding of mental illness keeps changing, so we do not have the "monolingual" description of mental illness that they had in Jesus' day. The world of the New Testament did not know psychological language.

In the second session, Dueck described three levels of pastoral care that can be offered with integrity by pastors, lay leaders, and the congregation (the "natural helpers"). We need to be aware of the different roles, skills, needs and limitations that come into play at each level of caregiving in the congregation, he said.

Congregations, just by being in a communal life, respond to people's needs. It has been shown that people with friends (i.e. people in community) live longer, are less prone to depression, have lower suicide rates and less alcoholism, have fewer complications in pregnancy, and faster rates of recovery from illness.

In other words, Dueck concluded, "Friends are good medicine."

He described the appropriate care, with strengths and limitations, which can be offered by lay caregivers, pastors and therapists or counsellors.

A licensed psychologist who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary, Dueck is the author of *Between Jerusalem and Athens*, describing the interplay of psychology and religion.

(See more on page 29.)

### Summer youth ministry opportunity

Young adults in Grade 12 or older who enjoy nurturing the spirituality of children are required to lead Vacation Bible School in MCEC congregations in July and August. Training

and remuneration are provided. Applications can be downloaded at [www.mcec.on.ca/christianed/](http://www.mcec.on.ca/christianed/). The deadline to apply is March 8.

For more information, contact Sandi Hannigan at 1-800-206-9356, ext. 114 or e-mail: [sandi@mcec.on.ca](mailto:sandi@mcec.on.ca).

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### Register now for leadership conference

The annual Leadership Conference held just prior to the annual delegate session will take place on February 18 at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg. Seminar leader Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba, will provide input on the theme "Rooted in the centre—Living on the edge."

"Jesus reflected a life rooted in relationship to God through the practice of retreat and worship," Voss writes in his invitation to church leaders. "Out of that centredness, he invited people to explore the edges of God's grace and justice. It is this dynamic combination of the vertical and horizontal relationships that we come to know God. Neither is complete without the other as Jesus points out in Luke 10:25ff. You are invited to explore how this relationship between the centre and edges guides your congregation in living out God's desire to reconcile all things in Christ."

Registration for this event begins at 10 a.m. The seminar runs from 10:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and includes lunch for \$12. Pre-register by calling the MC Manitoba office at (204) 896-1616 or by sending in the delegate registration form.

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

### 'Buncha Guys' benefit for Camp Shekinah

Camp Shekinah has again benefited from the vocal talents of the "Buncha Guys." Each year, the men's group, under the direction of Russ Regier, performs at Shekinah just before Christmas as a fundraiser. This year, two concerts raised much needed funds—one in Saskatoon and one at the camp. Both events were sold out and brought in well over \$6,000 for the camp.

The water treatment plant begun in October is now completed.

"It has solved the problem," noted Carl Wiens, administrator. "Our water is consistently testing as good quality."

The camp is also branching out into the literary arts. Breaking from the usual focus of hiking and canoeing and working mainly with children, this year Shekinah is enlisting the expertise of Lloyd Ratzlaff to entice seniors to the camp.

Ratzlaff will be speaking at a fundraising banquet on March 19 at Mount Royal Mennonite Church. He has held workshops on memoir writing in public library settings and may be holding similar workshops in summer at the camp, said Wiens.

## Mennonite Church Alberta

### Closer than a brother retreat in April

From April 1 to 3, the Missions and Service Committee is sponsoring a retreat designed to help men examine the value of friendship in nourishing their own spiritual growth. The title of the retreat is borrowed from a booklet written by denominational minister Sven Eriksson,

entitled *Closer Than a Brother: Building Deeper Friendships*. This booklet is one of five study booklets commissioned by Mennonite Men in the last three years. Other topics are "What really matters," "The meaning of tough," "Sex and faith," and "Relatively speaking."

In this five-session retreat, Eriksson will be examining the friendship of David and Jonathan in exploring the nature of male friendship, how deep friendships can be nurtured, risks of friendship, and the possibilities for spiritual growth that true friendship presents.

This retreat is designed for men of all ages and younger men, in particular, are invited to register to provide intergenerational interaction.—From release by **Marvin Baergen**

### Nurturing faith workshop at Bergthal

On January 22, about 17 people braved Alberta's icy roads to gather at the Bergthal Mennonite Church near Didsbury. The draw was a workshop entitled "Nurturing faith in our homes and

congregations" led by Elsie Rempel, director of Christian Education and Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada.

Rempel led the group in an exploration of the resource "Opening Doors," which envisions a model of Christian education for all ages that encourages closer partnership between home and church and reaches outward to the wider community. The model can be used to plan and evaluate activities within the church, at home, and by the individual, to ensure a balance in the areas of worship, education, community, and mission.

Rempel also presented a teaching model using the "nine intelligences"—logical-mathematical, naturalistic, bodily-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and existential—to communicate the message. This model aims to enhance the involvement and enthusiasm of participants in Sunday school programs and is a useful supplement to the Jubilee curriculum.

Workshop participant Elizabeth Wall said, "Elsie Rempel is a very engaging speaker. She used the multiple



**Margaret Kruger-Harder (left) speaks with Elsie Rempel at the "Nurturing faith in homes and congregations workshop" at Bergthal Mennonite on January 22.**

intelligences throughout the workshop, blended worship and education, and community-building, and gave us a glimpse into some exciting possibilities for fostering faith in our homes and churches."

### Mennonite Church British Columbia

### Paddle-a-thon 2005 dates set

The dates for the 2005 Camp Squeah Paddle-a-thon have been set for April 23 and 24. The paddle-a-thon is a two-day trip on the Fraser River,

beginning in Hope and ending at Fort Langley. This is an opportunity for canoeists and kayakers to put their paddles in the water to raise money for the Squeah Staff Bursary Fund.

Every summer, more than 60 young people volunteer their time and gifts to Squeah's summer

camp program, giving up the opportunity to earn money. For students, the bursary program helps ease the burden of schooling costs.

The Squeah website—[www.Squeah.com](http://www.Squeah.com)—has information as well as registration forms ready for print. Each participant must raise \$500 and the goal is to raise a total of more than \$40,000. The person who raises the most money goes home with a canoe!

Those unable to paddle can sponsor a paddler. Volunteers are also needed for various land jobs. Contact Rudy Kehler at 1-800-380-2267 for details.

## Lent: 'It all begins with ashes'

The season of Lent is again upon us. Spanning the 40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday, Lent is an invitation for Christians to devote time to prayer, self-examination, and preparation for the Easter celebration of Jesus' resurrection, and our redemption and abundant life in him.

During this time of the church year, our attention is directed to the state of our spiritual life. We take an honest inventory of our relationship to God and to our neighbour. In our public and private worship we create openings to name the ways our Christian walk has missed the mark, and we are encouraged to ask for and offer forgiveness, so that our fellowship with God and with God's people is both restored and strengthened. In this way, we grow in awareness of our need for God's grace, and gain a deeper understanding of God's steadfast love for us and for all creation.

It is significant that Lent begins not

with the celebration of palm branches, but in the sobriety of ashes. By beginning with Ash Wednesday, we are compelled to place ourselves before God in humility, as we truly are—stripped of all pretence to righteousness, emptied of false pride—thus declaring before God our readiness to be renewed and restored.

In our Lenten prayers we seek to open ourselves before God, and to hear in a new way the call of Jesus to "come unto me." We nurture a renewed sensitivity to the presence of God in our lives and in the world around us. We place our failures, our needs, our hopes into God's hands again. And, we seek, by entrusting ourselves to the self-giving love of Jesus Christ, to recognize again who God is, and to allow God's transforming grace to work in us, so that we might emerge on Easter Sunday with fresh victory and a living hope that undergirds our walk of faith.

But it all begins with ashes, with a journey through darkness. And if we are to

### From our leaders

know genuine spiritual renewal, we must undertake this spiritual pilgrimage. The oft-quoted text from 2 Chronicles 7:14 is a helpful guide: "...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (NRSV). This is a call to penitential prayer for the whole community of faith. The prayers we make are not for others, but for ourselves, those already in the family of faith.

May we welcome the season of Lent as an opportunity to return to the centre of our faith—to be drawn back to the cross of Christ and to the life-giving love for which it stands.

*Dave Bergen, executive secretary for MC Canada Christian Formation*



**Employment opportunities**

Emmanuel Mennonite Church invites applications for a

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Emmanuel is a multicultural, intergenerational congregation with a membership of approximately 225 people. We are looking for a dynamic individual to work predominantly with our youth, young adults and their families. This individual would be committed to and educated in Anabaptist theology and polity. Experience would definitely be an asset.

If you have questions or wish to apply contact:

**Emmanuel Mennonite Church**  
3471 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford, BC V2T 5C1  
Phone: (604) 854-3654  
Email: office@emmanuelmennonite.com

**PASTOR**

Faith Mennonite Church, in Leamington, ON has an opening for a full time pastoral position. The position will be available in early summer 2005. Experience would definitely be considered an asset. Faith Mennonite is a church of about 200 members with many young families. We are located about 35 minutes from Windsor.

Any interested person/persons may ask for a church profile and/or apply at:

**Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada**  
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Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2  
Attn: Muriel Bechtel  
E-mail: Muriel@mcec.on.ca

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Processing of applications will begin at the end of **March, 2005**. For more information, please visit our websites at [www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca) or [www.outtatown.ca](http://www.outtatown.ca).

Enquiries and applications should be forwarded to Susan Warkentin, Director of Human Resources (swarkentin@cmu.ca) or call **204-487-3300**.



**Advertising**

**Copy due dates.....for Issue**

Tuesday Feb. 22	Mar. 7
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**1-800-316-4052 Fax: 1-519-884-3331**  
[advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

### VOCAL MUSIC

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For additional information see [www.bluffton.edu](http://www.bluffton.edu). Review of applications begins March 1 and continues until an appointment is made. Send letter of interest, resume or curriculum vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee), official transcripts and a recording of a recent performance(s) to

**Elaine Suderman**  
**Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs**  
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**Bluffton, OH 45817-2104**

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MCC Manitoba is seeking an

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
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Located near Steinbach, Manitoba the ranch is a faith based program, employing alternative justice principles in providing residential and vocational support services for up to 10 adult men with mental disabilities who are in conflict with the law. El'dad has 3 distinct programs that seek to provide support to its residents as they move towards independent living and community integration. The Executive Director will be required to manage a staff of up to 30 workers, be responsible for program budget and program direction and will report to the Advisory Committee and the MCCM Board.

All MCC workers are required to have a Christian faith, be actively involved in a Christian church and be committed to non-violence and peacemaking.

For more information contact:

**Janelle Siemens e-mail: [jms@mennonitecc.ca](mailto:jms@mennonitecc.ca)**  
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Listowel, Ont.

## Church leaders discuss mental health and pastoral care

The annual workshop for ministers, deacons, elders and chaplains brought 220 people to Listowel Mennonite Church on January 15. Al Dueck, a psychologist from Fuller Theological Seminary in California, talked about the interplay between Christianity and psychology.

Dueck questioned the advantage of dividing the spiritual and psychological parts of life.

"When I tell you I have been depressed, is that a spiritual or a psychological issue? Is reality one, or is it split three ways—spiritual, emotional and physical? How can we divide reality when God is one?"

He also recognized the spiritual dimensions to physical and psychological reality. We have assumed that pastors should not be dealing with psychological issues, certainly not with medical concerns. "But," said Dueck, "it's never that simple; the problem could involve all three."

The day also included a panel discussion led by Wanda Wagler Martin of Shalom Counselling Services Waterloo, which demonstrated the "multilingual" nature of how we deal with mental illness in the church. The panel included Karen Good, a parish nurse at Breslau Mennonite Church; Liz Klassen, a psychiatric and mental health nurse, and a member of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church; Rob Annis, a physician and member of Listowel Mennonite Church; Allen Strong, a community mental health resource coordinator from Wellesley Mennonite Church; and Jim Loepp Thiessen, pastor at The Gathering, a new church plant in Kitchener, Ontario.

Along with Dueck, they spoke about the role of the church in addressing spiritual, physical and mental issues. Annis suggested that "a lot of medications now work better than counselling. So when you are inclined to throw your pills away, don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

"Is the presence of the symptom necessarily a reason to remove the symptom by medication?" Dueck wondered. "Or could that be killing the messenger, and what it is trying to tell me?"

Annis conceded, "I hope doctors are not so simplistic; the multi-disciplinary approach is better."

Strong added a fourth "language" to the discussion, that of social justice. "When you are socially isolated, or don't have enough food or a roof over your head, that can lead to depression."

Strong admonished the panel and the audience to be careful not to say "we" and "they" with respect to persons with mental illness. "None of us is perfect; we all have our limitations. And sometimes 'the ill diagnosing the ill' is problematic." He added, "Is depression always an ill response? Given certain situations, sometimes I should be depressed."

Good noted that even a bad cold has spiritual, mental and physical implications.

Klassen added that the church can help persons with mental illness, and their families. "We don't have the complete skill set, so we refer people to professionals." She concluded, "In the church we don't separate things out; our help can also include prayer."

Loepp Thiessen said the church can treat people as whole beings, "and we are just one piece of a larger puzzle in their journey to wholeness."

The event was hosted by the Woolwich-Bruce ministerial cluster of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Participants wrapped up the day with worship and prayer.

See also page 26.—**Maurice Martin**

## Bell performs in Kitchener

**Kitchener, Ont.**—On February 19, Steve Bell will give a concert at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m. Bell is a Manitoba musician who writes and performs in a folk/roots style. A portion of the proceeds will go towards the youth of First Mennonite. Tickets are available at the door or by calling (519) 744-6574. Bell, a two-time Juno Award winner, performed at the “Refreshing Winds” conference at Canadian Mennonite University in January, and is part of CMU’s “Art & Soul” tour to Guatemala in February. He will also work with Wilma Derksen as she launches a new Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program with Mennonite Central Committee Canada. For more details, visit his website: [www.steve-bell.com](http://www.steve-bell.com). —From releases

## Refugee coalition sponsors fundraiser

**Kitchener, Ont.**—A concert and arts evening at Calvary Mennonite Church in Ayr on March 5 will raise money for the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support. The event, beginning at 7 p.m., will include Latin American dancers, jazz ensembles, a barbershop quartet, drama and poetry, as well as dessert. Tickets are available by calling (519) 632-7833.

The coalition was created in 1987 by several Mennonite churches to serve refugee claimants in Waterloo Region. It has been operating on a small budget with overworked staff, and it currently needs another \$50,000 to assist the growing number of refugees coming to the area.

Besides helping refugees with settlement and processing claims, the coalition builds



Room, summer camps for children, hospitality houses and a summer picnic. Donations are welcome.—From coalition release

## MCC asks for 20,000 kits

**Akron, Pa.**—Mennonite Central Committee is asking for 20,000 relief kits to be donated by February 28. The kits will be shipped to Aceh province in Indonesia, where they will be distributed by the YAKKUM Emergency Unit (YEU), the emergency arm of an association of Indonesian hospitals. MCC has provided \$253,000 for YEU’s work with tsunami survivors.

For information on how to make the kits and where to send them, visit the MCC website at [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org), or phone toll-free 1-888-622-6337. Provincial MCC offices also have the information.—From MCC release

## Youth planning Hungerfest for April

**Saskatoon, Sask.**—Mennonite Church Saskatchewan youth are planning a Hungerfest for April 22. It will be a juice fast, and its purpose is to raise awareness among the youth about global hunger issues. The event may also be a fundraiser, according to Anna Rehan, youth minister.

During the last Hungerfest, the youth group raised \$1000 for Westridge Village, a low income housing project.

—Karin Fehderau

community with programs such as the Speak English Café, the Sewing

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**February 25-26:** MC British Columbia Church Polity Seminar (Friday) and annual delegate sessions (Friday evening and Saturday) at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

**March 5:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. lecture by Bruce Guenther on “Wrenching our youth from frivolous pursuits,” at Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, 7:00 p.m.

**March 11, 12:** Columbia Bible College Kingdom Players presents “The Importance of Being Earnest.” Call (604) 853-3358 for tickets.

**March 18-19:** Youth workers conference at Columbia Bible College with Tony Campolo on: “Youth ministry as sanctuary in a world of violence.” For details, call Gareth Brandt at (604) 853-3567, ext. 323.

**March 18:** Prospective Student Day at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford.

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

**April 15-16:** Columbia Bible College graduation weekend. Spring concert at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford (15). Grad ceremony (16).

### Alberta

**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 17:** Discussion on youth ministry for youth

pastors and sponsors, in Calgary. Contact Mary Ann Van Oevern, phone (403) 335-8264, e-mail: [gmaster2@telus.net](mailto:gmaster2@telus.net).

**April 1-3:** Men’s retreat, “Closer than a brother,” at Camp Valaqua. Speaker: Sven Eriksson. Contact Marvin Bergen at (403) 256-2894.

**April 28, 29, 30:** Musical at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

**May 7:** Camp Valaqua work day. Contact Jeff Schellenberg at (403) 637-2510.

**May 28, 29:** Songfest in Rosemary. Theme: “Can’t keep quiet.”

**May 30-June 2:** Theological Studies Week at Camp Valaqua. Lecturer John Neufeld on marriage and family.

### Saskatchewan

**February 25-26:** MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Rosthern Junior College.

**March 4-6:** Poet/hymn writer Jean Janzen at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

**March 18-20:** Portable CMU with Dan Epp-Tiessen at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

**March 19:** Shekinah fundraising banquet and auction at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

**March 20-21:** Portable CMU with Gordon Zerbe at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

**April 2:** Women in Mission Enrichment Day.

**April 8:** Evening of Quartets at Cornerstone Church Mennonite, 7:30 p.m. MCC fundraiser.

**April 16:** “Touring Mission Fest” by MC Saskatchewan Ministries Commission.

**April 22:** MC Saskatchewan youth Hungerfest.

**May 1:** CAMS concert of Mennonite school choirs at Bethany College, Hepburn.

**May 2-6:** AMBS seminary course in Saskatoon with Karl Koop.

**May 14-15:** 40th anniversary celebration at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. RSVP by April 15 to (306) 374-1364, e-mail: h.b.neufeldt@sasktel.net.  
**May 15:** Spring concert at Rosthern Junior College.  
**June 10-11:** MCC relief sale in Saskatoon.  
**June 17-19:** Youth Farm Bible Camp 40th anniversary celebrations.  
**June 25-26:** Camp Elim 60th anniversary celebrations.

**Manitoba**

**February 18:** Leadership conference at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, 10:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
**February 18-19:** Mennonite Church Manitoba delegate sessions at Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.  
**February 20, March 20:** Vespers at Canadian Mennonite University, led by John Poettcker (Feb.) and Rudy Schellenberg (March), 7:30 p.m.  
**February 27:** Open house at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, 2 to 5 p.m. Call Jennifer at (204) 327-5891.  
**March 4-6:** Retreat for families with mentally handicapped persons, at Camp Assiniboia.  
**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.  
**March 12:** MCC fundraising banquet at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 6:30 p.m. James and Leann Friesen will speak on "Moving with compassion." Call Neil Heinrichs at (204) 837-5385 for seats.  
**April 14, 15, 16:** Westgate Senior High musical, "Oliver," at Tech Voc Collegiate, Winnipeg.  
**April 16:** Graduation for CMU's Outtown programs.  
**April 23-24:** Graduation weekend at Canadian Mennonite University: Spring concert (23), convocation (24).  
**May 20-22:** Camp Moose Lake workathon.

**May 24-28:** Youth ministry course on sexuality with Roland Martinson at Canadian Mennonite University. Visit www.cmu.ca for details.  
**May 26:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior spring concert.  
**May 27-29:** Birding Retreat at Camp Moose Lake, with Adolf Ens.  
**May 30-June 1:** Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Moose Lake with speaker Jim Brown.  
**June 6-8:** Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Koinonia with speaker Jake Neufeld.  
**June 6-10:** Congregational Peacebuilding training with Nan Cressman and Dean Peachey at Canadian Mennonite University. Contact Shirley Plett at (204) 487-3300.  
**June 17-18:** MCC Festival and Relief Sale at Canadian Mennonite University campus.

**Ontario**

**February 15-17:** School for Ministers and Chaplains at Breslau Mennonite Church.  
**February 18-20, 25-26:** UMEI Players present "Oklahoma," at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, Ont.  
**February 20:** Report on visit to Cuban churches by Sarah Pinnell and Beth Ann Lichti, Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, 7:00 p.m.  
**February 25-27:** MCEC Young Adult retreat, "At the foot of the mountain," at Welcome Inn, Hamilton. Contact Mark Diller Harder, phone (519) 650-3806.  
**February 26:** Annual Dinner and Auction Extravaganza at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.  
**March 5, 6:** Drama "The Adventures of Beatrix Potter and Her Friends," at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, 7:00 p.m.  
**March 5:** Concert for Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, at Calvary Mennonite Church, Ayr, 7:00 p.m. Evening includes art displays, dance, drama and poetry. For tickets, call (519) 632-7833.

**March 12:** Fundraiser breakfast for MCC meat canning (Guelph) at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs, 8:00 a.m. Speaker Dave Worth. Call (519) 745-8458.  
**March 16, 17:** Bechtel Lecture with Fernando Enns of Germany at Conrad Grebel University College, 7:30 p.m.  
**March 18-19:** Engaged Workshop at Milverton Mennonite Fellowship. Call Delmar and Mary Bender at (519) 656-2256.  
**March 19:** Mennonite Aid Union annual meeting, St. Jacobs Country Inn, 9 a.m. Call (519) 634-5267, ext. 210.  
**March 24:** MEDA Breakfast Meeting, Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, with speaker Jim Erb, 7:30 a.m.

**March 29:** Mennonite Savings and Credit Union annual meeting, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.  
**April 1, 2:** Menno Singers and Guelph Chamber Choir perform at Benton St. Baptist Church, Kitchener (1) and River Run Centre, Guelph (2), 8:00 p.m.  
**April 1-3:** Marriage Encounter weekend at Festival Inn, Stratford. For details, call Marjorie Roth at (519) 669-8667.  
**April 17:** Convocation at Conrad Grebel University College.

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