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C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

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The five amigos
page 18

**Same-sex
marriage**
page 14

Being church together

What does it mean to be church together? That was a question facing Mennonite Church Saskatchewan delegates the last weekend of February as they met for their annual delegate sessions.

I have been continuing my listening tour over the past months and was in Saskatchewan to meet with pastors and churches, and to attend the delegate sessions on February 25 and 26. Thank you to the 19 people (primarily pastors) from Prince Albert to Hanley I met with, to the congregation of North Star Mennonite Church in Drake with whom I was privileged to visit, and for the warm greetings and good conversations I had at Rosthern Junior College with delegates. I will be sharing Canadian Mennonite-specific feedback I received on this trip and on previous trips through parts of Manitoba and Ontario in a future issue.

Delegates at the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan assembly had much on their plate (our news reports on the four area church delegate sessions in February will be in upcoming issues), but one moment in particular left a powerful impression.

For the last three years, MC Saskatchewan churches have been discussing with one another a new covenant on how they are church together. The covenant reaffirms, as its starting commitment, that the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective is a description of their (and our) shared faith. It then commits Saskatchewan churches to strengthen and support each other, and sets out guidelines on how to do this even when difficult conversations arise (see www.mcsask.ca). I believe the work the churches in Saskatchewan have done together on this document over the past years is a model for the rest of the church.

The delegates were asked by the church executive to formally approve the covenant “as the basis for our re-

covenanting, for reaffirming our common centre in Christ, and our commitments to living faithfully together.” The motion was approved.

Following the approval, the assembly joined together for a service in which representatives from churches signed the covenant on behalf of their congregations. The line of signers stretched from the stage to the side of the gym and then a good portion of the way down the wall. It was a powerful and holy moment.



Henry Block, pastor at Warman Mennonite Church and moderator of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, checks out a recent issue of Canadian Mennonite.

It is a solemn thing to agree to a re-covenanting together. Delegates and church staff often used the comparison to a marriage covenant. One delegate said that if he and his wife had waited until they had solved every issue they disagreed upon before agreeing to their wedding covenant, they would never have been able to enjoy

over 25 years of marriage.

Jesus uses the word “covenant” to describe what he does in the Last Supper in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22. Paul uses the same language in 1 Corinthians 11, the text that many of our churches use during communion. Re-covenanting is part of what it means to be the body of Christ together.

“We state our best intentions and then we rely on God’s resources, forgiveness for our failures, and God’s strength for our new beginnings,” said Saskatchewan Conference Minister Ken Bechtel at the re-covenanting service. May all our churches experience this in full measure.

—**Timothy Dyck**

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March 5, 2005
Volume 9, Number 5



Page 10

4 **UpClose**
Test of faith **4**
Life-changing experience **5**

6 **Faith&Life**
The waters of life **6**
Giving up criticism for Lent **9**

10 **Arts&Culture**
The cinematic Christ **10**
Tapestry interview **11**

12 **InConversation**
Letters **12**
These I lay down **13**

14 **WiderChurch**
Same-sex marriage **14**
The five amigos **18**
Sharing gifts **20**

28 **LocalChurch**
Youths just 'can't keep quiet' **28**
Ecumenical prayer service **30**
Transitions **32**

34 **TheChurches**
Revolution=Transformation **32**

38 **ToMorrow**



Page 34

Web site preview

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

Cover: The five 'amigos'—members of the newly named Global Community of Young Anabaptists—joined hands at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church during their first face-to-face meeting since Zimbabwe in 2003. Photo by Ross W. Muir. See stories, page 18.



Page 11

Abbotsford, B.C.

Loss of voice a test of faith

What does it take for a person to re-examine God's call on her life?

For Helma Sawatzky of Wellspring Christian Fellowship, it was the loss of her singing voice just when her career as a musician seemed to be taking off. During the planning and recording of her latest album, *Seasons of Grace*, Sawatzky first noticed she was not hitting notes on pitch—something that hadn't happened before. She overcompensated, straining her voice and making the situation worse. But what resulted was more than just voice strain.

"I became increasingly anxious about performing with this instrument that became more and more unreliable and that had—in my experience—lost its sparkle and freedom," she recalls. "Recording the vocals for *Seasons of Grace* started to feel like my 'swan song' as I struggled my way through each song. During the preparations for the CD release concert I felt like a lamb being led to the slaughter ... and my voice felt so very, very tired. Singing no longer was an act of joyful worship and expression, but became enmeshed with anxiety, fear and lots of muscle tension."

Although doctors have examined Sawatzky's vocals chords, which appear to be healthy, she is still unable to sing. She describes it as if her voice had a stroke.

"One day all the muscles knew what to do and, due to coinciding circumstances, my voice just forgot how to 'dance'; in fact, became unable to 'walk'—to stay within that metaphor," she says.

And while the CD was completed and was being met with enthusiasm, Sawatzky's voice loss was devastating to her emotionally, creatively and spiritually. She dealt with guilt, feeling that there was so much suffering in the world that was worse than her own, while, at the same time, losing the freedom to sing mattered so much to



Photo by Carmen Tomé

Following the loss of her voice, singer-turned-artist Helma Sawatzky has been struggling to make the words of the popular hymn *It is Well With my Soul* her own.

her. What she realized was that her voice had been her primary way of connecting to God and to people.

"I felt closest to God when I was singing to Him and I felt most able to communicate with others through song and music," she explains. "I am a very shy person by nature and music was my way of connecting. Life made sense when I sang, and not singing meant a loss of connection and purpose."

She entered a time of doubt, questioning everything she had been taught about God's plans and guidance in life. She had always understood her purpose in life to be embodied in music ministry and found affirmation in that.

"Yet current events seemed to communicate to me that there is no cause-and-effect relationship between what I might experience as 'walking in obedience' and subsequent blessings and opportunities," she says. "I redis-

covered that God is sovereign as well as personal, and His plans include me but way surpass me."

Sawatzky also discovered that she had to let go—of seeking to understand the will of God and of all the "why" questions she had. In letting go she came to understand that the will of God is accomplished in spite of circumstances, no matter what they are.

When her singing was replaced with silence, Sawatzky felt that her creativity had died with it. People would ask if she was writing more music or if she had considered producing an instrumental album. But she found that she was empty. She approached the situation by trying to fix the problem, but when weeks turned into months and then into years, with no improvement, she decided to explore other ways of expressing herself creatively.

She took some courses to develop

Abbotsford, B.C.

Experience in India life-changing for BC woman

Katie McBride comforts a young girl who sits on her lap crying, smoothing the girl's hair while gently rocking her gently back and forth. It's no more than any daycare worker might experience on a given day. What makes this snapshot unique is that McBride is a Canadian Mennonite woman from Abbotsford living in Chennai, India, and the young girl she comforts has AIDS—having contracted the virus when she was raped as a six-year-old.

McBride, 19, works at a home for children with AIDS that is run by Youth With a Mission (YWAM). She works 10-hour days and is responsible for the children's schooling and emotional development.

"I am the teacher-older sister-babysitter-poop cleaner-upper," she jokes, adding that all of those jobs are just as important as book learning.

McBride ended up working with YWAM when employment at a village school with a private ministry fell through. While she was still in India, her father put her in contact with the staff at YWAM and she was immediately drawn to the AIDS ministry they offered. There was a need for a teacher and full-time childcare worker. Within

skills that would enable her to freelance as a graphic designer. This re-ignited a desire for painting, which stirred within her a desire to try other means of creative expression.

"I went out, bought some canvasses and acrylic paints, materials I had never worked with, and started experimenting," she recalls. "I also got into exploring with clay sculpture and soon one thing led to another and I saw that I was finding another way of expressing ideas, which felt like new life to my soul."

Sawatzky has been working with a vocal coach since December 2001 and has made some progress. She dreams of the day when her voice will soar again, but she has learned that she cannot count on that.

"If this whole journey has taught me anything, it is that nobody knows what will happen tomorrow," she says.

a matter of weeks, McBride signed on and began the work she has been doing for nearly half-a-year.

She is proud of the progress her students have made in the short time she's been with them. "The children had very little concept of English before I came, but I am teaching only in English and from English books,"



McBride

she says. "It is amazing how quickly they have picked up the language. The four older children are between eight and ten years old, and in a matter of months have gone from only counting to ten to having conversations and having basic reading skills."

Classroom learning is only a part of her days with the children. They also spend time doing artistic activities like colouring or modelling with play-dough or playing outside.

"At 5 p.m., the Mr. Bean cartoon is on TV and is never missed on penalty of having eight children angry at me," she laughs. "Then we all go for a walk before supper."

"For now, I am very grateful and humbled that I was given the opportunity to 'birth' three CDs and that God continues to use these songs in the lives of many people. I do think that the visual arts will become a bigger part of my future artistic endeavours."

The words of the familiar hymn *It is Well With my Soul* have become her "north star," as she puts it: "When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul."

"Once every part of my being can wholeheartedly agree with these words I will have found a deeper, stronger, more enduring faith and living hope on this journey," she says.

Sawatzky's CDs are available through her website: www.helmasawatzky.com.

—**Angelika Dawson**

She enjoys the relaxed schedule, as it allows her plenty of time for one-on-one interaction with the children. Her greatest joys and greatest difficulties are often the same experiences—as with the young girl who was raped. When McBride had the opportunity to ask about her experience, the young girl referred to it as the "paining."

"I held her and looked in her eyes, telling her she is a good girl and I love her, and she's safe," McBride recalls. "We just sat in the bedroom together for an hour; her, whimpering in my arms with her legs hanging off my lap, mosquitoes biting our feet and sweat forming on our brows. I cannot imagine her trauma. It deeply saddens me to know she is 'paining.' At the same time, though, I am so content in being able to hold this crying girl as she continues to work through her past. I feel so blessed that the Lord has felt that I am appropriate to be a part of these kids' lives."

McBride will return to B.C.—and to her home congregation at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church—in May. She is not sure what the future holds for her, but she knows that it will be a difficult transition after what she has experienced in India.

"I am planning on going back to university, but I don't know how I will live my ordinary life after a lifetime of experience here," she says. "I can see myself in classes, absorbed in wondering how 'my' kids are. I will just have to wait on the Lord to see where He leads me."

—**Angelika Dawson**

email

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The waters of life

In a lectionary reading for the third Sunday of Lent (Exodus 17:1-7) we are told how the Israelites thirsted in the desert after their escape from Egypt. They quarrelled with their leader, Moses, asking why he brought them out of Egypt only to die of thirst in the desert. Moses prayed to God and was told to strike his staff against a rock. He did so, and water flowed from the rock to relieve the thirst of his people. These events took place 3,500 years ago in what some local traditions say is now the country of Jordan.

Today in Jordan, another water miracle is taking place in the life of a deaf-blind boy named Bashir.

When Bashir was born blind and deaf, his parents did not know what to do with him. They gave him to an orphanage, where he was kept in a crib modified to be a cage. Bashir suffered in this mental and emotional desert for nine years. Neglected in his confinement, Bashir faced hunger, thirst, and extreme isolation. In order to survive, he became like a person on an island—Bashir's world consisted solely of himself.

Three years ago, when Bashir was nine, his world began to expand. The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, located in Salt, Jordan, opened a unit for deaf-blind students with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) support. Bashir became the first student and began to receive the one-on-one attention that he had needed for so long.

Bashir began to live at the deaf-blind unit, a small house on the institute's campus. As they began to work with Bashir, the teachers needed love, skill and patience to overcome the severe deprivation that characterized his early life. In the beginning, the staff began introducing Bashir to the world of human touch by stroking his arms and legs and giving him lots of hugs. They also showed him the worlds of shape and texture, introducing deaf-blind educational materials such as wooden shapes to be placed on pegs.

Efforts were made to care for his physical needs as well. Daily sessions on a trampoline helped to strengthen his long-neglected muscles. At first, Bashir resisted these efforts to reach out to him. He turned away from human touch and kept to his own inner world. Gradually, his teachers have been able to penetrate Bashir's internal defences, and today he greatly enjoys physical contact with other people.

As we enter Lent and contemplate the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, I am reminded of the suffering and resurrection of Bashir. After almost a decade of mental, emotional and physical deprivation, Bashir has begun the process of resurrection, awakening to the world of people after spending nine years in the tomb of the orphanage. He is reclaiming the life God gave him when he was created in God's image in his mother's womb.

I am moved to learn from Bashir's teachers that after three years of work he has a new skill that makes him very proud. He can now make the sign for a drink by extending his thumb from his fist in front of his mouth.



Desert photos by Leona Dueck Penner

Holy Week in Damascus: Under Christ we pass into the church

The Christian year crests during Holy Week in Damascus. Unlike many churches in the West, where Christmas is the highlight of the Christian calendar, Holy Week for Eastern Christians in Damascus marks the climax of the church year, and is referred to in Arabic as the Week of Sufferings.

Holy Week is bookended by feasts of incredible joy—Palm Sunday at its beginning and Easter Sunday at the end of the week. Between these two swells of intensely joyful celebration comes the emotional nadir of Good Friday, where Christ's death and burial are not only remembered, but are actually enacted as churches move through the stages of Christ's crucifixion with a funeral Mass.

For many Christians in Damascus, preparation for Holy Week begins five weeks earlier at the start of Lent, with its emphasis on prayer, meditation and fasting. Unlike the Western Lenten fast, in which individuals themselves typically choose to give up eating or drinking something they really enjoy, Eastern Churches have set down what constitutes the fast. One does not eat anything until later in the day. For some people this means

After doing this he can make his own way to the kitchen in the deaf-blind unit, find a cup, turn on the tap, and get himself a drink of water.

Bashir is now more than a recipient of care; he has become an agent who can make things happen in his own life. This may appear to be a small step, insignificant to those ignorant of Bashir's history. But for those who know the story of his life, water flowing from the tap in the deaf-blind unit is just as miraculous as water flowing from the rock in the Jordanian desert.

As we experience Lent this year, may we be reminded of the reality of suffering and resurrection, and of the waters of life that still flow in Jordan. —**Sonia Weaver**, MCC Palestine, Jordan and Iraq co-representative

waiting until noon to break the fast; for others it means waiting until sunset. When one does eat, the food does not include any animal products—meat, eggs or dairy products. This vegetarian (or better, vegan) diet is a communal act of self-denial in preparation for the feast of our Lord's resurrection from the dead.

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday with the celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. And like the crowds that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, Damascenes pour into the streets after Mass. Many hold or wear palm and olive branches as they proceed through the streets and alleys of the Old City, accompanying bands of youth from the churches who play triumphal marching music. The police block cars from entering the Old City of Damascus, and the celebration of Palm Sunday shakes the city.

Maundy Thursday celebrations have a slightly more muted tone, but still carry an air of celebration and festival. Sacrament Thursday as it is called in Arabic, recalls the establishment of Holy Communion at the Last Supper. And in many churches it also includes the washing of feet. In the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Patriarch wraps a towel around himself and washes feet, physically performing the very act of servitude that our Lord carried out.

On Maundy Thursday people from all over the city of Damascus traditionally gather in the Old City, whether they typically worship there or not. Then Christians walk from church to church, praying briefly in each and taking its blessing before walking on to the next. The youth from each church print up stickers for the occasion, with the church's name and a symbol appropriate for the occasion. Then as people walk into the church, they receive a sticker to wear on their lapel. As Christians move from church to church on Maundy Thursday, the collection of stickers grows and grows, until many people sport seven or eight on their jacket.

Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday have an air of festivity—they are occasions to walk about and celebrate with family and friends.

Good—or Great—Friday, however, has a completely different air. Women usually dress in black to attend the Friday evening funeral Mass.

Depending on the particular church tradition, an icon or statue of Christ is literally placed in a coffin. In some churches, the coffin is carried by deacons around the church, and people throw or place

After the last drumbeats from the processions have died away, it is time to visit neighbours, friends and relatives, to wish them Easter greetings.



Continued on page 8

Damascus *From page 7*

flowers on the coffin while funeral dirges are sung. The ceremony is extremely moving, and there is seldom a dry eye in the congregation as all surge to get closer to the bier of Jesus. Other churches take the coffin of Jesus outside the church before the funeral Mass and march in a funeral procession through the streets, which have again been blocked off by police. While the band plays doleful funeral music, the coffin makes a slow trip through the neighborhoods flanked by young people carrying flaming torches. Upon their return to the church, in traditions like the Armenian Catholic, the coffin is held by four pallbearers at the entrance of the church. All who enter the church stoop down and literally pass under the body of Christ.

The next day is known as Saturday of Light, and at night churches celebrate an Easter Mass which ends around midnight. The sombre altar covers and banners from Good Friday are exchanged for brightly coloured cloth. On Easter morning children come to church dressed in new clothes and, again after the church services, the youth bands take to the streets to celebrate Christ's triumph over death. Crowds of families dressed in their Easter best throng the streets, as cries of "Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed!" are exchanged.

After the last drumbeats from the processions have died away, it is time to visit neighbours, friends and relatives, to

wish them Easter greetings. Muslim friends as well, phone or stop by to wish Christians well on the occasion of Easter. Giving and receiving greetings can run through Easter Monday.

Holy Week is the culmination of the Christian year in the Middle East. The Week of Sufferings in Damascus' Old City runs the gamut of emotions, from extreme joy at each end to the deep sorrow of Good Friday's funeral. Even if one forgets for a moment that it is Holy Week, the sorrowful notes of the Good Friday CD of popular Lebanese Christian singer Fairoz sounding out from shops and homes in the Old City remind one that Christ's suffering is at hand—the sense of expectation is palpable. And as young and old go into the church on Good Friday, they do so with a most poignant reminder that under Christ we pass into the Church, and that the shouts of "Christ is risen" will soon follow.

—**Eldon Wagler**, MCC Syria
co-representative

Variations on a Lenten theme

I

As I sit in this quiet winter room remembering that *once for all* pain-filled journey to the cross, voices from the past begin to rise in me:

First, that voice from heaven, descending like a dove:
This is my beloved son
in whom I am well-pleased....

Then the tempter in the desert, whispering in the ear:
*of power & fame & fortune,
in return for homage....*

And later, the clamouring crowds, (and even the disciples) preoccupied with:
miracles of bread and healing,
*first-places at the table,
a successful revolution....*

Alone, at last, within the quiet garden, (the tired voices silent now) while sweat, like blood, drips from the brow, he speaks:
Let this cup pass from me...
Yet, not my will but thine be done.

II

A slim wooden crucifix hangs on the wall above my writing table. A gift from a South African friend, received during the height of the anti-apartheid struggle when thousands of people lost their lives because they, too, had to drink of a cup which would not pass from them.

For a long time, during and after the years we lived in Durban, I could hardly bear to write about that suffering, the worst of which, quite often, seemed to coincide with the Lenten and Easter season.

But now, this sparingly-carved cross, seems to invite me to uncover some of those old wounds and enter into the kind of suffering which the artist sought to represent. So I lift the carving from the wall and hold it in my hands as I examine it more carefully than I have ever done before.



Etched onto a burnt-wood background, under a Latin inscription, hangs an elongated, almost stick-like figure of Jesus. There is a four-pronged crown on his heart-shaped head and his eyes are wide open. Clearly visible, are the nail-prints in his hands, the spike in his feet, and the cut of the spear in his side.

For a moment, as I run my fingers over the wood, I wonder about the person who carved this African version of the crucified Christ. As the details of the carving suggest, this artist must have intimately known the suffering of those who picked up their cross and carried it, sometimes to their death....

III

For a moment I remember someone like that—Nomfazi Ethel Danisa (1969-1994) was shot to death while praying for peace at the foot of a cross on Easter Sunday morning in Bhambayi, South Africa, just before apartheid ended. May her prayers for peace continue to bring forth fruit this Lenten and Easter season.
Amen.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Why I gave up criticism for Lent

The first year I decided to give up criticism for Lent, George W. Bush invaded Iraq. Since I strongly opposed that war, I nearly bit my tongue off because of my Lenten commitment.

But some of my friends were shocked when I shared my struggle with them. How I could be a Christian and give up criticism when we are called to declare justice for the oppressed in the world?

For years I have adopted the practice of giving something up for Lent. Often it would be something I felt I could do without, like coffee, for example. But while giving up coffee provided moments of suffering, as I endured the caffeine withdrawal headache, I can't really say it had a profound effect on my spiritual life.

I gave up being critical of those who think differently than I do; ceasing to use unkind language to describe them, or resorting to sarcastic humour to belittle them. While I am called to be critical of injustice, it is the way in which I do it that makes the difference.

If Lent is a time of repentance, what was I really repenting of when giving up coffee? And should not my act of repentance include a positive action? I began to examine my own character and it led me to give up something that would give me more of a heartache than a headache: criticism.

I gave up being critical of those who think differently than I do; ceasing to use unkind language to describe them, or resorting to sarcastic humour to belittle them. While I am called to be critical of injustice, it is the way in which I do it that makes the difference.

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus talks about the power of words. "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person brings good things out of the good stored up in

him, the evil person brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that all will have to give an account for every careless word they



Dawson

have spoken" (Matthew 12:34b-36). I cannot begin to imagine the number of careless words I have spoken. My words can be poison and I shoot them like arrows without thinking. What is the overflow of my heart? Where are the good things stored up in me? Here was something of which I truly needed to repent, but that was the easy part.

Giving up criticism for Lent wasn't enough. I also needed to do something positive. So I decided that I would find a tangible way to encourage those of whom I was critical.

Most often I would write a note of encouragement and simply let people know what I did appreciate

about them, and that I was praying for them. "I appreciate the way you give leadership to this committee." "Thanks for leading singing on Sunday; your choice of songs made me reflect."

When Lent is over, I won't go back to being critical like I went back to drinking coffee. The act of giving up criticism has profoundly changed the way I see others and the way I see myself. I have become acutely aware of my own shortcomings and am grateful for the grace that is extended to me by family, friends, colleagues... God. Giving up criticism for Lent has led to giving up criticism for good.

And as for George W., "I commit myself to praying for you as you lead your country."

—**Angelika Dawson**

Resurrection: Sudan —January 9, 2005

**I sit
on the bleachers
of Nyayo Stadium
Nairobi, Kenya**

**Presidents and dignitaries
from across Africa
and around the world
with thousands of Sudanese
congregate to witness the signing
of the final comprehensive peace
agreement
between the Sudan People's
Liberation Movement
and the Government of Sudan
bringing an end
to the world's longest running civil
war**

**The air is electric
with excitement**

**"This day
stands for
the end of war
and
the beginning of peace."**

**"This day
contributes to
the African Renaissance."**

**"This day
is a roadmap
to end the war
in Darfur."
presidents intone**

**The crowds
cheer
ululate
drum
dance
and wave flags
of the
New Sudan**

**—Annetta Miller, former MCC
Sudan co-representative**

London, England

Seeking the cinematic Christ: Group views movies through Anabaptist lens

With the Academy Awards still fresh in the minds of many people around the world, some religious groups are suggesting that Hollywood has nothing to offer the faithful. But Vic Thiessen, executive director of the London Mennonite Centre, believes that the movie medium's tremendous power to influence lives, thoughts and even beliefs makes film-watching vital to understanding the modern world, even if the messages do not always fit into Christian theology.

Paraphrasing author Gareth Higgins, Thiessen says, "Films are the sermons of our time. They speak to the existential condition of our time and the spiritual condition of our souls. They help us to think about God and talk about God. It's theology for the masses."

For five years, Thiessen (Holyrood Mennonite Church, Alta.) followed his movie viewing with conversation—a tradition he started while living in Edmonton. He says nearly every discussion turns theological, regardless of the movie.

"Some of the people who have attended my movie nights have seen it as the place where most of their theological interaction and learning takes place—more than in church," he says. "For others, it restored their belief in a community of faith and brought them back into the church."

"Many of our film nights have focused on Anabaptist theological themes like community—indeed, some of my film night groups have been a real community to those who attended—and like peace and

justice," he says. "Most of the best film nights happened because people were willing to be open and to share whatever they were thinking, including some very painful parts of their lives."

Karen Cornies, now working for Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener, Ontario, spent time at movie nights with Thiessen in Edmonton. Cornies says the group gave her freedom to openly process issues of faith, peace and justice as they related to the wider world—a discussion she was not experiencing at her church and one she believes is important as Anabaptists examine their roles in society.

"For our theology to be anywhere near relevant we actually need to be aware of the world in which we live," Cornies says. "Even when we watch movies that we don't agree with...we can gain empathy for people in those situations." Thiessen believes Christians must enter into a dialogue with films, using them to learn about the issues and values dominant in society without necessarily accepting them.

"If the church is to have anything to

say to our culture, it is essential that it learn how to dialogue with film," he says. "While I would not recommend [James] Bond films to any discerning Anabaptist, my daughter and I have had some amazing discussions after watching them.

That's the secret for me: people love watching films, and many love watching violent action films, so instead of just condemning this, I make use of it to draw people into discussions about violence, about the portrayal of women and sex, etc."

But Thiessen says the myth of redemptive violence overwhelms most of today's cinema. Even recent

Academy Award winners like *Gladiator* and *Unforgiven*, which try not to glorify killing, end with a clearly redemptive use of violence.

"People seem to assume that violence is the only way to save the town or the country. All they need is a hero to come in with both guns blazing to save the day," Thiessen says. "I would like to suggest that this is one of the worst uses of the film medium—that, in fact, film bears a large responsibility for perpetuating this myth, making life that much harder for Anabaptists who believe that this myth is completely counter to the gospel of Jesus.

"Contrast...the saviour of all these hero films with Jesus, who was emptied, humbled, dishonoured, mocked, dealt with unjustly by both the crowd and the system, but did not respond with violence," Thiessen asks



Photo by Mennonite Mission Network

As executive director of the London (England) Mennonite Centre, Vic Thiessen leads movie discussion nights.

Thiessen says films that deal honestly with violence are scarce, mentioning *The Mission*, *Romero*, *Gandhi* and *In the Bedroom* as examples.

10 questions to ask at your Anabaptist movie night

Interested in hosting your own film night? Consider these questions, provided by Vic Thiessen, representing Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network at the London Mennonite Centre, as ways to start a discussion.

1. What is your first response to the film? What struck you, touched you, spoke to you?
2. Which character was the most important for you? Why?
3. What did you learn about yourself in watching this film?
4. What did the film say about people, about society, about the world? How did this film help you to better understand the people around you?
5. What kind of symbols did you see in the film?
6. Do you think the film had a particular message? If so, talk about it.
7. Were there any overtly religious themes in the film? If so, what did you think about them?
8. How did the film affect your thinking about God or other theological ideas?
9. What does your understanding of God and theology have to say to the characters and narrative of the film?
10. How does your theology interact with the responses of viewers to the film?

of viewers of violent movies. "Instead, [Jesus] showed us a new way to respond to the oppression of violence through community and dialogue, through loving our enemy, through forgiveness, through nonviolently challenging the oppressive powers around him."

Thiessen says films that deal honestly with violence are scarce, mentioning *The Mission*, *Romero*, *Gandhi* and *In the Bedroom* as examples. The latter, while containing what Thiessen calls the usual elements of films where aggressive revenge seems the only way out, avoids portraying violent acts as positive and the ending certainly is not redemptive.

Gabrielle Plenert, 17, gets help from CBC radio technician Ron Goede in preparation for an interview for *Tapestry*, "a weekly exploration of spirituality, religion and the search for meaning." The topic of the installment was about faith building in teens and how they make life choices in preparation for adulthood. Plenert talked about her *Quinzena*, a Latin American tradition of hosting a coming of age party at age 15, and the role of her community—which included church, family, and friends—in the event, and in her life. A reading from her personal vows, which she presented to the assembled guests at her *Quinzena*, served as a launching point for further discussion. The broadcast date of this installment is set for March 20. The program airs on Sunday afternoons on CBC Radio One (visit www.cbc.ca/tapestry/ for air times across the country). Plenert is a Grade 12 student at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg, and is a member of Home Street Mennonite Church.



Photo by Dan Dyck

Some films, too, can correspond with Anabaptist ideals without being overtly religious, according to Thiessen, citing *Magnolia* and *American Beauty* as examples that "reveal the loneliness and brokenness all around us and in us and show us the power of, and need for, community."

Chocolat parallels the historical Anabaptist theme of standing in the margins, encouraging the broader church and society to transform itself, he suggests. And many films, including *Missing*, *The China Syndrome*, *Under Fire* and *The Killing Fields*, seek, as Christ did, to expose abuses of power in the world.

Thiessen was seven when he saw his first film, *The Sword in the Stone*,

which retold the story of King Arthur in animated form. He visited the land of legends first as a teenage backpacker in 1975 and several times since. Eventually encouraged by a daughter afflicted with her father's love of medieval myth, he applied for his current position at London Mennonite Centre with Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network.

"So I am here today because of the first film I ever watched, back in 1963," Thiessen admits. "Actually, I do believe that ultimately it was God and not *The Sword in the Stone* that led me to the London Mennonite Centre, but films played a huge role."

—Ryan Miller

Letters

Leave marriage legalities to the state

It seems to me that marriage has been deeply important and sacred to almost every religious community since religion began. This leads me to wonder why marriage is in the legal realm at all. I'm no historian, but it seems like this might find its roots in a time when the church and the state were one and the same institution. Perhaps the legalization of marriage has hurt its sanctity more than we realize.

Baptism is also deeply important in many religious communities, but to my knowledge there is no such thing as legal baptism. A given baptism is recognized as legitimate in some religious communities, while not legitimate in others.

Why not remove the word "marriage" from the legal realm altogether? Let the state recognize what legal unions it chooses, and let faith communities recognize what marriages they choose, insofar as those marriages do not violate civil law.

Some faith communities may recognize same-sex marriages, others may not. So be it. My suggestion is to leave the legality of relational unions to the state.

—Darren Kehler, Winkler, Man.

No church unity this side of heaven

Our dear Lord in John 17 passionately prayed for the unity of all believers past and present. He also said that the very gates of hell would never be able to destroy his bride—the church.

I would contend that the spiritual unity of the body of Christ has never been threatened. There is, you see, the church that Jesus is building and there is the church that man may build or be building. Don't you find

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

wonderful Christian fellowship with believers from various church backgrounds? I do.

Is not the gospel the very centre-piece of the body of Christ that we all hold dear?

What then of all our differences? Could it be that the good Lord allowed the church to be broken for specific reasons?

Maybe we need all of our various perspectives and faith disciplines to make up the church. Perhaps the body of Christ could be likened to a patchwork quilt or a collage of photos. All individuals, congregations, denominations present make up the whole.

I'm concerned that many of our contemporary prayers for unity are vain attempts at uniformity, which will never happen until Jesus returns. This is a mighty host of believers past, present and future that, I believe, will form that perfectly united church that will reign with Christ forever. Jesus also said that not all those who profess Christianity will be part of that number. Praise God it's not too late to join that throng.

—Glenn Leis, Wellesley, Ont.

MCC responds to relief kit complaint

Re: "Tsunami relief supplies should be bought locally," letter from Jacob Dyck, February 21, 2005.

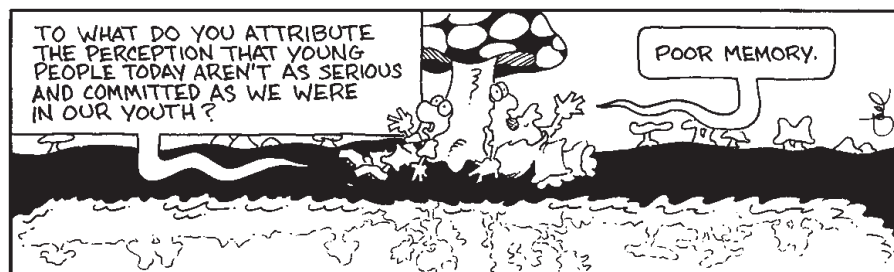
Jacob Dyck expresses a valid critique of MCC's decision to send relief kits to Indonesia. His letter could have been written by many other supporters of MCC.

Mr. Dyck's question is one that we debated vigorously within MCC: Why send relief kits halfway around the world when much of the content of the kit is, in fact, produced there? While we had serious questions internally, we made a decision to send relief kits for two reasons.

First, we recognize that a decision like this is, in part, about us. Many people in North America are looking for a chance to do hands-on work. We are engaged in the process of responding to human need. Our material aid warehouses across the country speak to the fact that we want to connect and to feel connected. In addition to supplying useful materials, sending a relief kit from North America is also about establishing a tangible solidarity link with people who are suffering.

Second, MCC sent an assessment team to Indonesia in mid-January and it was the assessment team, in consultation with local partners, that made

Pontius' Puddle



the request for the relief kits. In this case, the Indonesian Mennonite churches, which are assembling 2,000 relief kits and distributing 1,500 of them in mid-March, specifically asked for MCC's assistance in providing an additional 20,000 relief kits. This, then, was also an opportunity to express solidarity with another part of the Mennonite community.

In the past, we've had serious discussions on material aid. We can attest to the fact that those discussions continue within MCC. We are glad Mr. Dyck has raised this issue. It is completely appropriate and the discussion is very important to the work of MCC, and also to many other relief, development and mission organizations. Discussions like this help us shape the decisions that need to be made.

—**Donald Peters, MCC Canada**
executive director, Winnipeg, Man.

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These I lay down

The confession that many Mennonites offer before communion includes a prayer "that every contradiction to Christ's peace might be laid down" (*Minister's Manual*). Specifics are named, such as unspoken words of hope and unvoiced prayers of kindness, as well as narrowness of vision and hurtful words and silence. A refrain of "these I lay down" is sounded repeatedly. What a powerful way to acknowledge our shortcomings.

I inherited a reticence to name my sins. Perhaps you did as well. Mennonites can be cursed with a tyranny of perfection, which makes it difficult to face vulnerabilities and transgressions. Confession in a Mennonite worship service may be non-existent or glossed over with a beautifully sung tune. Many of our sisters and brothers in other denominations, though, get a chance to confess (and hear words of assurance) every Sunday.

Lent offers us a full 40 days to contemplate that which estranges us from God. Some people practice a discipline during this time, such as fasting from certain foods, or not eating for a period of time. One pastor I know

will not be reading the newspaper or watching the evening report; he wants to free up that time to be with God in other ways. Some people add an activity during Lent—writing a daily note of encouragement or increasing prayer.

Sometimes my Lenten discipline involves relationships. Once I was strug-



Family Ties

Melissa Miller

gling with a colleague at work. Day after day I laboured under tension, confusion and anger. That year I resolved to confess my bad attitude to God regularly during Lent. By Easter, things were different! Or more specifically, I was different. Spiritual disciplines help us bring our painful, broken parts into God's gracious and transforming light. In my case, attention to my shadows during the gray days of Lent helped me release negative emotions I

carried needlessly.

This year, it's bitterness. There is a hard, stubborn place within me. It relates to the past and places and people, and it gets in the way of the kind of person Jesus invites me to be. I resolved during this season to confess the bitterness to God regularly with journaling, prayer and even beautifully sung tunes. In the early weeks, I am conscious of how I chose the bitterness, and could choose to let it go. I'm also creating a worship centre by placing fitting nature items collected on walks—dry leaves, broken twigs, hard stones. This week I added a soft sweep of pine green. Perhaps God's grace is loosening my grip.

And you, gentle reader? Might there be things in your life that would be best to lay down? Are there emotions or memories that are getting in between you and God, or you and others? These are the weeks when we yearn with creation for the sun to warm and green growth to sprout. The promise of Easter bears fruit as the old seed dies.

Melissa Miller is a counsellor and author from Winnipeg. She is currently an MDiv. student at AMBS, and interim associate pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church in Indiana.

MC Canada leaders respond to same-sex marriage debate

In early February, just prior to the beginning of the parliamentary debate on same-sex marriage, Mennonite Church Canada sent out two letters related to this issue—one to pastors and church leaders, signed by Sven Eriksson, Denominational Minister, and the other, to Prime Minister Paul Martin, signed by Dan Nighswander, General Secretary (see pages 15, 16). In a recent interview with Canadian Mennonite, Eriksson and Nighswander reflected on these actions. They emphasized the importance of offering immediate guidance to pastors and congregations based on the convictions that have been previously articulated, and, at the same time, making the churches' concerns known to government and wider society.

Why did you decide to send these letters now?

Eriksson: Folks called and asked, 'Are you going to say something about this?' So we responded to a felt need.

Nighswander: They were asking two kinds of questions: What are you saying to government? And what are you saying to pastors?

Eriksson: In this process of discerning, our response was a follow-up action on earlier letters sent in 2003.

Nighswander: The situation has evolved since 2003. At that time, the Supreme Court hadn't considered the case and other provinces hadn't made their subsequent decisions, prompted by the Ontario court decision. Now the Supreme Court has ruled on the issue and parliament is beginning the debate. So the external situation has changed. Also, the group receiving the letter is new—we have a new Prime Minister and many new MPs.

What do you hope to accomplish with the letters?

Eriksson: We're not trying to address all the complexities of the issue. We're simply trying to make clear where MC Canada stands on the basis of our

Confession of Faith.

Nighswander: What we've addressed up to now is ourselves as a church, to encourage one another in the convictions we've expressed previously. We have addressed the governmental/societal issues, but less strongly than we have addressed the church because of our understanding of the differing responsibilities of church and state in addressing moral issues.

What steps would you advise area churches and church members to take in response to this issue?

Eriksson: We have strongly encouraged pastors and churches to pray for officials and for the whole process.

Nighswander: Our letter to pastors is written out of our responsibility as national church leaders to help pastors to be faithful to their calling, though we recognize that area conferences hold ministerial credentials and carry the primary responsibility for walking with pastors in their ministry.

Eriksson: We're trying to provide clarity/guidance for the pastors. This is very important so that if they're approached to perform same-sex marriage, they have given it forethought and have a basis for their response.

If a pastor is asked to perform same-sex marriage, what do you advise?

Nighswander: They should not make this decision on their own, but should go to two circles of counsel: their congregation and their area conference. My feeling is that pastors should always be in conversation with these

bodies, since they are conducting marriages not on their own, but on the basis of ministerial credentialing received from them. So there is accountability. We don't just make such significant decisions on our own.

What if the pastor insisted?

Nighswander: In that case, it would be up to the ministerial oversight body in the area conference to determine if that was sufficient to revoke the ministerial credentials. In such a case, the area conference involved would be held accountable by other area conferences through Mennonite Church Canada.

Eriksson: In other words, breaking from traditional patterns is always done in the context of our community and being responsive to that long pattern of how Mennonites do church together.

Nighswander: The reality is that the whole body of the church holds people accountable. This is a specific case, but not unique. We do have other experiences of dealing with pastoral issues and our experience is that we struggle together, not alone.

Eriksson: That's a really important point. Many voices, from opposite sides, are coming at us to demand that their agenda be honoured in the communal process.

Now a couple of questions regarding the content of the letters. Both letters note that the Confession of Faith states that marriage means one man, one woman, for life. But we make allowances for divorce and remarriage. Why stop there?

Nighswander: It's instructive for us now in that the church has struggled intensely with pastoral dimensions of marital breakdown. The present Confession of Faith, 1995, was clearly written after the church found ways to address the pastoral dimensions related to this, yet it still affirms the commitment to life-long marriage.

Continued on page 16



Nighswander



Eriksson

MC Canada pastoral letter



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February 2005, *Equipping*



Same sex marriage

On December 9 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Parliament must decide on the new definition of marriage as a union between two persons, replacing the traditional definition as the union between a man and a woman. Meanwhile, all the provincial Courts have ruled in favour of the new definition, except Alberta, New Brunswick and PEI.

As public debate over this formative issue rages in anticipation of the upcoming Parliamentary debate, how should we as pastors and leaders respond?

First and foremost, our call is to extend the love of Christ to all people including gay and lesbian brothers and sisters who come to us seeking ministry and guidance.

Further, we need to respond and minister out of the common frame of reference that we hold which is based on the authority of Scripture and is expressed in our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Article 19. This common frame of reference was articulated in the pastoral letter of June 2003.

“We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life. Christian marriage is a mutual relationship in Christ, a covenant made in the context of the church. According to Scripture, right sexual union takes place only within the marriage relationship.”

“This position affirms the teaching of Scripture and up-holds the traditional understanding of marriage. Therefore, it is clear that the conducting or blessing of same-sex marriages is outside of our understanding and practice as taught in Scripture, and held in our Confession.”

The authority for credentialing pastors is lodged in our area conferences and overseen by our Conference Ministers. Guided by the same confession, they will offer support and guidance to pastors and churches as they face questions in the days to come.

I encourage you as pastors to lead your congregation in prayer for our Minister of Justice and Members of Parliament as our understanding of the nature of marriage is laid before them.

Thus far, the Church has been assured by government that church ministers will not be legally required to perform same sex unions. We are also free to express and affirm our convictions to our MPs by letter, email or telephone.

But most importantly, let us not allow the controversy around this divisive issue to detract us from offering sensitive caring ministry to all who struggle with gender and sexual issues in their lives, the lives of their family members, and those who minister to them.

—Sven Eriksson, *Denominational Minister*

Same-sex marriage *From page 14*

Eriksson: This brings us back to an earlier question—the process of discernment. We're presently near the beginning of the public discussion on the same-sex marriage issue. All the answers are not in. We've had very little time for processing this issue yet. Because of that, it's all the more important to work together, rather than individually.

Nighswander: It's also instructive that divorce was handled differently across the country.... That experience illustrates how hard we need to struggle if every part of the church engages in the discussion, while recognizing both pastoral and theological dimensions. It's not necessarily the conclusion of the divorce debates that we should learn from, but the process of struggling with the issue.

**Our letter to pastors is
written out of our responsibility
as national church
leaders to help pastors to
be faithful to their calling....**

In paragraph 9 of the pastoral letter, the phrase, "thus far" suggests that government assurances about not being required to perform same-sex marriages, are suspect. Do you have reason to think they will change their minds about this later?

Nighswander: I'd like to comment on a couple of things. First, the debate includes questions about who has jurisdiction to rule on this—the federal or provincial government. Second, the very way this issue has come forward, how the courts rule in relation to what the legislature says, demonstrates that the legislation itself may not provide adequate assurance. Third, as expectations in the civil realm change, Christians, being part of that, also change their expectations. Fourth, given the speed at which the government has been willing to consider changing the definition of

Letter to Prime Minister of Canada
Re: Same Sex Marriage

February 10, 2005

The Right Honourable Paul Martin
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Together with other religious groups in Canada, Mennonite Church Canada has followed with interest the public debates, the various court actions, and now the parliamentary debate regarding the changing legal definition of marriage.

Our understanding of God's intention for marriage is defined in our denominational Confession of Faith: "We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life. Christian marriage is a mutual relationship in Christ, a covenant made in the context of the church." We understand that the societal and legal definition is changing, and that there may come to be distinctions between our religiously-based definition and the civil definition of this institution. It is our intention to retain the practice of blessing and sanctifying marriages according to our convictions.

We are encouraged by the intention of your government to protect religious leaders who refuse to sanctify same-sex marriages, understanding the jurisdictional questions that have been raised. We believe this is a significant issue where religious liberty appears to clash with civil liberty (which we also value), and it will undoubtedly be tested in the courts.

Mennonites, like many other people of faith, have a long and often painful history of following our conscience even when it conflicts with socially-approved and legally-sanctioned expectations.

We pray that God will grant wisdom and courage to you and other legislators who carry the burden of leadership on this and many other weighty matters.

Sincerely,

Dan Nighswander
General Secretary
Mennonite Church Canada

marriage, and given our history of experience with governments withdrawing protections for the church, we are naturally sceptical about relying on such assurances. We recognize that the situation can change.

Eriksson (smiling): Trusting government has never been a huge response among Mennonites!

Any other comments?

Nighswander: I'd also like to say that there are many important ethical, theological, practical issues that the church needs to be putting energy into and we've been trying to be good stewards of our energy, knowing that other Christians are engaging this issue. We felt it important to concentrate on issues that haven't captured

the attention of other churches, such as religious freedom in Vietnam, issues and treatment related to first nations people, military intervention in Iraq, etc.

I want to say clearly that strong marriages and healthy families are important for individuals, the church and society. Our understanding of marriage, our values and practices on matters of sexual ethics, are very important, but they are not the only thing that the church needs to address.

I hope that our grappling with the issue of same-sex marriage and the other issues related to homosexuality does not weaken the church's resolve and ability to respond to other issues with equal intensity and conviction.
—Interview by **Leona Dueck Penner**

Winnipeg, Man.

MC Canada responds to CBC questions about same-sex legislation

On February 17, Dan Nighswander, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, appeared briefly on The National in response to CBC television's request for reaction to the proposed same-sex marriage legislation.

The story focused on the Hutterite reaction to the legislation. "They rarely get involved in politics, but Canada's Hutterite communities have made an exception, jumping into the same-sex marriage debate, sending a letter right to the top," said news anchor Peter Mansbridge in an opening to the story.

When the CBC invited Nighswander to comment on the legislation, he regarded it as an opportunity to witness to the broader Canadian society about the church's convictions, and to do so with grace. "We have a history of standing by our convictions no matter what the government or other people have set as their values and practices," said Nighswander in the news report.

The report went on to quote excerpts from a letter sent by Nighswander to the Prime Minister and other government leaders, which states, "We believe that God intends marriage to be a covenant between one man and one woman for life," and, "It is our intention to retain the practice of blessing and sanctifying marriages according to our convictions."

Many people still regard Canada as a "Christian nation." But that view is increasingly challenged both within and outside the church, said Nighswander. "A key conviction of Anabaptist understanding is that the church cannot assume that government or society is aligned with Christian beliefs."

"As Christians, our starting point is to understand the mission of God and the church in the world. Especially because we live in a democracy, we testify to the legislators and the population about our values and beliefs, but we do not expect non-Christians to share those until they

come to faith and to maturity in faith."

"Mennonites have a long history of being in the world, but not a part of it," Nighswander said, adding, "While this issue is important, I pray that the media attention and the churches' attention to this issue will not distract Christians from the other important work that God calls the church to do in the world."

—From MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Dan Nighswander, general secretary of MC Canada, spoke to CBC reporter Allison Brachman recently about the church's stand on same-sex marriages.



Dan Dyck photo

Pastors, churches offer views on same-sex marriage

What is your response to the same-sex marriage issue?

"I see it as largely a civil matter. It doesn't change who I am as a pastor." *Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert, Sask.*

"I can't say I've completely come to terms with where I stand... I have compassion for those on the edge." *Karen Martens Zimmerly, co-pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, Sask.*

First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.—just completed a series of sermons on human sexuality. One of the sermons was a "sermonic conversation" between two of their pastors on homosexuality—describing various perspectives on the matter, and the history of the discussions within the Mennonite Church. The goal of the sermon series was to create an atmosphere of church being a "safe place" to talk, even when people may disagree. The pastoral staff are still in conversation about how to respond to the circulating pastoral letter on the subject of the same-sex legislation before the House of Commons.

Q: How do you think the letter will be received?

"We appreciate the re-affirmation concerning the authority of scripture and the timely reminder to continue the sensitive caring ministry." *Statement by First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask.*

Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont.—posted the letter from Sven Eriksson on its church bulletin board, and via the church bulletin invited people to pray for both the government and their local MP during this time of debate and decision-making. They also encouraged people to be in conversation with the local MP.

"It is not a hot issue in the sense of being talked about a lot. It has been fairly quiet in the church." *Peter Penner, pastor, Winkler Berghthaler Mennonite Church, Man.*

St. Jacobs, Ont.

Youth want a say in church's future: 'Five amigos'

If the global Anabaptist church is to survive and thrive in the 21st century, its youth and young adults believe they need to be more involved—especially in areas that concern them directly.

This is one of the messages that Amigos—A global community of young Anabaptists—will be including in their action plan to the next Mennonite

“Since I was little, I was into music and creative ministry,” Ciptadi said at the close of their four-day session. “But as you grow older, you realize there is more to youth than music. We can make an impact in other areas.”

Young Anabaptists want to “have a voice in decision-making, especially concerning youth issues,” stated Khohlwani Moyo of Zimbabwe, repre-

There are benefits for the church from increased youth involvement, according to Ciptadi. “If young people are involved, it prevents the church from being too doctrinal or theological,” she suggested. “We like to see real things happen,” she said, adding that youths and young adults (from 15 to 30) bring the gifts of enthusiasm, energy, creativity, a willingness to take risks, and an eagerness to learn.

It is not the youth committee's goal to merely shunt the older generation aside, however. “The two generations were created by God with different gifts,” Ciptadi acknowledged. As a committee, “we want to be ambassadors of inter-generational dialogue,” she said. The committee members were encouraged by their elders at youth summit, and Ciptadi hopes that encouragement will continue into the



Photo by Ross Muir

Members of the Youth Continuation Committee (YCC) met at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church last month to prepare an action plan for the Mennonite World Conference executive committee. Pictured from left to right: Sarah Thompson (North America), Amandus Reimer (South America), Elina Ciptadi (Asia), Khohlwani Moyo (Africa), and Barbara Kärcher (Europe).

World Conference (MWC) executive committee meeting.

Amigos (Spanish for “friends”) is the new name the five-member Youth Continuation Committee (YCC), created as a direct result of the 2003 Global Youth Summit (GYS) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, has given itself. After 18 months of e-mail contact, the five young adults held their first face-to-face meeting in January at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, with Asian representative Elina Ciptadi, a public relations consultant from Jakarta, Indonesia, as chair.

senting Africa. “They don’t want programs dictated to them. We want relevant programs. Speaking with one voice, this group can provide solutions to these problems,” he said.

However, there is a need to revitalize Anabaptist church services to keep the youth interested and involved, Amigos believes. “Most church services are not for youth,” charged Barbara Kärcher of Karlsruhe, Germany, Amigos’ European representative. “They sing old songs that we can’t identify with. We would like to sing new songs.”

‘Amigos’ identify diverse, conflicting continental issues

Besides the global issues they came together to address at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church in January, the former Youth Continuation Committee (now known collectively as Amigos—A global community of young Anabaptists) also spoke of issues that face their own continent’s youth specifically.

Khohlwani Moyo of Zimbabwe said that in Africa “social issues can follow you to church.” One such issue is that of family violence

resulting from a lack of employment opportunities for many people.

“People just try to make a living, but can’t get work right away, so there is a high rate of crime,” he said, suggesting that the church needs to speak to the government “about policies that affect us” while setting up local income-generating projects.

In Europe, the problem isn’t a lack of wealth or opportunity—it’s the



Moyo

future, noting that “young people lack a lot of experience, have no long-term orientation, and adults have more funding.”

“We’re not trying to tear up the

‘Since I was little, I was into music and creative ministry. But as you grow older, you realize there is more to youth than music.’

church,” North American representative Sarah Thompson of northern Indiana commented. “We’re working towards shalom...across historic barriers of generation and culture. Our aim is to create a network of youth who can together discern historic Anabaptist faith and reinvent it with the next generation.” According to Thompson, “the church is in good hands” because “we were well taught

by our parents.”

Besides a greater involvement in church leadership—that they hope will result in more youth-oriented sermons and Sunday school lessons, these young adults from Asia, Africa, Europe, and South and North America identified other global goals that the action plan will address.

“There are spiritual and

faith issues—like how young people can connect better with their non-Christian community and how to live as Christians in a pluralistic society,” Ciptadi said.

Another spiritual issue for Anabaptist youths deals with the personalizing of their faith. “Many [Anabaptist] young people see themselves as ‘born Christians,’” she said. “They don’t feel the need for a per-

sonal relationship with God.” She said the committee is seeking to discover “how to bring a personal intimacy [with God] back to our families and the church.”

And besides receiving mentoring from older church members, young adult Anabaptists (18 to 30) need to begin mentoring the church’s teenagers, so the dialogue becomes self-perpetuating.

—**Ross W. Muir**

opposite, according to Barbara of Germany. “Youths here have so much things they can’t decide their priorities in life,” she said. “They worry they’re missing something else.” School is also a big issue for European Mennonite youths. “Our big challenge is a good education is essential, so some miss church to study.”



Kärcher

The tsunami in Asia on December 26 may have given Mennonites and other Christians there a unique opportunity, Elina Ciptadi of Indonesia noted, speaking of an e-mail she had received from a Muslim woman expressing surprise at the Christian response to the devastation. It was not fellow Muslims from other countries who arrived first, but Christians. “We really hope there will be reconciliation because of all this,” Ciptadi said.



Ciptadi

For Amandus Reimer of Paraguay, the biggest continental issue facing South American Mennonite youth is

their lack of knowledge about Mennonite World Conference (MWC). “Latin America still has not merged themselves into the leadership structure of the World Conference,” he said, suggesting it may be because MWC events are in English while “our main language is Spanish.”



Reimer

North American Mennonite youth need to be reminded “we’re part of the global church,” Sarah Thompson of the United States said. “Everyone has wealth,” whether it’s material or otherwise, she said, “so because we’re part of the global church, we’re called to share and enjoy what others have to share.”



Thompson

Ciptadi said this is important for Anabaptist young people everywhere to understand. “Until recently, we saw ourselves as a local church,” she said. “We are now realizing that we are part of a global church.”

—**Ross W. Muir**

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Mennonite

Breslau, Ont.

Sharing gifts in the global faith family

Pakisa Tshimika and Tim Lind, Mennonite World Conference Gift Sharing Project staff, shared their work with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) pastors at the annual School for Ministers on February 15-17.

"We have learned much," Lind said of their project travels. "It has been like being invited into homes of family members for meals, and the 'menu' has to do with gifts and gift sharing. We have seen a large variety of gifts. This 'gift sharing feast' is food to us."

The family theme is important in defining the global Anabaptist identity, according to Lind, who reminded the pastors that God chose to work through the family of Abraham and Sarah. Citing passages in Genesis, he said they were chosen



Tshimika

for a task "so that in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

It is God's invitation to take one's gifts to build relationships in the world and to experience abundance to all, Lind said, noting that this is not an invading, colonial or empirical expansion, but a going forth that gives of self and shares with others, "so that we might have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

"Be careful of how we use the term 'Mennonite world family,'" Lind warned, suggesting that the concept of "family" is changing. In many places, "family" includes one parent, or extended family, or couples without children. The AIDS epidemic in Africa has certainly shifted our understanding of family, with many orphans being care for by other families.

There are three common features of family, according to Lind:

- There is relatedness – something that binds us together. As a "church

family" members are tied together by the Spirit.

- There is accountability. What each possesses belongs to the family. Members need to give account for their actions, and use of their gifts, to the whole family, in the global Anabaptist family.

- There is responsibility in the family. When something happens to a family member, it happens to all. "Where is your brother?" is a question all Anabaptists face.

Church body language

The Bible also uses body language to speak of the Church, the pastors were told. Scripture makes it clear that as soon as more than one congregation exists, they are connected. The problem is that congregations can be globally linked (the lure of Internet) without really be connected in any sense of being committed to each other. This is not a model for the church, Tshimika said, quoting Paul's admonition to be careful not to say as one part of the body, "I have no need of you."

"We are fearful of using the metaphor 'family' to describe the worldwide church, when we see so many dysfunctional families," Tshimika said.

Lind then spoke of how to understand sharing gifts in this global Anabaptist family. The approach of the church in the North has been to ask all over the world, "What do you need" that we can give? The problem is that this initiative assumes that the gifts or resources are all here, not there.

He invited the group to reflect on the characteristics of gifts. "A true gift happens when something has changed between us," he said. "A gift cannot be possessed, because the relationship to the giver is always contained in it. To



Photo by Maurice Martin

Tim Lind of Mennonite World Conference's Gift Sharing Project speaks with Marilyn Rudy Froese, Pastoral Leadership Training Commission chair.

possess it is to destroy the relationship." Lind described how the church needs

Five characteristics of a gift

1. It is given.
2. It is voluntary.
3. It is not part of a deal.
4. It has benevolent intent.
5. It has movement—and the movement is away from oneself to the other.

Biblical gift principles

- All gifts come from God.
- God intends gifts to be shared.
- All people are equitably gifted by God.
- The purposes of gift sharing are the redemption of creation and the "abundant life" which Jesus offers.
- The sharing of gifts creates oneness of the church. "There is a variety of gifts, but one Spirit." And gifts are given "for the common good" (I Corinthians 12).

Winnipeg, Man.

MC Canada ends 04/05 fiscal year 'in the black'

Despite a donation shortfall of nearly \$120,000, Mennonite Church Canada "will have a small positive balance for the fiscal year just ended," reports Dan Nighswander, MC Canada general secretary.

This positive financial news for the new fiscal year—which is tied directly to figures from the previous year—came about as the result of a number of factors.

"Every department came in under budget," Nighswander says, adding

to move from "gift giving" to "gift sharing." Gifts move freely between people, and relationships are linked to gifts, he said. The problem is that many people tend to make gifts into commodities when they wonder if they can afford to accept the gift or feel pressure to give a gift back some time.

Lind also sees gifts related to needs as being problematic. What happens to the relational aspect when, in the global Anabaptist family of faith, there is such a large economic disparity? he wondered, suggesting the church has divided the family into those with gifts and those who have needs—those who are "resource rich" and those who have deficiencies.

But God's intention from creation is that we are all created as gifted beings, he maintained. "See, I have given you every plant, seed,..." again quoting from Genesis 1 and 2. Life itself is a gift from God, to be multiplied and shared with each other in this global church family. Gifts matter, he said, because it is where all of life comes from.

Besides the creation account, Lind said there is another core biblical account that informs us of how to share gifts in the global family of faith. The Jesus story is a story of God's gift of life in Christ, in whom we are "a new creation" (2 Corinthians 4:16ff). God wants to relate to creation, so in Christ "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1).

See also *The Churches, MCEC*, p. 34.
—Maurice Martin

that international exchange rates—especially in relation to the U.S. dollar—"improved in our favour." As well, some ministry activities planned for the 2004/05 fiscal year that ended on January 31 were deferred and some staff vacancies were not filled immediately.

The shortfall will impact some of MC Canada's core programs in the 2005/06 fiscal year, Nighswander acknowledges. "It will constrain some programs beyond what the need is," he says. "A number of international missions have far greater needs, and people willing to serve and respond to calls, but we have no money to send them."

Staffing is being slightly reduced, Nighswander says, but there are no plans to roll back staff salaries. "In 2003, we held back on salaries and that continues to impact our staff now," he notes.

Despite the donation shortfall for core programs, Al Rempel, MC Canada's director of resource development, maintains that members are not becoming less generous. In fact, his Generosity Report indicates that individual and corporate donations were up slightly from the previous year, to \$832,000. Congregations contributed just under \$3 million.

Rempel lauds this level of giving, especially in light of the impact of mad cow disease and drought in farming areas across the country, and the fact that some business owners experienced a downturn in their firms' revenue.

What MC Canada donors are becoming, according to Rempel, is more "particular" about where they direct their dollars. Nearly \$370,000 was designated for ministries beyond MC Canada's core programs, with \$152,000 of that figure going to 20 new initiatives in Latin America, Asia,

Europe, Canada and Africa. While he is concerned about the need to continue developing support for the core programs that make ongoing ministries possible, Rempel says, "I celebrate the generous hearts for responding to God's prompting in their lives."

So does Nighswander. After much soul searching among the board and staff who have worked on the new budget for a number of months, including intense times of prayer "for those impacted by our ministry and that we could be faithful to our commitments and their needs," he now says, "we praise God for their generosity."

Rempel's report cites examples of how this generosity has impacted churches and ministries around the world. Last fall, an appeal on behalf of persecuted Mennonites in Vietnam "generated a strong response," according to Rempel. And a \$1,000 donation in the summer allowed 60 pastors to take part in a retreat that prepared



Rempel

Every department came in under budget.

them for the persecution to come.

"The Vietnam story is just one slice of the healing and hope pie the church can offer," Rempel says. "There are additional stories of healing and hope in our own native communities, in the midst of the AIDS crisis in Africa, and in Latin America where poverty and violence constantly push people to the edge of society."

During the course of the 2005/06 fiscal year, MC Canada staff and board members will converse with area churches and congregations across the country—using the Where the Money Goes document as the basis for discussions—to determine future donation patterns. "If they say they're giving less to core funding versus specific programs, we'll have to make adjustments in the way we fund our programs," Nighswander says.

—Ross W. Muir

Akron, Pa.

Canadians prepare for MCC service

Mennonite Central Committee staff held orientation for 34 workers—17 of them Canadian—who are preparing to serve overseas and in North America for up to three years.

Canadians beginning three years of overseas service:

- **Dennis Henderson** and **Rachel Thiessen**, Kitchener, Ont. Henderson will work as a support technician and Thiessen will work as an English teacher in Laos.
- **Rosemary Monreau**, Vancouver, B.C., will work in Egypt as the director of an adult education program.

Beginning one year of overseas service:

- **Wes Penner**, formerly of Winnipeg, Man., will work as a computer analyst in India.

Canadians beginning two years of North American service:

- **Barbara Brown**, Edmonton, Alta., will work in Edmonton as a thrift shop manager.
- **Lisa Clark**, Vancouver, B.C., will work in Vancouver as Praxis Project coordinator.
- **Elna Coetsee**, Stouffville, Ont., will work in Stouffville as Care and Share general manager.
- **Erin Constable**, Moncton, N.B. will work as New Hope project coordinator in Moncton.
- **Brad Friesen**, Leamington, Ont., will work as Mennonite Immigrants' regional director in Ontario.
- **Leon Janzen**, Winnipeg, Man., will work as MCC web editor in Manitoba.
- **Jenny Kimba**, Winnipeg, Man., will work as a regional victim companion in Manitoba.
- **Kaye Migchelsen**, Lower Sackville, N.S., will work as food bank coordinator in Lower Sackville.
- **Martha Ras**, Calgary, Alta., is renewing an assignment as thrift shop manager in Calgary.
- **Dorene Rudy-Snyder**, Waterloo, Ont., will work as a community development worker in Ontario.
- **Tara Tharayil**, Winnipeg, Man., will work as an MCC staff writer in Manitoba.
- **Eva Unrau**, Morpeth, Ont., will work as a receptionist in Ontario.
- **Jennifer White**, Mount Forest, Ont., will work as Circle of Friends coordinator in Kitchener, Ont.

Each year, around 250 people begin MCC assignments in more than 50 countries in North and Central America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Currently, 764 board-appointed MCC workers serve in assignments that range from community development, education and health, to food production, emergency response and administration. Many workers are placed in assignments working directly with local churches or community groups.

—From MCC release



Seventeen Canadians participated in orientation sessions at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) offices in Akron, Pa., recently, in preparation for overseas and North American assignments. Pictured from left to right, front row: Erin Constable, Leon Janzen, Martha Ras, Tara Tharayil; middle row: Kaye Migchelsen, Rachel Thiessen, Dorene Rudy-Snyder, Rosemary Monreau; back row: Elna Coetsee, Jennifer White, Eva Unrau, Barbara Brown, Dennis Henderson, Brad Friesen, Wes Penner. Missing: Lisa Clark, Jenny Kimba.

Former missionary nurse to India dies

Dorothy Giesbrecht (Andres), 79, died on Feb. 4 in Abbotsford, B.C. She spent 26 years as a mission worker in India with the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM). She went to India with COM as a nurse in 1951; a year later she married Jacob Giesbrecht. Together they served in India for 25 years. They left India in 1977. About 18 years ago, Giesbrecht was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. She was born in Swift Current, Sask. on Dec. 28, 1925, to Hilda and Henry Andres. She became a registered nurse at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon, Sask., and attended Grace Bible Institute (now Grace University)



Giesbrecht

in Omaha, Nebraska, for two years. She is survived by her husband, two sons—Gary of Edmonton, Alta., and Larry of Chilliwack, B.C., two daughters—Hazel of Abbotsford and Hilda Reed of Caronport, Sask., and 11 grandchildren. A memorial service was held at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church on February 11.

—MC Canada release

'Beating pens into ploughshares'

About 75 people attended the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) banquet held in Vancouver on February 5 at First United Mennonite Church.

Tim Dyck, editor of *Canadian Mennonite*, spoke on the topic of "Beating pens into ploughshares."

As he compared secular journalism with that of the church, he noted that the world of journalism is more about doing than thinking. "It's deadline driven," he said. "It's more about filling spaces than about what is good for the community."

But the church is about community—as Jesus reminded his audiences over and over again—and it is the nurturing of community that Christian journalism is called to do.

"Journalism is about human stories, it's about the things we value, what shapes us," he said. He quoted Malcolm Muggeridge, who said that when people stop believing in God they do worse than believe nothing—they believe anything.

"The Christian response to this is that truth matters because it's part of God's character; it's part of good journalism," Dyck said, adding that it is when we let stories about God's people move us that we can bring change into the world.

The challenge he has set for himself as editor of *Canadian Mennonite* is to never let values be replaced by deadlines.

"Journalists who strive for humility, who are meek, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who bring peace—these are journalists who honour God in their work," he said.

Henry Krause, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, thanked Dyck not only for his address that evening but also for the way in which *Canadian Mennonite* respects its audience. Referring to news articles he had recently heard, which he felt violated him as a recipient, he thanked the magazine for not violating its readers and not insulting their intelligence.

"Thank you for setting the bar high for yourself and for the church," he said.

The banquet ended three days of meetings by the CMPS executive and

board and the CMPS annual general meeting.

The Quiring Chamber Trio delighted the guests with hymns and chamber music by Bach. Angela Quiring said that she and her brother Reg, who both play professionally, have begun a school that gives children an opportu-

nity to play chamber music in small ensembles. Their purpose is to "nurture and inspire through music," she said, and the music presented at the banquet did exactly that, drawing appreciative applause from those assembled.

—Angelika Dawson



Board members Mary Lyburner and Henry Neufeld listen as Henry Krause, right, addresses the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board at meetings in the days preceding the banquet.

Arts notes

New MCC quilt exhibit

A new travelling quilt exhibit from Mennonite Central Committee—featuring quilts made by Mennonites in

Canada and the United States that were distributed in the Netherlands after World War II—will begin a three-year tour on April 1 at the Pennsylvania Relief Sale. The exhibit accompanies a new book from Good Books—*Passing on the Comfort: The War, the Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference*, which captures the story of two women who were brought together by a set of well-worn MCC quilts. The exhibit features 18 of these quilts, provided by MCC to those fleeing the ravages of war. The exhibit will travel to relief sales, quilt shows and other sites. The full-colour book by An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller will be available beginning on April 4 in bookstores throughout Canada and the U.S., as well as directly from the publisher at www.goodbks.com or 800-762-7171.



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Ontario Mennonite Music Camp has been an integral part of our family's summer planning for the past four years, with two children attending, and another hot on their heels. Of all the plans that we make each summer, this is one they insist is not optional. So why is that? What makes this camp so special?

When I put that question to our children, Douglas and Stephanie, the immediate response was that the fellowship and fun between the campers is amazing. Both have attended other camps, and enjoyed them—but only the music camp is non-negotiable. So what do they do that builds that strong fellowship?

Throughout the two-week camp, the campers work hard and encourage each other as they polish their solo and ensemble pieces. In the process, they learn much about each other's musical strengths and talents. They spend a part of each day with the whole group choral singing and preparing the drama for the final performance. In between, there's recreation, "secret friend" fun, guest musicians, and, apparently, awesome cookies!

In small groups they plan the daily chapel services, which provides wonderful opportunities to learn more about God, and to explore ways of serving him with music. Each evening the campers meet across the creek for campfire and more singing. Preparing for the campfires and the mid-

camp coffee house provide other organizing and planning opportunities, with lots of creativity and laughter—not to mention the songs they're still singing eight months later!

I think the campers all enjoy the fact that camp is held on the Conrad Grebel University College campus. It gives them a taste of campus life, and I know they appreciate having regular showers!

The sense of community among the campers during and after that final performance is amazing, with laughter, singing and spirited conversations abounding. Each camper is reluctant to leave, and everyone exchanges e-mail addresses and promises to keep in touch.

At Ontario Mennonite Music Camp there are two things that everyone shares—a love of music, and a desire to use that music to get closer to God. We're looking forward to another terrific, musical summer camp!
—Jeanne Epp

●

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Mennonite Mission Network
The mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

Join the travelling DVBS troupe this summer

Mennonite Church Alberta youth who want to serve the church and earn some money this summer, listen up.

During the month of July, MC Alberta is planning to institute a daily vacation Bible school (DVBS) program across the province, providing youth with the opportunity to live their faith in a practical way, sharing the gospel and developing leadership skills. Participants will also help the conference to design a DVBS program uniquely suited to MC Alberta churches.

Troupe members will be paid an honorarium of \$750 to \$1,100 (depending on experience) for four weeks of service. One troupe leader will be paid \$1,100 and will have additional responsibilities. All meals and lodging will be provided by the host churches.

The troupe will consist of four individuals, including the troupe leader. Over the course of the summer, the troupe will participate in one week of orientation/preparation followed

by the actual DVBS program, which will be offered in one church in each of the remaining three weeks (from Monday to Friday with a closing program on Sunday).

General troupe duties include: leading music during the week; helping direct closing program; teaching the DVBS theme and story to the children; planning and directing skit practices; participating in memory verse activities; and decorating each church; among other responsibilities.

The troupe leaders duties include: liaising with the host church leaders; arranging transportation for the troupe; preparing the curriculum; and financial record keeping; among other duties.

Interested applicants can fill out an online application form at www.mennonitechurch.ab.ca/joinform.htm by March 31. For more information, contact Kelvin Rempel at 403-282-7418 or by e-mail at admin@mennonitechurch.ab.ca. From MC Alberta website

Manitoba's Passion Play prepares for 2005 season

La Riviere, Man.—Excited about the upcoming summer? Organizers of Manitoba's Passion Play certainly are, as they anticipate another successful production at their beautiful outdoor theatre site.

The Passion Play will run in the evening from July 8-10 and July 15-17. In its sixth season, the Passion Play has seen over 20,000 people in attendance over the past five years.

As it is becoming a regular tradition for the local area, Manitoba's Passion Play involves hundreds of volunteers from both the local area and across the province. The live drama and music includes many talented volunteers, and the front of house reception and services also provides a taste of southern Manitoba hospitality. The event won the Manitoba Innovative Tourism Award for its premiere year (2000) and continues to grow to become a favorite of many.

Nestled in Oak Valley, just off Highway 3 near the hamlet of La Riviere, Manitoba, the outdoor theatre venue presents the perfect setting for an outdoor presentation such as the Passion Play, creating as it does a quiet and secluded atmosphere where the audience can enjoy the natural beauty of the valley.

One of the new attractions at the site that people seem to appreciate is the "Way of the Cross" meditation trail. Created in 2003, the trail provides hikers an opportunity to relive Christ's Passion as they take a hike that leads them through 15 different stations. Each station represents a different part of Christ's journey to the cross, the tomb, and, finally, his resurrection. Though a wonderful addition to the Passion Play, the trail is open throughout the summer, allowing hikers to enjoy it at their leisure. Providing a vigorous walk at times, the meditation trail also includes some spectacular views of nature and the valley.

Those interested in attending the Passion Play this summer or using the Oak Valley site for other events, check out the website at www.passionplay.ca or call 204-242-3160.

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AMBS offers Celtic spirituality tour

Join other pilgrims on a journey to ancient, medieval and modern centres of Celtic spirituality in Scotland, Ireland and England with Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary this spring.

From June 9-27, the pilgrimage will visit ancient roots of Celtic spirituality on the island of Iona; sites connected with St. Patrick in County Down, Northern Ireland, and with St. Brigid in Kildare; the site of an ancient monastic community in the Wicklow Mountains; Trinity College Library, Christ Church and St. Patrick's Church in Dublin; and the cathedral city of Durham and Holy Island (Lindisfarne).

Leaders of the pilgrimage will be Marlene Kropf, associate professor in spiritual formation and worship at AMBS, and Stanley Kropf.

The pilgrimage fee is \$4,795 US. Three hours of graduate academic credit are available for an additional fee \$990 US.

Anyone interested in joining the pilgrimage should contact Bev Sawatzky at 574-296-6207 or by e-mail at bsawatzky@ambs.edu, to request more information and an application form.

—From AMBS website

Fleish Piroshki (meat buns) (approx. 6 dozen)

The following recipe comes from the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church's volunteers who have mastered their craft courtesy of the supervision of their Tantes and Omas.

Part I. Dough

4 cups milk	2 tsp. salt
1 cup warm water	2 eggs
2 tsp. sugar	2 T yeast
2 cups fat (2/3 cup each of butter/shortening/margarine)	12 cups flour

1. Heat milk for 6 minutes in microwave.
2. Dissolve sugar in warm water, add yeast and set aside to rise.
3. Pour heated milk into large mixing bowl; add salt. Cut fat into 1" cubes and add.
4. Add 9 cups flour to the liquid; then add the yeast and 2 eggs.
5. Mix until blended. Add 2 cups flour and mix again until blended.
6. Turn the dough onto a floured surface and knead, using the remaining 1 cup of flour. (Use more flour if necessary).
7. Place dough in lightly greased bowl and cover with wax paper and tea towel.
8. Set bowl in a warm place to rise to double in size (60 to 75 minutes)

Part II. Meat

4-1/2 lbs. lean hamburger	1 T salt
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	3 cups mashed potatoes
4 medium finely chopped onions (1-1/2 cups)	1-1/2 tsp. pepper
2 T prepared mustard	1 cup beef broth (1 pkg. Bovril or Oxo + 1 cup of water)

1. Brown hamburger with onions, salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce and mustard, mixing well. Drain fat.
2. Add mashed potatoes and beef broth. If mixture is too dry, add more broth.
3. Spread meat mixture evenly on 1 or 2 cookie sheets. Cut into 75 equal pieces. Place in fridge until firm.
4. Remove meat mixture from fridge then shape into sausages.

III. Assembling the Piroshki

1. After the dough has risen, take approximately 1/4 cup dough, flatten with fingertips to make a 3"x4" rectangle. Place the meat "sausage" on it. Fold up ends like gift wrap and wrap the dough around the meat. Pinch ends and seams together firmly.
 2. Place on cookie sheet, seam side down, about 1 to 1-1/2" apart. Cover with waxed paper and tea towel, and let rise approximately 1/2 hour. Bake at 350F for 30 minutes.
- From the Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale and Auction website

Pupusas

The following Latin American recipe comes from Ana Grimaldi and her crew at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., who make them for the MCC Relief Sale each year.

Filling

1. Cook 1/2 lb. ground pork with a little salt until it gets brown, then let it cool down.
2. Blend 1 small onion, 2 tomatoes and 1/2 green pepper in a blender.
3. Mix all the ingredients, including the meat.
4. If you wish to add cheese, blend it or shred it and mix with other ingredients.

Dough

1. Mix 2 lbs. of corn flour with water until it is smooth.
2. Grab some dough and make a ball with it until round.
3. Make a hole in the middle until the walls are about 1/2 inch thick.
4. Stuff the hole with the filling, then close the hole and round it up again.
5. Put pupuas on a flat surface with a plastic on it and flatten it with a plate or other flat item. The pupusa has to be about 1 inch thick.

Cooking

1. Cook the pupusas on a pancake grill for 1 or 2 minutes on each side.
2. Then flip it again and let it cook for 3 more minutes on each side.

Optional Cabbage Salad

1. Chop cabbage.
2. Run hot water on it.
3. Add salt vinegar, oregano and carrots—to suit your taste.

200th anniversary of K-W settlement planned

Early Mennonite pioneers in the Kitchener-Waterloo area came from Pennsylvania two centuries ago. This summer, the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario plans to celebrate this migration at its annual meeting in June.

In order to settle an issue about legal title to their farms, the early Mennonite settlers in the Waterloo area received help from friends in Pennsylvania, who organized the purchase of 60,000 acres in 1805.

The Brubacher House, a museum sponsored by the historical society, will be having a special celebration on July 1. The Brubacher family is typical of these Mennonite pioneers and can trace its roots back to Switzerland. Members of the family moved from Switzerland to Germany in the 1600s, to Pennsylvania in the early 1700s, and to the Waterloo area in the early 1800s. They cleared the trees for prosperous farms and helped develop a strong Mennonite community.
—Barb Draper

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Ages 12-18: M & F

AUGUST 22-26 | *CMU Multi-Sport Camp*
Ages entering grades 7-9: M & F

Winkler, Man.

Youths just 'can't keep quiet'

At Emmanuel Mennonite Church excitement is building. For more than a year now, the youth group has been preparing for the youth convention taking place in Charlotte, North Carolina, this summer. The youth event is being held in conjunction with the binational Mennonite Church Canada (MC Canada) and Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) assembly. The convention's theme—Can't Keep Quiet—has aptly reflected the enthusiasm of this group to date.

Larissa Kropf, youth pastor, got the green light to go from church council last February. Ever since then, the 15 youths have been working to reach its goal of raising \$10,600, enough money to pay for the bus trip, registration and accommodation. Five adults will accompany this group, the largest youth group coming from Manitoba.

"We are getting pretty close; only \$2,200 left to go," reports Kropf.

Fundraising efforts have included serving at a Mennonite Disaster Service banquet, working as parking attendants at the local Harvest Festival, weeding strawberry patches, cleaning bank offices, holding a garage sale, selling gift certificates, and serving a hot meal at church. In addition to the group fundraisers, the youths are each expected to pay \$200 out of their own pockets.

Karen Koop plans to use her earnings from work at Camps with Meaning last summer. Janelle Friesen is setting aside money from her part-time job as a gymnastics coach. Alex Peters spent last summer mowing lawns.

"The youth have put a lot of time and energy into getting ready," Kropf says. Part of that preparation also includes Bible study. "The conference will be sending out material that we plan to use for Bible study, to help us prepare mentally and spiritually as well."

Not only has the past year required time and financial commitment from

the youths, but for some it will also impact their opportunities for summer employment. However, the potential loss of summer employment pales next to their excitement.

"I am looking forward to having a great time," says Justin Bergen, who attended the youth convention two years ago in St. Catharines. "I look forward to the praise and worship times and getting to know God better."

Koop is excited about "getting to know new people and attending

the different sessions."

"And different speakers," adds Friesen.

They all look forward to the long bus ride and the opportunity to build lasting friendships. "The excitement is carrying over to the adults in church as well," says Kropf. "They are excited and supportive."

Kropf is grateful for the opportunity her youth will have to be part of a rich cross-section of those who make up the larger Mennonite family, which they don't see growing up in Winkler. "I am looking forward to having the definition of what is Mennonite broadened for them."

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Didsbury, Alta.

Bergthal ordains new pastor

The call to ministry of Elwin Garland by Bergthal Mennonite Church as its pastor was recognized and reaffirmed through ordination on September 26 2004.

The significance of ordination was explored by all generations, beginning with a puppet show written and performed by Joanne and Gary Peters; they explained the basics of ordination through a child's eyes. Eric Froese then elaborated, reminding the congregation of its role in respecting that which God has set apart. Through ordination people recognize and honour Garland's pastoral gifts and his commitment to service by bestowing the mantle of "reverend" upon him.

Jim Shantz, conference pastor for Mennonite Church Alberta, officiated at Garland's ordination, which included prayers and commitments by Garland, his wife Linda, and the people of Bergthal.

As stones were used in biblical times as a witnesses to a promise (Joshua 24: 26-27), a commemorative rock was presented to Garland in honour of his ordination. Through God's hands, Garland has become like a split stone—the truth that lies within him, and the revelation of his gifts and calling that

were once hidden.

Responses and congratulatory greetings were shared.

Garland came to Bergthal two years ago from Brussels Mennonite Fellowship, Ontario, where he and his wife were instrumental in establishing the congregation. Before responding to his call to pastoral service by attending



Photo by Diane Jonson

Jim Shantz, conference pastor for Mennonite Church Alberta, prays over the kneeling Elwin Garland at his ordination service.

seminary, Garland was a high school teacher. His wife and their children, Nathan, Andrew, Rachel and Sarah, have encouraged and supported him through his journey to ordination.

In bringing Garland forward for ordination, the Bergthal family of believers has been blessed and honoured as well.

—**Diane Jonson**

Lethbridge, Alta.

Voluntary Service to begin in Lethbridge

A change of missional focus from Service Adventure to a Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) unit was approved at the annual congregational meeting of Lethbridge Mennonite Church.

"We are delighted in the fact that VS [Voluntary Service] was so strongly endorsed," said Ernie Engbrecht, chair of the MVS support group in Lethbridge, following the annual meeting. The organization is "elated with the good news," and is ready to "proceed full steam ahead," he said, noting that "our unit is in a strong position with a small surplus in the bank and full church support."

Following the models for MVS units serving in other parts of Canada, the Lethbridge congregation is inviting young adults 18 and older to apply for one- and two-year assignments here. Assignments will match the applicants' interests with needs in local agencies. Agencies like Streets Alive, that serves the homeless and disenfranchised, and the Chinook L'Arche Society, that cares for developmentally handicapped persons, have expressed interest in MVS workers.

Lethbridge Mennonite also approved inviting one volunteer as a half-time youth worker and researching other new possibilities for Voluntary Service in Lethbridge.

As the sponsoring congregation, Lethbridge Mennonite Church owns a residence well suited for an MVS service house. The service house has also provided affordable housing for university and college students, which remains an option for the future.

Launching the MVS unit in September of 2005 calls for finalizing placements for volunteers and vigorous recruiting in the next six months. At least one volunteer from Germany and several from Canada are eagerly anticipated.

Delegates at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly last July endorsed the vision for Mennonite Voluntary Service. It is hoped that pastors and youth leaders will now encourage young adults and youth to consider MVS in their plans. Further informa-

tion about MVS in Lethbridge, or in other Canadian locations, can be found on the Mennonite Church Canada web page at www.mennonitechurch.ca/mvs-sa. The new MVS unit in Lethbridge is one of five such locations

in Canada; three of the five are currently staffed with volunteers.

Engbrecht hopes the new MVS model "will be as contagious in the rest of Canada" as it is in Lethbridge.

—Fred Unruh



Jenna Stoltzfus photo

Liz Hunsberger packs a shipment of buckets containing Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) relief kits for Indonesian tsunami survivors. More than 10,000 relief kits have been collected from Canada and the United States so far, but MCC is still hoping to reach its goal of 20,000 kits. Another 2,000 kits are being collected in Indonesia. The kits contain hygiene items, including soap, towels, shampoo and toothbrushes. Four shipments have been sent already: an initial 1,512 relief kits through a Church World Service airlift, 2,111 from Manitoba, and more than 4,000 from Pennsylvania in two recent shipments. But MCC material resources manager Paul Pereverzoff stresses that thousands more kits are needed to reach the total number that MCC's partners in Indonesia are requesting. "We're hoping for a lot more than this," he says.

Winnipeg, Man.

Ecumenical prayer service promotes Christian unity

Charleswood Mennonite Church was the site of one of the eight Prayer for Christian Unity services held in various churches in Winnipeg in late January. The service at Charleswood was based on the theme “Meeting for Prayer in the Mennonite Way.” More than 100 people from a variety of denominations attended.

Helmut Harder led the service and gave a meditation called “Build on the foundation.” His reflection was based on 1 Corinthians 3:12-13, which begins to answer the question of how Christians should build on the true foundation, Jesus Christ, in the preceding verse. The text, he pointed out, names six building materials—gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, and straw.

These represent equally useful materials for construction. Regardless of which materials are used, builders of churches must be sure to build on the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ. The mention of Christ tells us that the focus of the text is not really on raw building materials, but on spiritual things—faith, good works, people and spiritual gifts.

The Christian churches, said Harder, represent a great variety of gifts throughout the world. Where is the unity in the midst of this variety? he asked, suggesting that Christians are united only when they build on the one foundation—Jesus Christ.

But churches aren’t always united in Christ. A time of testing is bound to come, Harder said, which will reveal their faithfulness and unfaithfulness. Genuine faith and good works will endure, he said, but anything contrary to Christ will not.

Christians have had their times of testing in the past, Harder said, noting that Mennonites remember 2,000 martyrs from the 16th century. Today it is important that the Christian churches stand the test of their faith together, he said, maintaining that they must not be schismatic, and must certainly not persecute one another, as in the past. For the sake of the genuine Christian witness, Harder concluded that churches must promote

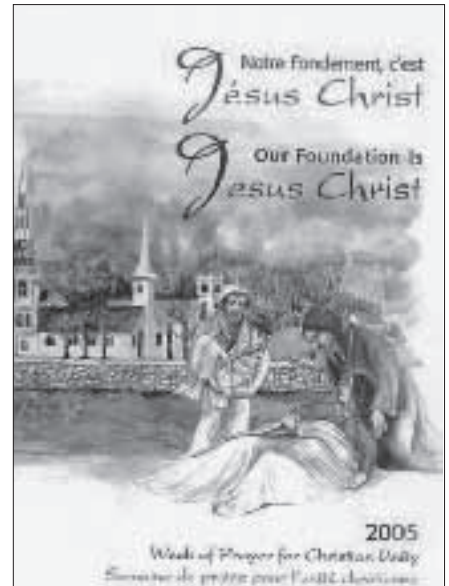
Christian unity in this troubled world.

Irma Harder led the singing, while Elsie Rempel led the corporate prayer time at the end of the service. Rempel and Sheila Klassen-Wiebe did a dramatic reading from Matthew 20. An octet sang True Evangelical Faith, which uses the words of Menno Simons.

After the service, refreshments prepared by members of the congregation were served, and there was a good time of informal fellowship.

Other services during the eight-day Festival of Prayer were held in Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Mennonite Brethren, Presbyterian and Ukrainian Orthodox churches in various parts of the city.

—Larry Kehler



Praying in the Mennonite Way, Jan 26, 2005

Jesus said, “Ask and it shall be given you;
search and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened for you.”

The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

And so we pray:
Uniting, reconciling, merciful God,
we have gathered from around our city to give you thanks
and bring our prayers to you,
with confidence in the name of our Lord Jesus.

God of compassion and reconciliation,
hear our prayers.

Gracious God, we hunger for your righteousness.
We thirst for your justice.
We pray for ourselves.
Feed our hearts, too, with your righteous love.
Give growth to the seeds of your justice in our lives.

Jesus, you who are our true foundation,
and on whom true community is built,
help us to build in agreement

with your master plans.
We pray for our community
and for the people where we live.
May we recognize your presence and activity
in those around us,
and may your Spirit be evident in us.

God of all true growth,
we are your field and your building,
and so we pray for your church in all places.
May it be built on the foundation of Jesus, the Christ,
and withstand the testing of our days.

God of reconciliation and unity,
may we grow toward unity that increasingly resembles
the unity you have with Jesus, your son.
Help us join hands and break down the barriers
between those who follow your varied servants.
May our passion for Jesus cause unity to grow.

God of strength and compassion,
we pray for people around the world,
especially for the poor.
May we share your compassion for the poor and
see your image within them.

Saskatoon, Sask.

First Mennonite installs new pastor

When he was young, Steven Farsaci had his whole life planned. He knew where he was going and how he would get there—until he started reading his Bible and praying; then Jesus intruded. At that time, he could not foresee his installation as a Mennonite pastor. But on Sunday, February 20, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Conference Pastor Ken Bechtel installed Farsaci as a new pastor at First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Farsaci had planned on being a politician. After high school he became a political science major at university. Because a good armed forces record would help boost his ambition, he enlisted in the American navy and finished his degree under its auspices.

He worked hard and rose through the ranks to be a Lieutenant, JG (junior grade), becoming a nuclear submarine weapons officer. At the same time, he was also reading the Bible and praying.

At his installation, Farsaci suggested that if you don't want Jesus to intrude on your plans, don't do that.

But when it came to sign a navy oath that he would launch a nuclear warhead if ordered, he couldn't do it. "Jesus had said, 'Love your enemy', not nuke them," Farsaci said.



Farsaci

His fellow officers (Christians) thought he needed psychiatric help. As his personal theology continued to develop, Farsaci sought and received conscientious objector status and left the navy in 1982. He found out later that his new theology—peace-making, non-conformist simpler life style—was consistent with that of the Mennonite church, which he didn't even know existed at the time.

Raised a Roman Catholic, Farsaci's theological training began at a Congregational seminary in Maine. He transferred to Eastern Mennonite Seminary in 1991, where he gained his Master of Divinity

degree. By this time, his wife also accepted the peace-making stance.

At the end of his training, Farsaci found no Mennonite church ready to call him. He who had always planned well ahead, now had to wait on the Lord. The Farsacis returned to Maine, where he led a Quaker group for a while, then three small Baptist congregations. Finally, he got his first Mennonite church to pastor—in Americus, Ga., a 2,400-kilometre commute.

Then the call came from First Mennonite in Saskatoon. He is looking forward to his wife Vicki and their youngest daughter Kate, in Grade 8, joining him in Saskatoon after school is out, and living under the same roof again. Their oldest two daughters are in their mid-20s and are living on their own.

What brought him to Saskatoon and First Mennonite?

With a quick smile he answered, "A call." Actually, he said that Jesus is alive and well, he talks to us, and he wants us to make a small effort to being what he is. Jesus, he suggested, will identify needs in the community that we need to meet.

As out-reach minister, he sees his task as starting small fires, by making the gospel relevant in the community. For Farsaci, it takes mutual aid in a community to effect a faith and lifestyle change.

—**Jake Nickel**

Strengthen those who care for the troubled,
the sick and the needy.

God our Lord, whose sovereign power
and unending mercy
are perfect in almighty love,
we pray for those in power and
authority.

May we and they join you in loosing
the bonds of injustice,
in feeding the hungry, sheltering the
homeless,
and helping the oppressed go free.

Reconciling God, may our faith, our
prayers and
our acts of service be pleasing to
you.

We offer them to you
with hearts that long for the unity
of your coming Kingdom.

As disciples of your son, we join
together
in praying the prayer Jesus taught us:

Our Father....

—Prayer led by Elsie Rempel

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People & Events

Catholic missionary murdered in Brazil

A US Catholic missionary who had been honoured for human rights work has been shot dead in the Brazilian Amazon. Dorothy Stang, a nun in her 70s, had repeatedly reported receiving death threats because of her work in



Stang

protecting the people of the Amazon. Police said two gunmen shot her in the face three times at an isolated jungle settlement in the state of Para. Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Brazil's president, has sent ministers and police teams to the area to bring her killers to justice. Nilmario Miranda, human rights minister, said two suspects in the case had already been identified. He said putting those responsible behind bars was "a matter of honour" for the Brazilian government. Marina Silva, Brazil's environment minister, compared Stang's murder to the killing of trade union leader Chico Mendes, a campaigner for the rainforest whose death in 1988 sparked worldwide outrage.

Stang was a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, an international Catholic religious order, and had lived in Brazil for more than 30 years. She recently won an award from the Brazilian lawyers' association (OAB) for her work in the Amazon region, while the state of Para named her woman of the year.

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Enns—to Natalie and Phil, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Hunter Philip, Feb. 14.

Enns—to Shelley and Steve, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Madelynn Elizabeth, Feb. 7.

Friesen—to Tanya and Dan, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Samuel David Edwin, Sept. 1.

Gilks—to Annette and Chris, St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Justin Thomas, Feb. 4.

Huebert—to Colleen and Peter, St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Grace Anne, Jan. 11.

McMahon—to Karen and Tom, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Jessica Lynn, Feb. 14.

Pena—to Martha and Oscar of Indian Shores Beach, Fla., North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Alejandro (Alex) Oscar, Feb. 17.

Marriages

Wiens-Janzen—Toby and Candice, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., Feb. 12.

Deaths

Friesen—Justina, 77, Warman Mennonite, Sask., Feb. 12.

Hildebrand—Jacob H., 91, Crystal City Mennonite, Man., Jan. 26.

Lepp—Eric, 80, Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask., Feb. 12.

Neufeld—George, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Feb. 13.

Peters—Henry, 86, Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Feb. 14.

Riediger—George, 79, Vineland United Mennonite Church, Ont., Feb. 9.

Riediger—Helena, 89, First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Feb. 5.

Ropp—Alfred W., 83, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Feb. 22.

Sawadsky—Anna, 102, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Feb. 16.

Stern—Susan, 85, Innisfail, Alta., Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., Feb. 8.

Wiens—Olga, 96, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Feb. 5.

Baptisms

Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C.—Rudolf and Lydia Sperling, Mohammed S., Feb. 13.

Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.—Rhonda Penner, Nov. 21.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Transitions announcements within four months of the event. Please e-mail Transitions announcements (identifying congregation name and location) to: transitions@canadianmennonite.org.

Employment opportunity

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Canadian Mennonite is seeking a part-time (80% time) Administrative Assistant for the biweekly Mennonite periodical. A resume should be submitted by March 22, 2005. The position begins April 20, 2005.


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Gerber Financial Services, Waterloo, ON
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IPC Investment Corporation (see ad this page)

Mennonite Savings & Credit Union
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Menno Travel, Abbotsford, BC
 1-800-667-5559; info@mennotvl.com,
 www.mennotvl.com

Mennonite Your Way Tours
 1-800-296-1991; www.mywtours.com

Mennonite Church Canada

March Equipping highlights summer activities, resources

The March edition of *Equipping Canada* highlights summer resources and activities such as the new Vacation Bible School curriculum, "Celebrate the Psalms: Our God is awesome!" Also included are the Faith & Life Summer 2005 catalogue and registration information for Charlotte 2005.

"Registrations are coming in thick and fast", writes Pam Peters Pries, Mennonite Church Canada staff. "Some hotels are already sold out," she says, so register now—either by mail (registration forms were sent to churches in early January), or online at www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/charlotte.

The packet also includes thought-provoking letters from church leaders Dan Nighswander, Dave Bergen and Sven Eriksson, who respectively address themes such as "Becoming a productive ministry", "Lent: Is a time of opportunity," and "Reflections on leadership".

In addition, there are prayer requests, notes for bulletins and bulletin boards; a New Resources list from the Resource Centre, which includes titles such as *A Sensual Faith: Experiencing God Through Our Senses* by Ian Price, and a DVD on *The Last Supper*, filmed and dramatized in the Middle East. Also, there is a "Moment of Celebration" from Native Ministry by Walter Franz, highlighting partnership circles.

Equipping is available at church offices and www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/current/.

Prayer requests

- The family of Han Vandenberg, Taiwan alumnus, who passed away February 21. Han and Martha served with the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) in Taiwan from 1957-93 and retired to Alberta. His funeral was held on February 24 in Didsbury, Alberta. Please keep Martha and her children, Tobia and George Veith and Susan and Rod Reynar in your prayers as they begin to live without their husband, father and grandfather.

- Grace Schwartzentruber, Brazil alumnus, who is suffering from incurable cancer. She is at home and asks that we pray for "strength and not much pain." Grace and her husband Ken served with Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) in Brazil from 1961-94. They now live in New Hamburg, Ontario.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Martin honoured at School for Ministers

The annual School for Ministers was held this year at Breslau Mennonite Church from Feb. 15-17. The guest speakers were Pakisa K. Tshimika and Timothy Lind, who have travelled extensively on behalf of Mennonite World Conference to do research for the Gift Sharing Project.

Tshimika and Lind began the Gift Sharing Project by meeting with the churches in Africa, doing Bible studies on gift sharing, and doing an "inventory" of gifts in the church. While they could not avoid discussion of financial sharing, their focus was on sharing gifts locally and globally in the Anabaptist "family" of churches.

The theme was wrapped in worship based on 1 Kings 17,



Photo by Maurice Martin

Marilyn Rudy Froese, chairperson of the Pastoral Leadership Training Commission, left, thanked Laurence Martin for 10 years of work as director of various PLTC programs, including the School for Ministers.

the story of Elijah's encounter with the widow of Zarephath, a dramatic encounter in two parts, in which they shared life-sustaining gifts and the gifts of healing and restoration.

Daniel Genest, pastor at Rawdon and Joliette congregations in Quebec, reflected on the first part of the text, in which the last bit of oil and flour is multiplied in a time of famine. The widow represents humanity, weakness and physical poverty, he said. Elijah, who complains earlier that he alone is faithful in all of Israel, represents the spiritual poverty of his people, he added. Genest asked participants, "What does spiritual poverty mean in our Canadian and Anabaptist context?"

Betty Puricelli, pastor at New Life Centre, Toronto, Ontario, reflected on the second part of the story, in which Elijah raises the widow's son to life. She asked, "What would it take for our congregations to know that we serve a living God? What, like the widow's son, is dead that needs to come to life? Our children and youth are dying spiritually. They serve false gods. They are often 'dead' to the church."

In the Wednesday morning session Lind defined the meaning of "gift sharing." He reminded pastors that a gift in

itself is not a gift. Something else is being talked about. It has to do with relationship. "A true gift happens when something has changed between us."

Another complication is the relationship of gifts to needs, Lind explained. Typically, people see gifts as the answer to a need—a way to balance a scale. In the global Anabaptist church, some people's basic needs are comfortably met, whereas in many other places, people struggle daily to meet these needs, he noted.

"The problem with this," said Lind, "is that it leads to a false view between people who have gifts and those who have needs. It creates dichotomies of resources and deficiencies, of rich and poor, of gifts and needs."

But this is not theologically true, he said, since God has created us all as gifted beings. So let's not understand needs as lacks, an emptiness to be filled, but rather let us see the need as a gift that is impeded or imprisoned.

David Brubacher, Minister to Conference, liked what he heard about gift sharing in the global church. "The shift—perhaps a new way of thinking—is to enable congregations to do an inventory of their assets and release their gifts of

ministry to be a blessing to each other and to their community," he said.

Bryan Moyer Suderman brought the gift of music from varied cultures during the morning worship, in the several languages used by congregations in MCEC each Sunday. One pastor admitted a growing ability to "use my body" during worship.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Rooted in the Centre— Living on the Edge

This is the name of a new curriculum hot off the press and introduced at the recent annual delegate sessions in February.

Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service Ministries, said the six units in the study series are a tool to help the church find its way in the larger cultural context. The units are titled: Who are we?, How did we get here?, The heart of God, God's strategy, Recovering vocation, and Creating the future.

Voth thanked those who were helpful to him in the process of writing the material: Kelvin Dyck, Larissa Kropf and Jeff Thiessen.

Dyck, pastor of Covenant Mennonite Church in Winkler, said, "Twenty-five years ago a number of young professionals got together and decided they wanted to develop an alternative approach to worship. They did this with the blessing of the mother church and thus Covenant was born."

Since that beginning, Covenant's membership has changed. Winkler has changed and grown. New churches have been built. "Where is our church in all this? We need to think again who we are and what God is calling us to do," Dyck said.

Covenant Mennonite plans to use the study guide in adult Sunday school classes to guide them in a visioning process.

All MC Manitoba churches will be sent a complimentary copy of the study resource. More copies can be ordered from MC Manitoba for \$5 each by calling 204-896-1616.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Nursing home board faces loss of control

For several years, the Herbert Nursing Home in Herbert has struggled to balance its budget with the funding that the provincial government was providing. Numerous letters were sent by the home's administrator to request more funding and the situation was getting desperate.

Within the last year, the nursing home board has been meeting with the Cyprus Regional Health Authority and representatives of MC Saskatchewan in an effort to solve what appears to be an escalating problem. During a recent meeting with the regional health authority on January 20, the Herbert Nursing Home board came face-to-face with the issue of who will manage the facility.

"Up until now, the region was content to give us the money and let us run it," said

Pete Peters, board chair.

Now, with the predicted closure of the Herbert-Morris hospital, the health authority is asking for more say over how that money is administered within the nursing home. It wants to take over the operations of the home while paying for six acute care beds to be added to the facility.

Both groups are set to gain from the arrangement; Herbert Nursing Home gets the much-needed funding and the health authority is still able to fulfill its mandate of providing healthcare to the community.

One of the concerns the board has is how much control the region will exert over the spiritual content of the program. "If the region controls the operation, it means the conference and the board will become peripheral," said Peters.

The issue is further clouded by the reality that the region will only provide 60 percent of the funding for the home. That means the community of Herbert will need to raise the

Continued on page 36

Revolution = Transformation

Recently a church member lamented how difficult it still is to understand all the changes that have happened in the church structures in recent years. Some still struggle to associate "Witness" with the international ministry of Mennonite Church Canada.

Drastic change is difficult and levies a cost. But the business of church is about transformation, and transformation is a kind of revolution. For Cubans, the word "revolution" carries a lot of weight; none ever forget the Cuban Revolution that began January 1, 1959. But for Christians in Cuba, new connotations have been added to the word.

Pastor Alexander is a young seminary graduate. In January he sent a videotaped message to MC Canada saying, "My Christian life has changed greatly and has been more humble, more focused and much deeper since September [when I took the course offered by MC Canada Witness]. This has been because of the Mennonite thinking which has led me to the roots of the New Testament and which has impacted the

practical living out of my Christian life. Anabaptist thinking has revolutionized our way of thinking."

Alexander is but one example of a person profoundly touched by the ministry of MC Canada Witness. The very message of Jesus Christ lived out through Anabaptist convictions and practice is radical, revolutionary and inspirational. Church structures may have undergone a kind of revolution. But the work to which God is calling us has not. Together as Mennonites united through MC Canada, we are going where God leads us, to transform lives around the world.

A mother of an MC Canada intern wrote a note of thanks, saying that her experience "has confirmed once again how much the work of our Mennonite missions people is valued and appreciated and done with integrity. They are frugal and I believe our missions dollars are used with care."

I wish you could all sit at my desk and read the reports that come in from every continent, telling transformational stories of how ministry efforts through MC Canada Witness have changed their lives.

Maybe we get tired of revolution in our

From our leaders

lives, and we wonder if it is worth the effort to get on board with the new things. Should we keep supporting our denomination when we aren't as familiar with the new names and faces?

Alexander would say an enthusiastic "Yes!" In fact, his message to us was to ask if we would expand our ministry in Cuba so that more Cuban church leaders could be trained, and therefore expand the church in his country. My response is clear: How can we not? The business of the church is transformation—or revolution. We must work together, supporting Witness through prayer, people and finances, so that lives are shaped, transformed and revolutionized.

(Read about Pastor Alexander and other Cubans in the next issue. Ed.)

Janet Plenert, acting executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, and executive director of International Ministries



The Churches cont.

remaining amount. Peters wonders how people will feel raising public money for a private institution.

The situation has the possibility of becoming a landmark case, as the outcome could affect approximately 60 faith-based nursing and care homes in Saskatchewan.

Mennonite Church Alberta

New pastors ordained, installed

On February 6, the Bergthal Mennonite Church celebrated the ordination of Don Stoesz. Stoesz is a chaplain at the Bowden Institution located North of Olds. While funds for Stoesz's salary come from Corrections Canada, his cheques are handled through Mennonite Church Alberta and he is accountable to it. Stoesz regularly participates in the MC Alberta's pastors council and is a member of the Bergthal congregation.

In November 2004, the Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church installed Michael Kong as its full-time lead pastor.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Cedar Valley part of Heritage Week

Cedar Valley Mennonite Church had an open house during the City of Mission's Heritage Week. The focus of Mission's celebrations was faith, so the church invited the community in to see the facilities and learn about what the congregation has to offer.

As visitors toured the church, they saw the ladies group making blankets and the children's centre, among other features, and saw that the congregation also provides a home to other community organizations, including Kumon Math and Reading and ESL for adults. In addition, Canadian Blood Services (CBS) sets up its clinic in the lower auditorium, and some members of the congregation serve as CBS volunteers.

Pastor Dan Rempel commented that it was important for Cedar Valley Mennonite to be involved in Mission's Heritage Week because members of the congregation—including Abe Rempel, Mission's mayor—are very involved in the community.

Employment opportunities

First Mennonite Church, Kitchener seeks
1 FULL-TIME or 2 PART-TIME MEMBER(S)
for our PASTORAL TEAM

A healthy congregation of 340 members, with a long tradition of involvement in multicultural and urban ministry, FMC has long benefited from a team ministry. Primary responsibilities will include ministry with youth and young adult programs and/or general pastoral responsibilities. The position(s) will be available in late summer 2005. The Search Committee plans to begin reviewing applications in early April.

For a copy of job description(s) and congregational profile or to apply, please contact:

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E.
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Attn: Muriel Bechtel
Minister of Pastoral Services
E-mail: muriel@mceec.on.ca

IDEAL SUMMER JOB in WORSHIP LEADING! Niagara United Mennonite Church, a large congregation in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is looking for a

SUMMER MUSIC WORSHIP LEADER

This paid position would include providing leadership for the praise and worship band and for children's worship, as well as participating in the choir (in early summer). The applicant should be willing to work with traditional and contemporary worship styles. We are looking for a devoted follower of Jesus with a passion for music in worship. The applicant should have experience in leading congregational worship.

This would be an ideal summer position for a student. Accommodation can be arranged if needed. Interested applicants, please contact:

Ruth Willms
1668 Concession #6, RR 2
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
E-mail: rmw1275@hotmail.com
Phone: (905) 984-2166

Niagara United Mennonite Church, a 600+ member congregation in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON invites applications for a

FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR
of YOUTH and EDUCATION

The applicant should be a devoted follower of Jesus with a passion for youth and young adults. The individual should be committed to anabaptist values and be willing to work as part of the ministry team. A minimum bachelor's degree is required. Relevant experience is preferred. The position is available in early summer 2005.

For additional information or to apply, please contact the chairperson of the search committee by May 15, 2005.

Fred Teichgraf
E-mail: fteichgraf@wurthcanada.com
Phone: (905) 468-4798

We thank you, gracious God,
for the children in our lives,
for the joy and the hope they embody
for the wonder with which they live each day.

Grant us your mercy, O God, as we nurture them,
Give us patience for their never-ending needs,
And wisdom for their everlasting questions.
Grant us, too, forgiveness for our sins against our children,
The sins of an over-zealous care—sentimentalizing them,
Over-protecting them,
Making them our whole world,
And laying on them our own unfinished dreams.
The sins of an under-zealous care—the neglect,
Abuse, exploitation,
That will be too many children's reality this day.
Help us, O Lord,
Whether we have children in our home or not,
To join as one in the hard and holy work of
blessing the children.
Amen.

—Mary H. Schertz

Employment opportunities

ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Warden Woods Community Centre (WWCC) seeks an experienced and motivated individual to lead the agency during a two-year leave period.

With roots in the Mennonite faith community, WWCC has grown into a well-established community organization providing a wide range of services to meet social, educational, cultural, physical and spiritual needs within the multicultural, multi-faith context of Scarborough.

For more information on WWCC and this exciting opportunity, please go to www.wardenwoods.com.

Application deadline is March 19, 2005

SHERBROOKE MENNONITE CHURCH of Vancouver, B.C. invites applications for the full-time position of

YOUTH PASTOR

Desired qualifications would include:

- Enthusiastic, mission focused, person with a long-term vision for reaching out to young people inside and outside the realm of the church.
- Ability to provide Christ centered, biblically based and Anabaptist oriented discipleship training/teaching.
- Vision for integrated youth ministry in a Multicultural setting.

Duties would include:

- Taking responsibility to integrate youth ministry into the overall life, worship and service of the congregation.
- Be accountable to the congregation through the senior Pastor and Church Council.

Preferred Starting Date: August 1st, 2005

Application Deadline: April 1st, 2005

Please send resume to:

Alfred Ens, Search Committee
E-mail: alfandkelly@dccnet.com
Sherbrooke Mennonite Church
7155 Sherbrooke St., Vancouver, BC V5X 4E3
Phone: (604) 327-3913; Fax: (604) 321-3933
E-mail: smcvan@telus.net

SENIOR MATH TEACHER

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate invites applications for a Mathematics teaching position for September 2005. This teacher will be responsible for teaching senior levels of Pre-Calculus and Advanced Placement Calculus. Qualified applicants will have strong relational skills and a commitment to Christian education from a Mennonite Anabaptist perspective.

Forward resumes:

c/o Principal
E-mail: westgate@westgate.mb.ca
Fax: (204) 786-1651
86 West Gate, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1

Christian Alliance International School (CAIS) in Hong Kong requires the following full-time teachers:

- Grade 2 (1.0)**
- Grade 5 (1.0)**
- Secondary Mandarin**
- Teacher Librarian (1.0)**

Applicants should possess a minimum B.Ed. (or equivalent) with the relevant major. Further details about the positions and the application process may be found on the school web site at: <http://www.cais.edu.hk>.

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 Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Attn: Muriel Bechtel
E-mail: Muriel@mcec.on.ca

Columbia Bible College announces Two Faculty Openings

Columbia is seeking two faculty members for fall 2005. The desired areas of expertise are:

- **DIRECTOR of EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**
- **PSYCHOLOGY/COUNSELLING PROFESSOR (3 year term appointment)**

For a full list of qualifications and job description, please consult www.columbiabc.edu.

Please forward resume to the attention of Dr. Ron Penner by **March 31, 2005**. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed in the first instance to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song.

~Maya Angelou

Housing

Sleepy Hollow Cottage. All season, 3 bedroom cottage/home in a peaceful wooded valley in the heart of the Niagara region. Excellent as a small retreat center or for family holiday. Walk to the Bruce trail. Minutes from other Niagara attractions. For further information and rental costs phone (705)476-2319 or e-mail coffmanjohnh@hotmail.com

Home away from home. Rooms for rent May 1 - Aug 31, May 1 - indefinite. Close to Conrad Grebel. Phone (519) 883-0252.

For sale

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

Advertising

Copy due dates.....for Issue

Tuesday Mar. 22
 Tuesday April 5

April 4
 April 18

contact
Barbara Burkholder
1-800-316-4052
advert@
canadianmennonite.org

Faith and Life choirs sing for museum

Steinbach, Man.—MC Manitoba's Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus are performing two benefit concerts for the Mennonite Heritage Village Museum in Steinbach in late May.

Joined by soprano Henriette Schellenberg and baritone Victor Engbrecht, the choirs—composed of talented amateur

and professional singers from across the province—will perform a variety of music, including hymns, classics and some well-loved spirituals.

On May 28, the choirs first perform at the Buhler Performing Arts Centre at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, and the next night at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Both concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.

Donations in lieu of admission are gratefully accepted. Proceeds from both concerts will go to support the educational and pioneer interpretive programs at Mennonite Heritage Village, as well as the Faith and Life music program.

The Mennonite Heritage Village Museum tells the story of the Mennonite faith and pioneer experience in Manitoba to 70,000 visitors annually.—Faith and Life Choirs press release



Siemens, Hiebert reunite

Gretna, Man.—Rosemary Siemens of Plum Coulee, Man., is reuniting with Loren Hiebert for two concerts with the Southern Manitoba Choral Society later this month; the two released a CD of gospel improvisations a number of years ago. The choral society is performing Schubert's *Deutsche Messe* with Hiebert on piano, and Vivaldi's Gloria with orchestra. Soloists include Siemens and Leona Hildebrand (sopranos), and alto Marilyn Houser-Hamm. Henry R. Peters is conducting. The concerts take place at Buhler Hall, Gretna, on March 19, and at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church on March 20.

Calendar

British Columbia

March 18: Prospective Student Day at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford.
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 19, 20: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (19), and Knox United Church, Vancouver (20), 8 p.m.
April 1: Columbia Bible College athletic awards evening.
April 15: Columbia Bible College spring concert at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford.
April 16: Columbia Bible College graduation and banquet.
May 3: Columbia Open 2005 at Chilliwack Golf & Country Club. Banquet and auction at Columbia Bible College.
May 15: Mennonite Concerto performed by Irmgard Baerg,

at Central Heights MB Church, 3 p.m. Sponsored by Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

Alberta

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.
April 1-3: Men's retreat, "Closer than a brother," at Camp Valaqua. Speaker: Sven Eriksson. Contact Marvin Bergen at 403-256-2894.
April 16: Bethany College concert of praise, on campus.
April 17: Bethany College commencement, on campus.
April 23: Alberta Rosthern Junior College fundraiser, Bearspaw Community Centre, 7 p.m. Silent and live auctions, entertainment, refreshments. Call Howard Enns at 403-547-3130 for tickets or to donate items.
April 28, 29, 30: Musical at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.
April 29-30: Alberta Women in Mission Enrichment Days at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton. Speakers: Tobia Veith, Susan Reynar. Topic: Living to make a difference. Call Evelyn Buhr at 780-439-3594.
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

March 18-20: Portable CMU with Dan Epp-Tiessen at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.
March 19: Shekinah fundraising banquet and silent 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 8-9: Deeper Life meetings with Nelson Kraybill at Mount Royal Mennonite Church.
April 9-10: Deeper Life meetings with Nelson Kraybill at North Star Mennonite, Drake.
April 15: Open house at Rosthern Junior College.
April 16: "Touring Mission Fest" by MC Saskatchewan Ministries Commission.
April 16: MCC fundraiser coffee house at Wildwood Mennonite Church with cowboy poet Doris Daley, 7:30 p.m.
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.
May 25: Work day at Rosthern Junior College.
June 10-11: MCC relief sale in Saskatoon.
June 17-19: Youth Farm Bible Camp 40th anniversary celebrations.
June 23-25: Spring musical at Rosthern Junior College.
June 25-26: Camp Elim 60th anniversary celebrations.
June 26: Graduation at Rosthern Junior College.

Manitoba

March 19, 20: Southern Manitoba Choral Society

concerts. Buhler Hall, Gretna (19); Berghaler Mennonite Church, Winkler (20); both concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.

March 20: Vespers at Canadian Mennonite University, led by Rudy Schellenberg, 7:30 p.m.

March 25: First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg choir presentation of Haydn's oratorio—The Seven Last Words of Christ—with orchestral accompaniment, 7 p.m.

April 14, 15, 16: Westgate Senior High musical—Oliver—at Tech Voc Collegiate, Winnipeg.

April 16: Graduation for CMU's Outtown programs.

April 23: Benefit concert for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder branch of MCC Manitoba at Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7:30 p.m. Featured artists: House of Doc.

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 2-4 spring concert, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

May 27-29: Birding Retreat at Camp Moose Lake, with Adolf Ens.

May 28, 29: Benefit concert for Mennonite Heritage Village Museum by Manitoba's Faith and Life Male Choir and Women's Chorus, 7:30 p.m. MCI, Gretna (28), Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg (29).

May 30- June 1: Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Moose Lake with speaker Jim Brown.

Ontario

March 12: Fundraiser breakfast for MCC meat canning (Guelph) at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs, 8 a.m. Speaker Dave Worth. Call 519-745-8458.

March 14,15: Grandparent and grandchild retreat at Hidden Acres Camp and Retreat Centre (choose one day or the other). For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail: info@hiddenacres.ca.

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. to 4 p.m. To register, 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. Guest speaker—Dr. Ronald J.R. Mathies, MCC executive director.

April 1, 2: Menno Singers and Guelph Chamber Choir perform at Benton St. Baptist Church, Kitchener (1) and River Run Centre, Guelph (2), 8 p.m.

April 1-3: Marriage Encounter weekend at Festival Inn, Stratford. For details, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667.

April 10: MCC meat canning fundraising concert, Community Mennonite, Drayton. Featuring Men of Note choir. Freewill offering. 7:30 p.m.

April 15: MCC meat canner fundraising dinner, Hamilton Mennonite Church, 5-7 p.m. Music by Hope Rising. Call Edgar Rogalski at 905-387-3952 or the church office at 905-528-3607.

April 16: Women of MCEC Enrichment Day at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock. Theme: God's calling. Speaker: Nancy Mathies. Call 519-356-2387 for more information.

April 17: Convocation at Conrad Grebel University College.

April 22-23: MCEC Spring

Conference at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

April 23: MEDA banquet at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, with speakers Robert and Lisa Shuh.

April 25-29: MCC meat canning in Guelph. To volunteer call Earl J. Martin 519-664-2528.

April 29-30: Engaged Workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. Call Delmar and Mary Bender at 519-656-2256.

May 15: Menno Singers perform Bach's Mass in B Minor at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Kitchener, 3 p.m.

May 28: Ontario Mennonite

relief sale, New Hamburg. **May 28-June 2:** Father Elias Chacour, Palestinian peace-maker, priest and educator, is speaking in Kitchener-Waterloo, the GTA and St. Catharines areas. More details to follow.

United States

July 4-9: Charlotte 2005, MC Canada and MC USA assembly and youth convention in Charlotte, N.C.

NEW!

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Steinbach, Man.

Squeals of joy: Students donate pigs for peace

Every winter, students at Southwood Elementary School in Steinbach, Man., collect cans for a food drive in their community.

But this year, they not only brought in food for hungry people in Manitoba, they also collected change to help feed people halfway around the globe. Led by two Southwood Elementary teachers, students raised almost \$8,000 for Pigs for Peace and Prosperity, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)

project that provides pigs, agricultural training and literacy education to women who farm in Jos, Nigeria.

“This project provided the students with a great chance to make a global connection,” says Martha Hiebert, a Grade 3 teacher. “[It] has taught them what they can do to be good global citizens.”

During the drive to collect money for the project—usually spare change the students brought to school—Grade 6

students, with the guidance of their teacher Shirley Reimer, kept a running tally of their progress and announced a fact about Nigeria each day over the public address system. The principal put a picture of a pink pig on the hallway bulletin board each time the students raised enough to buy another one.

Local hog farms and other businesses matched some of the children’s contributions, and the total was enough to help dozens of women raise pigs and start other small businesses.

In Nigeria, MCC country representative Joanna Bergen wrote to Southwood Elementary to thank the students and report on how generosity multiplies, as pigs do. She told them about a recent conversation she had with Ladi Sani, a widow with six children, who was a beneficiary of the Pigs for Peace and Prosperity project. Sadi gave a pair of piglets to three of her friends and brought together a larger group of women in her community for a two-day workshop on raising pigs.

The added income women can earn by raising pigs often has many benefits, Bergen noted.

“When all of you contributed to this pig project, you helped 17 women to eat good food and feed their families. You helped them buy school clothes and books, and pay school fees for their children,... build a warm shelter and buy medicines when they were sick,” she wrote. “And the wonderful thing is that even though you are living in Steinbach, Manitoba, you have participated in God’s community by supporting someone in faraway Nigeria, West Africa, which really makes our world so much smaller and so much more a part of God’s kingdom or neighborhood!”

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk and Tara Tharayil**

Thanks to students at Southwood Elementary School in Steinbach, Man., Ladi Sani is raising pigs as part of an MCC-supported project that helps Nigerian women earn a greater income.



MCC photo by Matthew Lester