

C A N A D I A N

# Mennonite

May 30, 2005  
Volume 9, Number 11

**More delegates  
required**

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**Recipe  
for relief**

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## Forgiveness or death

In the early 1990s, children from the Hanashat and Abdel-Halim families in the Egyptian village of Beit Allam, 400 kilometres south of Cairo, got into a fight. However, this fight ended differently than most: two members of the Hanashat family were killed by the Abdel-Halim family.

That was the start of a vendetta.

In April 2002, after more than a decade of bitter waiting, the Hanashat family retaliated by killing Hammam Abdel-Halim and injuring his son. Two Hanashat family members were arrested and charged. A peace agreement was signed by the families a month later. Police conducted 25 raids and seized about 40 illegal weapons in an attempt to prevent further bloodshed.

None of these actions worked. On Aug. 10, 2002, a group of Hanashat family members were travelling by bus and taxi to attend a court hearing for their two relatives. Stepping out of cornfields along the way, Abdel-Halim gunmen blocked the convoy and then opened fire with machine guns. Twenty-two people were killed in their vehicles, including a young boy in the group. Only three people escaped death by taking shelter under their seats.

"We will never forget our feud, no matter how many years go by," said one Hanashat family member, according to the Al-Ahram newspaper in Cairo. "We've waited 11 years before, and we will do the same now. No matter what sacrifices it takes, we are determined to kill as many of them [Abdel-Halims] as were murdered by them."

From a children's fight to two murders, to a death and an injury, to 22 murders, and the promise of more: The progression shows the importance of the Exodus law that limited revenge for those involved in a fight to an eye for an eye and

a tooth for a tooth.

After long and agonizingly difficult negotiations brokered by outside mediators, the vendetta ended earlier this month in a tense and emotion-wracked ceremony of forgiveness.

Seventeen Abdel-Halim family members walked through the village holding white funeral shrouds. One by one, they then entered a tent where the Hanashatis were waiting for them. "One was shaking, others were sweating, all looked in agony. They were bareheaded—a sign of humiliation in a region where men usually don headdresses," according to the Associated Press wire report.

"Each held a shroud in his outstretched hands and, flanked by security, approached waiting Hanashatis. As each penitent handed over the shroud, the Hanashati receiving it and repeated after a cleric: 'Great God is my witness that I have forgiven you and your family.'

"They're saying: 'Here I come with my shroud. You can kill me if you want or you can forgive me,'" said Khalaf, the mediator. "This is the most difficult situation that anyone can face. Even death is easier."

This story is a lesson to me of how agonizingly difficult forgiveness can be—and just how important it is. Peter asked Jesus how many times he would have to forgive, thinking he was being generous with his suggestion of seven times. In his answer of seventy times seven, Jesus reminded Peter of what being a follower of Christ meant. Our command is, "Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." Readiness to seek and grant forgiveness is part of the evidence that we have truly received Jesus' forgiveness for our own sin. Forgiveness opens the door to new life.

—Tim Miller Dyck

**'You can kill me if you want or you can forgive me.'**

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## Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org) on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the June 13 issue by June 9.

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**Cover: To celebrate its golden anniversary, Menno Singers joined the 25-year-old Guelph Chamber Choir for "Silver & Gold: A celebration of two anniversaries" at Benton Street Baptist Church in Kitchener last month, accompanied by orchestra. Ross W. Muir photo.**



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Winkler, Man.

## Loss of children leaves parents grieving

**G**od, what were you thinking?" That question has echoed in the minds of Ralph and Jocelyn Fehr thousands of times since Feb. 27, when they lost a daughter and son, and a future daughter-in-law, in a fatal car accident. Three young and beautiful lives, each filled with purpose and commitment; three talented and artistic young people who had so much to offer, and who shared so freely; three zealous believers who could scarcely contain their enthusiasm for life and for sharing the gospel—snuffed out so quickly. That question goes unanswered for Ralph and Jocelyn.

Brittany Fehr, 19, and brother Jordan, 21, along with his special friend, Jamie Klassen, 21, had just returned from a two-week mission trip to Mexico with their parents. They were driving from their parents' home in Winkler to the Winnipeg airport when their vehicle went out of control on the icy highway near Sanford, Man., and was struck by an oncoming pick-up truck.

The police at the accident scene were deeply touched by what they learned about these three young people, so much so that they offered a funeral escort, marched into Steinbach Mennonite Church ahead of the caskets and stood at attention, saluting the procession at the turns on the way to the cemetery.

Brittany was going to fly back to her "mission field"—the A&W restaurant in Canmore, Alta.—where she had worked for the past five months, and where she had become known as "the A&W evangelist in dreadlocks." Her vivacious and engaging personality readily drew people to her. In Canmore, she related to the down and out with compassion and unconditional love while she waited for God's leading, hoping to eventually follow her dream to serve in China.

Jordan is remembered by his parents and friends as a reserved and

reflective young man with a great deal of integrity and a heart for God. At the funeral, Ralph read from a letter he had written to his son, "I know that I was always prodding and trying to bribe you to go to school and try to decide on a vocation...concerned about your ability to provide for your future family. You always seemed to have one more God-filled/Christ-centred experience you needed to tend to. I am so happy I didn't push the issue. You did so much better with your last four years than anything I could have planned. You were amazing. You have always had a spiritual sensitivity and a faith that was rock solid."

Jordan and Jamie were very special friends who had already talked of marriage. They met while studying at Providence College in Otterburne, Man. Jamie was the lead singer and Jordan the acoustic guitarist for Once Lost, the school's praise and worship band that toured eastern Canada in May 2004. Jordan spent part of the year following high school graduation with Youth With a Mission, studying and serving in Turner Valley, Alta., Tunisia and France. He worked as an

educational assistant in Winkler before attending Providence College.

Jordan was working at Linden Manor, a seniors housing complex in Winnipeg, when he, Brittany and Jamie took a two-week break shortly before the accident to join Ralph and Jocelyn Fehr and a group of 25 people from Winkler to serve in Mexico. The group worked hard to lay the foundation for a gymnasium at an orphanage in central Mexico, providing the labour as well as the supplies for the project.

Along with the paintings, photos and sculptures that reflect the creativity of Brittany and Jordan, letters and notes cover the walls of the Fehr home, showing how their children touched the lives of so many. Letters and e-mails from as far away as Australia and England show that Jordan and Brittany's influence and witness have been felt far and wide.

Jocelyn has 10 varieties of flowers blooming in her garden this spring. "I have never had that many bloom so early in the season," she says. "Brittany loved gardening and flowers, and I think she has sent angels."

"They were flowering into such amazing people," says Ralph. "It is hard to understand God's plan."

Jordan and Brittany spent their summers since Grade 9 working at Winkler Bible Camp. This extensive involvement helped to shape their lives and faith, and gave opportunity for them to impact the lives of many children. The camp has initiated a commemorative project which involves the construction of a "lake" and a prayer garden—a fitting memorial to two young people who were faithful and tireless in their prayers for others. (Tax deductible donations or letters of pledged support can be sent to: Winkler Bible Camp Memorial Project Fund, Box 1659, Winkler, MB R6W 4B5. E-mail: [ralphf@eliaswoodwork.com](mailto:ralphf@eliaswoodwork.com) for more information.

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau



Photo submitted by Ralph and Jocelyn Fehr

**Jamie Klassen, Brittany Fehr and Jordan Fehr are pictured during this mission trip to Mexico earlier this year.**

# Charlotte 2005 discernment issues important to everyone

**W**hat does the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly have to do with the real issues of the church and of living the Christian life? Do delegates go off to an “ivory tower” to talk about abstract and irrelevant issues? Why should “ordinary” church members care what is discussed in Charlotte, N.C., on July 4-9?

In this year’s Assembly, delegates from the five area conferences of MC Canada and their 232 constituent congregations are invited to discuss five major issues. Every one of these is an issue that is important to congregational life and to the faith of individual Christians in our faith family.

### Purpose and priorities of MC Canada

Most of us recognize the importance of understanding the purpose of our life and determining our priorities. The immense popularity of book titles like *The Purpose-Driven Life* and *The Purpose-Driven Church* demonstrates that individual Christians and congregations know that they need to be deliberate about discovering God’s intention and aligning themselves with it. One of the conversations at Assembly 2005 could be called “The purpose-driven denomination.”

Last year, Assembly delegates discussed what should be included in a new purpose statement for MC Canada. In the year since then, a statement has been designed that captures that discussion. Delegates will be invited to discuss and ultimately accept this as our statement of identity and purpose.

Like our Healing and Hope vision statement—*God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world*—the purpose statement is intended to inspire individuals,

congregations and area conferences to an understanding of who we are as Christians and as the church, and what God wants us to be and to do.

Identity and purpose statements are necessarily general in their scope. But what specific actions should we be taking? How should our resources be used? How do we balance the many needs that confront us in the church and in the world?

Whether in congregations, area conferences or the national church, the priorities of Christian bodies must include both forming the faith of those already in the church and witnessing to those outside the church. The national church has some unique responsibilities in addressing national issues and representing all its members in relating to other Mennonite churches, other Christian churches and other faiths.

At Charlotte, delegates will weigh the priorities that the board has identified and will decide together what parts of God’s mission we will engage in as a national church body.

### Issues in funding church ministries

We need to identify priorities because we don’t have enough people, time or money to do everything. Together, we approve budgets and make commitments to the full capacity that we can imagine. And then new opportunities arise: there are other relationships, new mission opportunities, new calls for assistance.

The challenge of affirming all of the good that people do while struggling to meet the financial commitments made at annual general meetings is an issue faced by congregations, area conferences and the national church. It’s even a prob-

Continued on page 6

**The priorities of Christian bodies must include both forming the faith of those already in the church and witnessing to those outside the church.**

### Proposed ‘Identity and Purpose Statement’

God calls, equips, and sends the church to engage the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are a community of disciples of Jesus, a part of the Body of Christ, covenanted together as congregations, area conferences, and a national church.

Gratefully responding to God’s initiatives, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit our resources and efforts to calling, equipping, and sending the church to engage the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Charlotte** *From page 5*

lem for individuals and families, whose careful financial plans are confronted with needs ranging from tsunami relief to homeless people on our own streets. Especially challenging for Christians are all the requests from mission organizations and from people whom we know who have a vision for doing something for God.

Celebrating generosity both within and outside of formal church bodies is important, but it is challenging in the midst of shrinking commitments to long term, church-based ministry.

For example, suppose that the delegates would make a \$120,000 commitment to fund an AIDS ministry in Africa. (This is hypothetical; it isn't in the current budget.) Large commitments like this over a period of years help administrators plan stable ministry into the future. Meanwhile, a local congregation gets inspired by, and seeks support from the denomination, to enable a member's calling to a new ministry that is not currently part of the ministry plan. New initiatives like this frequently divert funds that had otherwise been given to long-term ministry commitments. This challenges our understanding of covenant and financial support that we have made with each other.

Our mission partners prefer stable and long-term partnerships and support, whereas our donors often prefer one-time or short-term commitments. What is most helpful?

The discussion at Charlotte will

### **Mandate of the proposed Faith and Life Committee**

The Faith and Life Committee will:

- Attend to the interface between the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and our identity as MC Canada;
- Give leadership to MC Canada in discerning God's will on issues of theology, ethics, polity and practice; and,
- Work cooperatively with educational institutions and other agencies to facilitate, create and distribute resources for study and guidance to the church.

build understanding among congregations and their members. It will also invite congregational counsel on solutions that meet the needs of ministries, the hopes of ministry partners in Canada and abroad, and the desires of congregational donors.

### **Proposal for a Faith and Life Committee**

The church is not only defined by what it does—its missions and congregational life—but also by what it is. In a world of limitless information, the assumed value of pluralism, and competing belief systems, what should Christians believe? In a world of relativism, diverse social pressures and challenged norms, how should Christians behave? These are questions that every Christian, every congregation, every pastor struggles with—or should—constantly.

What should MC Canada do to help us corporately and separately find answers to such questions? Already the national church body does a lot:

- It provided the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective that is a defining document in our identity and a talking point for our reading of the Bible;
- It supports schools whose faculty continually refine our understandings and teach them to young and old alike;
- It concentrates on training pastors and providing them with tools for interpreting the faith;
- It works with Mennonite Publishing Network and other partners to provide for children, youth and adult curricula and books that support the values and convictions that we believe God has revealed to us;
- It makes 7,000 selected resources available through the lending library of the Resource Centre;
- MC Canada staff serve in area conferences, congregations and clusters of congregations, to help inspire and guide leaders and members on many aspects of faithful thought and living;
- It provides materials for *Canadian Mennonite* and *Der Bote* that address these issues;
- It maintains the archival records of the discernment of previous generations; and,
- It supports other organizations, like

### **Expectations of members**

MC Canada bylaws state that area conferences and constituent congregations are expected to:

- Give faithful attention to the Scriptures;
- Accept the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective;
- Uphold statements of Christian faith and life made by MC Canada from time to time;
- Respond to the invitation to become engaged in mission and service;
- Participate in the church's life and mission through generous contributions of time and personal resources, all in commitment to Jesus Christ in response to the grace of God and in loving service to the church in which the Holy Spirit lives and works; and,
- Assume all duties as defined in these bylaws.

Mennonite Foundation of Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, Canadian Women in Mission, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure and more.

But we believe we can do better to coordinate the resources already available and focus those resources on the issues that believers and congregations face. We believe the church must address many new and evolving issues. Among these are the ethical dimensions of biotechnology, inter-faith relations, same-sex marriage, peace, globalization, leadership and power, stewardship and the implications of a missional understanding of the church.

The delegates at Assembly '04 recommended that a standing committee be formed to lead the church in dealing with issues of faith, ethics, polity and practice. This year, the delegates will consider a proposal for a Faith and Life Committee with a mandate to give leadership to this work.

### **Definitions, expectations of MC Canada membership**

Central to the issues that the Faith and Life Committee will address is the matter of belonging to each other in

the church. Congregations struggle with this. So do area conferences. What defines who is eligible for membership and who is not? What can we rightly expect of one another? What are the privileges and the responsibilities of membership? On what matters must we expect agreement, and on what can we allow, or even embrace, diversity?

Most congregations have definitions of how one becomes a member and what is expected of members. But that doesn't end the questions; in fact, it invites them. What does a congregation do when someone wants to become a member without conforming to the expectations? Or when a member strays from the norms, challenges the assumptions or demands special concessions?

MC Canada faces the same questions. Is the answer to modify the expectations, to allow exceptions, or to stand up more strongly for what has been agreed in the past?

A particular question we need to face together is whether we will define the membership of area conferences in MC Canada in such a way that allows congregations to be part of the area conference but not of the national church—or vice versa. The analogy to congregational life would be finding a way for individuals to be members of a congregation but not of the area conference to which the congregation belongs. MC British Columbia specifically has asked us to consider this question. Some congregations in other area conferences also want to explore this possibility.

The discussion guide for this conversation at the Assembly concludes this way:

*"Membership in the body of Christ is nothing less than God's gift of salvation. Mennonite Church Canada is a concrete expression of Christ's body that strives to be 'missional, contextually prophetic, diverse, networking and partnering, globally-connected, pray-*



MC Canada photo by Don Dych

### **Delegates engaged with the work of the Mennonite Church Canada at roundtable discussions during Assembly 2004 in Winkler, Man.**

*ing, resourcing and discipling, and enabling.'*

*"It represents a spiritual heritage of faithful discipleship and a vision for a future aligned with God's activity in the world. It is a national body in which we grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, and through which God's healing and hope flow to the world.*

*"How can the conferences, congregations and individual believers who are part of MC Canada express and experience the fullness of being in communion with each other? How can we derive more joy from the privilege of belonging to each other under Christ our head?"*

### **Relationship between MC Canada and MC USA**

Because of the unique opportunity this year to meet jointly with MC USA, the Canadian and American delegates will have one discernment session together. Part of the discussion will be the relationship between our two church bodies.

All the history of our relationships through bi-national church structures and all the secular issues of relationships between our two countries come to bear on this discussion, along with a vision of a church that transcends politics and nationalism. And we hear conflicting desires from people about whether to continue to meet together periodically. Where will we go from here?

In conclusion, the delegates at Assembly will be discussing matters that affect every part of the church in Canada. Pray for wisdom and openness to hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church. Read the discussion materials that have been sent to your congregation, or read it on the Internet at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/charlotte](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/charlotte). Share your views on these matters with your delegates. And look forward expectantly to the reports on how God leads as the assembled delegates discern what God is doing and what God wants us to be doing in response.

—**Dan Nighswander**

*The author is the general secretary of MC Canada.*

**The analogy to congregational life would be finding a way for individuals to be members of a congregation but not of the area conference to which the congregation belongs.**

## Celebrating a half-century of song

*Menno Singers, the popular Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont.-based choir, turned 50 this year. To celebrate, the choir performed a variety of special concerts, including the recent "Silver & Gold" performance with the 25-year-old Guelph Chamber Choir; and published a retrospective of its half-century of music-making. The following are excerpts from Menno Singers: Celebrating 50 Years of Song by Betti Burkholder Erb.*

If an occasion crystallized as the beginning of Menno Singers, it was at 3 p.m. on December 18, 1955, in a program of some Christmas music offered by 25 singers at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo. At that time, Abner Martin, the choir's young director, inspiration and founder, was a 20-year-old student at the University of Toronto.

Initially Menno Singers provided a musical outlet for early graduates of Rockway Mennonite School. Abner gathered an informal vocal ensemble of several dozen people for the pleasure of singing that historic Mennonite specialty: sacred music in unaccompanied four-part harmony. The group offered area Mennonites, who for the most part at that time did not have church choirs, a chance to study good choral music.

The expressed purpose of the choir—and what became its tag line, repeated in many programs over fifty years—was to “share the fellowship and learnings inherent in studying a variety of sacred choral music not usually covered in the repertoire of church choirs.”

April 28, 1962, stands as a landmark of Menno Singers' early years: the choir's first public concert appearance with a professional orchestra, before an audience of 600 people in the auditorium of Waterloo Collegiate.... The work was ambitious: J.S. Bach's sublime *Mass in B minor*.... It was a daring work for a relatively insular Mennonite audience. Abner, however, liked to perform music that pushed boundaries, and doing something well, he said, had a way of muffling criticism.

Abner conducted Menno Singers from 1955 to 1969.... In the four years that Abner was away, Jan Overduin, who would return a decade later to conduct the choir, took over.

On May 27 and 28, 1972, more than 100 people...took part in Menno Singers' production of a “church opera,” *Martyr's Mirror*, at Rockway Mennonite School.... The climax...was the interrogation, torture and incineration at the stake of four characters, while the choir, a sort of Greek chorus, sang “Fire, Fire.”

“We endured many performance challenges,” recalled Jan Overduin. “The performance at Waterloo-Oxford took place during a heat wave.... The trombonist complained about getting insects in his mouth and instrument and I, on the harmonium, recall playing several notes that vanished as I played. They turned out to be flies landing and taking off on the score.”

Kitchener's much-awaited Centre in the Square, lauded widely as an acoustically perfect concert hall, opened on September 27, 1980.... For the occasion, Raffi Armenian, music director of the K-W Symphony, assembled a large choir that included Menno Singers, to perform the choral portion of Mahler's *Symphony #2*.

Menno Singers' 25th anniversary concert was performed at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on May 9, 1980. The repertoire included several centuries of choral masterpieces that captured the essence of the choir's contributions over the years.

Bill Janzen, the third director since Menno Singers' founding in 1955, was appointed in April 1984, and he began his three-year term on June 1 of that year.

A peak event of the 1980s was two performances of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* at the Centre in the Square on July 5 and 6, 1986.... The *War Requiem*, a powerful statement on the folly of war, was chosen because of its aptness given Mennonites' historic position on peace.

The most popular concert of 1995 was “Mood Indigo”: gospel, blues, spirituals, jazz and other lighthearted pieces, with Bill Janzen on clarinet, on May 13, 1995, at Breslau Mennonite.



Robert Shuh took over Menno Singers...after Bill Janzen departed for good. The most memorable concert of Shuh's conductorship was easily “A Gospel Music Celebration” on March 1 and 2, 1996, to a sing-along audience of 350 people at Breslau Mennonite Church.

A popular Mother's Day spring fundraiser on May 10, 1998, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, included a dessert reception and lecture by guest conductor Howard Dyck.... During that concert, Peter Nikiforuk, Menno Singers' first non-Mennonite director...was introduced as permanent conductor....

In conclusion: how does one take the measure of 50 years? Over that time, Menno Singers' mainly sacred format has garnered repeated acclaim....

Music and song are our liturgy, singling our timeless language of faith. We are grateful for the power of music in our lives. In a world preoccupied with technological hubris and consumer values, we sing because we cannot remain silent.



## MCC drafts advocacy letter on Darfur

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) is inviting constituents to write a letter to their elected leaders to advocate for peaceful international involvement in bringing about peace and security in the Darfur region of Sudan.

A two-year-old conflict in Darfur has caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians and displaced more than two million people from their homes and farms. The letter calls for renewed diplomatic and economic pressure on warring groups in Darfur to end the violent conflict.

Please clip, sign and send to your federal Member of Parliament.

### Letters

#### To Charlotte on a shoestring

To go or not to go (to Charlotte), that is the question. I appreciated both Peter Peters' thoughts on the "Charlotte Dilemma" (*Canadian Mennonite*, April 4, page 8) and Dan Nighswander's reply (April 18, page 11).

But appreciation aside, and at the risk of seeming even remotely in favour of visiting Charlotte, I wondered about a still more excellent way. I looked into my favourite (as yet unpublished) book—*Assemblies On A Shoestring*—to see if I could trim both of their numbers. As expected, *Assemblies on a Shoestring* came up big with significant savings suggestions:

"In the event that a Canadian Assembly be held in Charlotte, N.C., in the middle of summer (be encouraged, it can't be worse than Winnipeg in the middle of January) there are a variety of ways to save money while travelling in the Great Green South. If you are travelling from Winnipeg, you'll be able to pick up a Greyhound bus ticket for \$200 return plus the ride to the

#### Dear Member of Parliament:

I write out of concern for those who suffer from the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan. The ethnic and political conflict in Darfur has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians in the last two years. Those who survive, especially the more than two million civilians who have been attacked and made homeless, cry out for justice.

I call on the Government of Canada to respond to this humanitarian crisis:

- To use all possible diplomatic and economic means to encourage all warring parties to stop the violence and bring security to civilians in Darfur.
- To support the African Union in its attempts to solve the conflict.
- To strengthen an arms embargo against all involved, and to provide humanitarian aid to those who have been driven into crowded camps by the violence.
- To ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses in Darfur be prosecuted for their crimes under international law.
- To continue to support and encourage the peace processes in place for the conflict in southern Sudan.

I pray that justice and peace will soon come to those who suffer in Darfur.

Signed

Address

Prov./Postal Code

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

depot. Unless you want to participate in a pre-conference fast, you'll need to enjoy some bus depot food on the way. Allow for \$15 a day. You can keep this number down my packing a lunch for your first day from home and not eating on the last day of your return trip because supper will be waiting for you when you arrive."

"Upon landing in Charlotte, you can catch a cab to your hotel with a bunch of friends—\$10 for two-way fare. If you can't find any friends at the bus depot...think missional and make some."

"If you share a hotel room with someone who doesn't snore, you'll be able to get some rest for \$200 or less for the week."

"There are a number of dining options available on the streets surrounding the Convention Center

and major hotels. While burgers, pizzas and subs may not rival gourmet Assembly dining, our guess is that it will allow you to eat for \$30 a day."

"As for the registration, \$80 plus service opportunity, local planning committees usually do all they can to make Assembly as affordable as possible (see "the impact of July temperatures in Charlotte on Convention Center availability/prices" in Appendix A) and they should be commended for their efforts."

So, according to *Assemblies on a Shoestring*, I can do Charlotte for approximately \$640 (plus souvenirs for the kids). Now that's a shocker. So, see you there. And, if you decide to go to Charlotte on a shoestring—I'm not—enjoy the ride.

—Mel Letkeman, Steinbach, Man.

## What ever happened to 'Making Peace With the Land'?

On July 6, 2002, the Mennonite Church Canada "Bridge" reported that the following resolution had been passed at the conference sessions:

"Whereas food and food systems involve all of us, not only producers, and, whereas food is an important question not only for us, but for all people, and, whereas 'Making Peace With the Land' was strongly affirmed as a good beginning, and, whereas there is need for faith-based initiative and leadership in these areas,

"Be it resolved that:

"The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada find more ways to encourage and facilitate reflection and action, and the creation of new models, about the production and distribution of food, with a view to strengthening community and well-being."

The purpose of this letter is to find what has come of this "good beginning." I am not aware of action coming from this resolution. If there has been something happening, it would be good

to know about it. I would also appreciate hearing from the General Board of MC Canada. What further action has been taken? There have been two conference gatherings since that resolution was passed. Both had no mention at all of this issue.

—Harold Penner, St. Malo, Man.

## Bias against CwM suggested in use of term 'blacklist'

Thank you for the May 2 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. As usual, it is informative and provocative.

I suggest, however, that the item about MC Manitoba camp policy ("New MC Manitoba camp policy more inclusive," page 25) should have been more carefully edited. Specifically, I am concerned that when this item refers to the relationship between Camps With Meaning and the Winnipeg School Division, the word "blacklist" occurs twice and "blacklisted" once.

However, when this school division's relationship with Red Rock Bible Camp is in view, "blacklisted" becomes

"deselected." If I recall correctly, the word used by MC Manitoba personnel is "delisted."

The question that came to my mind was: Does the use of the word "blacklist" imply a bias against Camps With Meaning? Does the use of the word "deselected" imply more of a pro bias towards Red Rock Bible Camp?

Should Mr. Muir's writing appear in *Canadian Mennonite* in the future, I hope that it will be more carefully edited for this sort of thing.

—Jim Suderman, Winnipeg

## Corrections

The photographs of Van Hoa Chau and Nhien Pham were reversed in the May 2 "Vietnamese-Canadian leaders respond to ruling" article on page 20. In the same issue, Dan Dyck's byline was inadvertently left off the "Discernment topics for Charlotte 2005" section of the page 19 "Assembly fever rises at General Board meetings" article. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

## Crocheting doilies

When they married, she told him about the box on the top shelf of the closet. "I know you'll be curious," she said. "But you may not open that box until I die." He agreed to her arrangement.

The decades passed, and he did wonder about the box. But he held true to his promise. But then she grew very ill and he decided the time was right. He retrieved the box from the back of the shelf and slowly opened it, wondering what he would find. Inside were two crocheted doilies and \$85,000!

He carried the box to her bedside. She opened her eyes and said, "So now you see what's inside."

"Yes, but I don't understand," he replied. "What does it mean?"

"Well, I decided to crochet a doily each time I got mad at you," she began.

"We didn't make out too badly," he interrupted. "There are only two doilies here."

"Yes," she agreed, and added, "The money came from the ones I sold."

Upon hearing this story, I was led to reflect on my own grandmother's doilies, crocheted from multi-coloured

cotton thread, her large and clever fingers swiftly turning out pineapples, roses and other intricate designs, some of which held words like, "God bless our home." She also sold her doilies "for pin money." I wonder if any of her creations emerged from anger towards Pap.

Conflict in their marriage was one-sided and continuous. Gram always had a complaint about Pap. He bought the wrong



colour of flowers for Mother's Day. The easy chair he brought home for her at Christmas "didn't sit right." While she listed his errors, Pap sat on a chair beside her, smiling all the while, seeming not to take offence. I never heard him reply in kind.

Marriage is a curious arrangement. Two individuals commit themselves to being lifelong companions. The journey can be

long and tough. Conflict is inevitable. At least I can't see any way of living through the seasons of a marriage, nurturing any young life that comes as a result of the union, weathering life's storms, and making myriad decisions without disagreement, disappointment and challenging differences of opinion.

We make choices about how to deal with the conflict. We can complain as steadily as rain dripping on a tin roof. We can smile it away like sun drying up the rain. We can speak honestly and carefully, tending the garden of our relationships. We can crochet doilies!

My grandparents died within nine days of each other in 1990. One night as I drifted off to sleep, I had a vision of the two of them together. Gram wore a tutu and was trying to strike a one-legged ballerina pose (a funny picture given her chunky stature). Pap was kindly steadying her, as supportive in death as he had been in life. In this memory, I don't remember Gram complaining.

*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.*

Saskatoon

## Bus tours showcase mission projects

**O**n the morning of April 16, more than 80 people participated in Saskatchewan's touring missionfest. One group of 57 travelled to Mennonite churches north of Saskatoon to learn about their mission projects; leading this group was Clair Ewert Fisher, chair of the Ministries Commission of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. At the same time, another tour left First Mennonite Church with two vans to visit Hague Mennonite and Tiefengrund Mennonite.

The first excursion travelled to the three rural churches near Mayfair, Rabbit Lake and Glenbush that make up the Hoffnungsfelder congregation. The 75th anniversary video of the congregation was shown on the bus.

The first stop was at Mayfair, where the simple rectangular structure, erected in 1933, has outstanding acoustics. The membership at Mayfair is only three, but as the only church in the area, they are very involved in the community.

Pastor Don Unger accompanied the bus as it travelled to Rabbit Lake, where the church meets in a remodelled one-room school. Lunch was served at the Rabbit Lake Hall, where Hoffnungsfelder members described their mission activities. Many individuals work as volunteers in local outreach, charities and in the traditional quilt-making.

At Glenbush, Sunday church attendance is more than 70 and the building was constructed in 1975. This church cooperates with the local Mennonite Brethren congregation, participating in Vacation Bible School (VBS), community Bible studies, choir and prayer services.

The tour group then journeyed to North Battleford to visit the urban Hope Mennonite Fellowship. Here, the mission focus is on Person-to-Person prison ministry, pastoral services at Saskatchewan Mental Hospital and the thrift store, which is run together



Photo by Victor Wiebe

**Missionfest tour members visited Mayfair Mennonite Church in northern Saskatchewan last month.**

with the Hoffnungsfelder congregation.

The tour returned to Mount Royal Mennonite for a late supper, where the congregation reported on its partnership with a congregation in the Republic of Congo, sponsorship of a refugee family, and Kari Friesen's participation in the China Educational Exchange. Community outreach involves Al-Anon, the Good Food Box and Youth For Christ.

At the Hague Mennonite Church, the second tour group of 27 learned about The Zone, a drop-in centre for teens operated with the Youth for Christ organization. "It's a chance to build relationships between adults and youth," explained Dave Feick, Hague Mennonite's pastor.

Returning to the city, this tour heard about First Mennonite's work with community outreach and a refugee committee. The congregation partners with a local Baptist church, worshipping together with them at Lent and working together in summer on a VBS ministry.

Since some community people don't

accept flyers, First Mennonite has erected a large sign announcing Sunday morning speakers and other church events. Bit by bit, people in the area have responded; a few are coming regularly, including a single mom, a young couple and a Congolese refugee with two children.

The tours were well received and feedback to the Ministries Commission, which planned the tour, was positive.

"There seems to be a real desire out there to be connected with each other," said Fisher, noting that it is difficult to build friendships at annual conference sessions where discussion revolves around issues of conflict.

Visiting the congregations was as important as hearing about their activities. Most impressive were the personal stories describing one-to-one or small group projects. The idea that one person's voice and action can help another person was repeated many times. The message of Christ was demonstrated in these vibrant evangelical congregations.

—Victor Wiebe and Karin Fehderau

Edmonton

## Alberta women live to make a difference

The laughter of reunion, the inquiring chatter of new acquaintances, the reverent mix of soprano and alto, and gentle tears of remembrance took turns filling Edmonton's First Mennonite Church with warmth and inspiration last month. The occasion was the 58th annual gathering of the Alberta Women in Mission (AWM).

While annual business sessions were an important feature of the retreat, much of the time was spent on spiritual enrichment and inspiration.

Featured speaker Tobia Veith focused her talks on selected passages from I Thessalonians as they relate to her experience as a mission worker in Macau, China, a city returned to the Chinese by Great Britain in 1999. It is one of the world's most heavily populated areas, with over 500,000 people crowded into six square miles. Veith, her husband George, and their three children were assigned to Macau in 1995 to establish a church plant to bring God's healing and hope into the area.

In her exploration of the theme, "Living to make a difference," Veith referred to Paul's imagery of the gentleness of a nursing mother cherishing her children (I Thessalonians 2:7) as the model her family tries to live out among the people. She explained that nursing a child involves much more than the provision of nourishment; it also involves a loving embrace and the development of a bonded relationship. This is how she understands their work among the people of Macau.

The silent auction and freewill offerings added up to just over \$2,000, to be divided between two projects. Half will go towards the replacement of the Camp Valaqua lodge roof, while the other half will be going towards support of Canadian Mennonite University student Odette Mukole. Mukole, a mother of three from the Congo, had received money from the AWM tuition fund for her first year of study and the AWM voted to continue to support her education with this

offering.

A moving memorial tribute, presented by Lydia Derksen, remembered 11 Alberta women who had passed away since the last annual meeting. Blue and yellow roses were placed in a vase as names and brief obituaries were read aloud. The list included one from Bergthal Mennonite—Mary Schmidt; four from Calgary First Mennonite—Agatha Banmann, Maria Buhr, Mary Thiessen and Katie Neufeld; three from Edmonton First Mennonite—Mary Epp, Marianne Paetkau and Marian Tobert; and three from Coaldale—Mary Friesen, Elizabeth Klassen and Anne Neufeld.

Spring gardening and growth was a fun theme for the weekend's entertainment and fundraising efforts. The First Mennonite Church's "Yellow Pages" children's choir energetically performed the musical *How Does Your Garden Grow* on Friday evening, while baskets of gardening tools and inspirational paraphernalia were sold, along with other donated items, at Saturday's silent auction.

Outgoing executive members included president Beth Moyer, vice-president Rita Dahl, and Camp Valaqua representative Bev Janzen. Evelyn Buhr, Anne Martens and Lynne Empey were elected as incoming president, vice-president and camp board representative, respectively. Secretary-treasurer Ellie Janz will continue in her role for another term.

—Donita Wiebe-Neufeld



Photo submitted by Joyce Unger

**Shmaunt Kaun Anne and The Rubber Boot Band—Judy Siemens, Jackie Epp, Joyce Unger, Pat Martens and Lisa Peters—performed a "spoof" on the progress of the customs and traditions of Mennonite women at a Warman Mennonite Church retreat last month at the Shekinah Retreat Centre. More than 30 church members attended the retreat in preparation for replacing Pastor Henry Block, who is retiring after 11 years with the congregation. Eric Olfert, Saskatchewan facilitator for missional formation and partnership, interacted with the group, helping it to determine the church's particular strengths and weaknesses during this transitional period.**

Rosthern, Sask.

## College history book nearing completion

In order to give people a sense of the broad, sweeping history behind the first hundred years of Rosthern Junior College, the school is preparing a large coffee-table style book to enhance their centennial celebrations.

"It should be finished in a week," says George Epp.

Epp, a long-time supporter of the college, is heading up the completion of the history book. It's being organized by decades and Epp has been asking alumni to send in stories and pictures of their experience at the school.

Abbotsford, B.C.

## Wholeness encouraged

**O**n a balmy May 1 afternoon, 220 ladies gathered at the Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, where Veronica Thiessen, as president, welcomed everyone to the 66th meeting of the British Columbia Women in Mission.

A group of young ladies sang some German songs that were much appreciated. All the women joined in heartily to sing the theme song of the B.C. Women in Mission, “*Die Sach ist dein Herr Jesu Christ*” (“The Work is Thine, O Christ our Lord”).

During the business part of the meeting, it was decided to support two projects: Camp Squeah and the Mennonite Family Centre in Zaporozhye, Ukraine; the centre is supported by the Mennonite Benevolent Society of Winnipeg, which publishes *Beacon of Hope*. The offering raised more than \$4,200.

Keynote speaker Beverly Bradford asked the women to stand, lift their hands, turn around, touch each other’s shoulders, and relax. This was all part of her message, “Wholeness of spirit, soul and body,” taken from I Thessalonians 5:23. Wholeness has nothing to do with age, she said. It is a progression of wholeness of body, mind and spirit. Christians don’t have to be perfect

since Jesus is sanctifying each one.

She then shared her own brokenness. At 33, after a failed marriage, health problems and depression, Jesus came into her life. She realized that she was a sinner needing salvation and she accepted it. The victim of emotional and mental abuse, who lost her father in a bad car accident, she got some Christian counselling and began to recover. She felt the inner voice, the power of Christ. Prayer, silence and solitude became part of her life.

Bradford is now chaplain of the Menno Hospital in Abbotsford. She concluded her message by saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; go out and be whole. Rejoice in your brokenness and rejoice in your wholeness.”

To conclude the day, the 220 guests enjoyed a delicious supper prepared by the women of Eben-Ezer Church.

—**Helen Wiens Franz**

Drake, Sask.

## Christian women in the workplace

**T**he theme of the Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day—hosted by North Star Mennonite Church in Drake on April 2—was “A Christian woman in her workplace.” The theme was based on Philippians 2:5.

of history. It will cost about \$50, but is not being used as a fundraiser for the junior college. About 800 copies of the work will be published through a printer in Saskatoon and distributed through Rosthern Junior College.

Alumni and visitors who want a copy should reserve one ahead of time, either through the school by calling 306-232-4222 or by e-mailing [g.epp@sasktel.net](mailto:g.epp@sasktel.net).

The book will also be available for purchase during the centennial celebrations at the end of July (29-31).

—**Karin Fehderau**

Friede Rempel Osler introduced the theme of Christian women in the workplace, challenging the audience members to take on the attitude of Jesus Christ in whatever circumstances they found themselves. She invited her listeners to “walk the talk.”

In her devotional, Yolanda Quiring spoke on “Preparing our spirit,” presenting Lydia as a biblical example of a Christian woman using her faith and gifts in her profession and community. “All became her workplace,” Quiring said. She then gave her own testimony, depicting visually her 40 years of faith.

Donna Schultz, a farm wife and mother who schools her children at home, and Edie Wilkinson, a material designer, spoke of taking their faith into the workplace. “Listening is essential,” said Wilkinson, who finds many opportunities to witness to her clientele.

Betty Brown gave a presentation of how Mennonite Economic Development Associates connects faith and work around the world.

A period of suspense preceded the scheduled morning business session after the chartered bus bringing the Saskatoon delegation failed to arrive. Quick thinking and some decisive action had the 50 delegates in Drake an hour later—in private cars.

Under the capable leadership of vice-president Irene Bartel and outgoing president Esther Patkau, the agenda fell into place quickly. A slate of candidates for existing vacancies was presented by the Nominating Committee and wholeheartedly endorsed by the delegates: president Audrey Mierau Bechtel, treasurer Erica Unrau and Program Committee member Miriam Jantzen. Hilda Voth, Ruth Heppner and Edna Zacharias volunteered to continue in their roles as secretary and Program Committee members for another term.

An afternoon memorial service remembered more than 30 women who had passed away in the last year. The Wildwood Friendship Circle conducted the service.

Although the day began in a distracting way for some, it ended with everyone leaving enriched by “the Spirit at work.”

—**Helen Kornelsen**

The most difficult decades to find information for, he says, have been from the first and last 20 years of the school’s existence. There are, of course, only a few people left from the early years. One woman who submitted an article for the book is almost as old as the school itself. But gathering information from alumni who attended in the 1980s is nearly as challenging, notes Epp.

“It’s difficult to get [those] people to write their memoirs,” he says. “They are not that interested in history.”

The book will hold a mind-numbing 300 pages



Altona, Man.

## Women discuss shelter and security as power flickers

A solitary candle burned throughout the day in the sanctuary of the Altona Bergthaler Church during the annual Manitoba Women in Mission Enrichment Day on May 7. From across Manitoba, 135 women drove through heavy rain to attend. Occasional power outages reinforced the theme of the day, "Secure in God's house: Shelter in the Bible."

Laura Unger, who spent the past 13 years with her husband and family in Nairobi, Kenya, reflected on security and shelter. She noted that since 9/11 security issues have received increased attention, yet many women around the world today feel insecure.

"What a gift to always have a place to call home," Unger said. The Mother Theresa home in Nairobi, where she volunteered, "was an oasis of relative security in an area of squalor for about

200 abandoned children and women." The Unger family also opened their Nairobi home to an Ethiopian woman so she could further her education before returning to Ethiopia.

The solitary candle, which shone brightly throughout the day, was lit in memory of 32 women who died during the past year and who faithfully witnessed and served Women in Mission over the past 63 years.

The candle burned as Marilyn Houser Hamm and Nancy Ratzlaff led the women in worship and music. It burned as the women learned about shelter provided through Genesis House, a place for abused women and their children,

**Security issues have received increased attention, yet many women around the world today feel insecure.**

about the support of the Pregnancy Crisis Centre and about the refuge provided to those with mental illness through Eden Health Care Services. The candle burned as an offering of \$2,589 was collected to fund an itinerant international worker with MC Canada.

The women voted to support the churches of Cuba with their 2006 funds. Through MC Canada Witness, their monies will enable pastors to attend training sessions and help provide for some of their physical needs. Betty-Anne Hildebrand, president, reported that although membership is down, giving has not decreased from the 24 member groups and five honorary member groups.

The number of vacancies on the slate of nominees was a concern. Marlene Mueller, representing Women for Mennonite Central Committee, said in her report, "We are also struggling with our existence. We are in the process, together with the MCC staff, to see if we should focus on another area or come to the realization that this organization has run its course."

Manitoba Women in Mission faces similar discussions in the years ahead.

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Tavistock, Ont.

## Busyness, affluence a threat to reliance on God

Approximately 250 women gathered at East Zorra Mennonite Church near Tavistock, Ont., on April 16 for the annual Enrichment Day for the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Organizers were encouraged to see an increase in attendance over the past two years.

The Lamplight, a trio of sisters, began each session with lively, uplifting, contemporary music, some with audience participation. Coordinator Shirley Redekop led the group in a brief business session. Morning coffee and a catered noon meal provided opportunities for fellowship, which is an integral part of the program.

Nancy Mathies of Sauble Beach, Ont., was the featured speaker on the theme, "Hearing God's call in the midst of the ordinary," based on Ephesians 4:1-16. A respiratory therapist, Mathies also has a degree in psychology and is currently enrolled in

theological studies. Working in various settings gave Mathies unique opportunities for ministry to people who were often critically ill. Stories of her experiences, which she used as illustrations, were both inspiring and encouraging.

Mathies assured everyone that God's call comes to all regardless of how "ordinary" people think themselves or their lives to be. Like the small scrap of fabric, insignificant by itself, becomes part of a grand masterpiece when stitched into a quilt, so too everyone's gifts have a place in God's great design.

The "busyness" and affluence of today's world take away from a Christian's trust and reliance on God. It is easy to get so caught up serving and doing for others that some neglect to nurture their own relationship with God. In anticipation of God's call, Christians need to study the scriptures, mature in their faith and explore how their particular skills and passions, even those not usually considered to be spiritual, could be used in ministry.

Women of MCEC will meet again for their fall workshop on Oct. 22 at Vineland United Mennonite Church.

—**Alma Guenther**

## HOLIDAY TRAVEL

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Executive Tour to

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Registration/deposit deadline:  
**August 1, 2005**

Charlotte, N.C.

## 30 more delegates required to meet quorum in Charlotte

**R**egistration numbers for the joint MC Canada/MC USA Assembly in Charlotte, N.C., suggest that congregations may have transferred loyalties and taken on ownership of MC Canada faster than leaders anticipated.

The decision to meet jointly with Mennonite Church USA was a “part of the deal” made in St. Louis at the last joint assembly of Canadian and American delegates at the joint General Conference, Mennonite Church, and Conference of Mennonites in Canada, in 1999. At that meeting, delegates agreed to separate into two national church bodies that would meet together every four years. The original plan was to host Mennonite Church USA in Canada in 2003.

Since the 1999 decision, unforeseen realities have re-shaped the plans. For example, planners learned that Canadian meeting facilities capable of handling 10,000 Mennonites cost considerably more in July (Canada’s high tourist season) than comparable meeting places in the American South for the same date—their low tourist season.

The response to the 1999 decision thus far seems to be manifesting itself in significantly reduced MC Canada registration numbers for Charlotte 2005. As of May 10, a total of 284 adults were registered—196 of them as delegates. Bylaws state that 226 delegates are required to make a quorum. Since 2000, Canadian assemblies have averaged 582 total registrants (with 417 delegates).

While there are plans to adjust proceedings if a quorum is not met, leaders remain hopeful that another 30 delegates will register by the time Assembly starts on July 4. Pam Peters-Pries, lead assembly planner for MC Canada, says, “A few very early reports of unavailable lodging may have dampened response. However,

our MC USA planning partners have assured us that there will be sufficient lodging made available for all who come.”

Leaders are encouraging congregations who have not yet registered their

delegates to do so soon. “The issues we will be discussing this year are very important to our identity and ministry,” says Dan Nighswander, general secretary. “We need to hear the voices of the church in order to discern where God is leading us and how we will participate in God’s work.”

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

### News briefs

#### Savings and credit union celebrates its mission

On March 29, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) members and guests gathered at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church for the credit union’s 41st annual general meeting. The management report summarized highlights from 2004, which included membership growth of 3.1 percent, total loan growth (on-book and off-book) of \$33.4 million, and investment growth of \$21 million. Total assets under administration grew to \$546 million, an increase of 9.4 percent. Pre-tax earnings of \$1.5 million resulted in patronage distribution to members of \$1.2 million. Meritas Financial Inc. CEO Gary Hawton reported on behalf of the MSCU subsidiary, which experienced growth of 50 percent in assets under administration in 2004. The management report emphasized the importance of continued focus on faith-based stewardship values and church relatedness efforts. Dr. Ronald Mathies, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee, gave the keynote address, affirming the credit union’s recent growth and continued focus on stewardship, compassion, professionalism and trust. Abe Fehr and Kaye Rempel were re-elected to the board of directors, while Brent Martin, Al Isaac, and Ernie Metzger were elected to initial terms. Glenn Steiner and Jim Bearer were re-elected to the Credit Committee.

—From MSCU release

#### Displaced Darfur families receive blankets from MCC

Sudanese families that have been displaced by violence in western Sudan’s Darfur region have received approximately 22,000 blankets donated by Canadians and Americans to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Wilfred Unrau, MCC’s Canadian material resource warehouse manager, travelled to Darfur in late March and participated in a distribution of the blankets and other basic items from partner organizations in a village named Ta’asha. In a region decimated by lawless militias and dotted with crowded refugee camps, the small village of Ta’asha has taken in about 4,000 people who have fled their homes. Each refugee household in Ta’asha received a blanket from MCC. One recipient, a single mother, told Unrau that she was touched to learn that the blanket she received had been made by hand. Violence is continuing in Darfur, and an estimated 300,000 people have died there due to the two-year-old conflict. After visiting Ta’asha, the aid convoy passed a village that was being burned by a group of armed men on camels, Unrau reports. *To help stop the violence in Darfur, sign the letter on page 9 and send it to your MP.*

—MCC release

**1. The canning process begins with slabs of beef being trimmed of fat and sliced. Notice the mesh glove to help reduce injuries!**



# recipe for relief

*In its nine years of operation, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) beef canning operation at the University of Guelph has become a well-oiled machine. Late last month, 400 volunteers from across Ontario—working in three six-hour shifts for five days—put up nearly 21,000 28-ounce cans of prime Canadian beef for shipment to MCC relief programs around the world. The meat is eaten over rice or made into meatballs, with each can feeding between five and 10 people. Photos by Ross W. Muir.*



**7. The labelled cans are date stamped, boxed and loaded onto skids inside a transport trailer. One can from each batch is incubated for 10 days at 90 degrees F and then tested by the University of Guelph to ensure proper sealing.**



**6. After cooling for 20 minutes, the cans are washed off and labelled.**



**2. Emma Bauman of Chesley grinds the beef into one-inch chunks.**



**3. Containers of ground beef are then shipped across the parking lot in a "reefer" ("refrigerated" for the uninitiated) truck to the portable MCC meat canning facility.**

**4. The cubes of ground beef are cooked—300 pounds at a time—with salt in large steam kettles. Keeping the meat from sticking, and to ensure even cooking, requires constant stirring.**



**5. The cooked meat is packed firmly into cans and sealed. The cans are then cooked for a further two hours in a retort steam cooker.**



### Canning's future in 'slow cooker'

MCC is currently negotiating with the federal government to allow the portable meat canning unit to continue to be used in Canada. While Guelph canning committee chair Dan Troyer understands the government's desire to monitor meat production in the wake of the mad cow disease scare of 2003, he says, "We, as the canning committee and [beef] donors, see this as humanitarian aid. We give out of our community to the larger world. We'd like to continue to can because of our love of giving."



Winnipeg

## Western companies aid tsunami victims

**A**s waves of anxiety flood through southeast Asia following another massive earthquake on March 28, funds continue to flow in to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which is mounting the largest relief effort in its history in the wake of the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami.

Golden West Broadcasting, which operates a chain of 22 radio stations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, partnered with local credit unions in the rural communities that they serve, to give an entire day in January to raising funds for tsunami relief.

**GOLDEN WEST**  
*Radio*

“From 6 a.m. to the close of business, all 22 radio stations dedicated a large portion of air time, resources and staff

to drive listeners to their local credit union, where donated money was designated to the Red Cross and Mennonite Central Committee,” said Elmer Hildebrand, CEO of Golden West Broadcasting.

A total of \$654,000 was raised for victims of the tsunami. When combined with matching federal contributions, more than \$1.2 million was raised.

“An incredible accomplishment in light of the fact that only one of the communities involved has a population of over 15,000,” Hildebrand said.

“Some people get so overwhelmed and immobilized because the need is so big and they end up doing nothing,” said Janine Brandao, project manager in the marketing department of Palliser Furniture in Winnipeg, whose employees rallied to the cause.

Palliser gave its employees a tangible way to respond to the quake-driven tsunami, encouraging its 2,600 employees in the company’s manufac-

turing plants in Winnipeg and Airdrie, Alta., to donate an hour’s wage.

“We came back from the Christmas break when a lot were on holidays and almost immediately our president, Art DeFehr, indicated we would be doing something as a company,” said Brandao. “Three days later, we had our ‘hour of care’ and employees were encouraged to give an hour’s wage to tsunami relief through Mennonite Central Committee.”

 **PALLISER**

More than 64 percent of Palliser employees in Canada responded to the challenge. “In fact, they went beyond the challenge, donating on average closer to two hours of wages,” said Brandao. “This made it manageable. ‘What’s \$15? I’ll give more,’ many said,” he noted.

Employees in Palliser’s American,

Mexican and Indonesian operations also supported the relief effort. A total of \$51,000 was raised by the employees. The DeFehr Foundation had agreed to match what was raised up to \$25,000, bringing the total to \$76,000.

Palliser has production facilities in Indonesia and although none of their employees there were directly affected, many had friends and family who suffered or were lost in the tragedy. In honour of this, employees observed a moment of silence for the many who had lost family or friends.

“Because we have container shipments that go back and forth between here and Indonesia,” explained Brandao, “these empty freight containers were offered to MCC for relief supply packs.”

—Evelyn Rempel Petkau

Breslau, Ont.

## MCEC mission dinner celebrates refugee artists

**T**he streets became narrow. I lost my faith looking for you. Nobody would tell me where you were, or why they took you. I left my feet on the streets of Santiago.” These words were recited by Chilean actress Isabel Cisterna in her dramatic monologue entitled “The Dream” at the missions dinner following MCEC delegate sessions on April 23.

The monologue by Cisterna—who immigrated to Canada as a refugee in 1991—concludes: “Dear madam, we regret to inform you....” Her beloved, for whom she had been searching, was found in a mass grave with a bullet in his head. This poignant story is repeated many times by refugees from Latin America.

Food for the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support fundraising dinner was prepared by refugee claimants from Colombia and Iran. Artists from Central and South America and Japan presented a creative menu of after-dinner fare representing their various cultures to those gathered at Breslau Mennonite Church.

Katherine Laguana sang several popular songs in English and in Spanish, bridging cultures and

generations. She was born in Canada to parents who came as refugees from Nicaragua in 1989.

Victor Paneque, a Cuban photographer, displayed his photo art. His works, he said, depict “another side of Cuba—the real Havana, not the Havana of the tourists,” including disturbing scenes of poverty and oppression. After he went to Mexico to display his work, he was not allowed back into Cuba because he was perceived to be a traitor to the present regime. He then went to the United States and eventually came to Canada, leaving his 15-year-old son behind.

Bonchiku Hoshi of Japan performed his own compositions on a variety of bamboo flutes that he makes and sells.

Seifu Ttasfaye, a refugee claimant from Ethiopia, spoke of leaving his family behind as he fled Ethiopia in September 2001 to escape persecution.

The Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support helped him from the start to solve his problems. “I will never forget, it is printed in my heart, the love and care you gave me,” Ttasfaye told the crowd. He concluded his account with good news. This month, after three years and seven months, his wife and children will join him in Canada!

Keith Regehr, coalition board chair, told a story of a family that arrived at Pearson International Airport. It is 1 a.m. by the time their paperwork has been completed at Immigration. Now



Photo by Maurice Martin

**One of the many performers at the MCEC mission dinner.**

they are outside the terminal on the sidewalk, lost with no place to go. A taxi driver sees and appreciates their plight, and tells them, “I know a place you need to go.” He takes them to his house overnight, and the following morning brings them to the offices of the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support. Such a story is not uncommon.

Regehr briefly described the birth and work of the organization. About 15 years ago, Mennonites in Waterloo Region felt

something needed to be done for unsponsored refugees arriving in Canada each year by the thousands, many of whom end up in southwestern Ontario.

The coalition provides a broad range of assistance to these refugees: a place to stay overnight; longer-term housing; basic living supplies; help dealing with government agencies regarding social assistance, refugee claims and employment; trauma support groups; language training; and a day camp for their children.

How can Mennonites help? Volunteers are always needed to drive the refugees to their appointments and sit with them while they wait; call 519-571-1912 if you can help. And financial assistance is always welcome. No longer an MCC Ontario program, donations can now be made directly to: Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, 58 Queen Street South, Basement, Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6.  
—Maurice Martin

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# FOCUS

## Seniors

### MCC sponsor marks 40 years of giving

The 1,100 residents of Kleefeld, Man., are probably not aware of the celebrity in their midst.

This marvel is Helen Fast, a busy, dynamic mother of five and grandmother of seven. At 82, she lives in her own house, is involved with her church, and participates in a sewing circle that

**Continued on page 22**

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- In the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL (Nov. 6-22)

### 2006 TOURS

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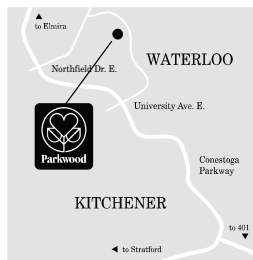
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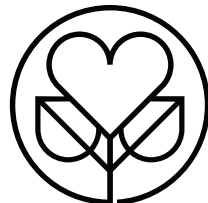
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<sup>†</sup>Ask for more details about Parkwood's "right-to-occupy" arrangement.

**Sponsor** *From page 20*

donates homemade quilts to people in need throughout the world. On top of all this, she has inadvertently become a bit of a celebrity at MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) as one of Canada's longest continuous supporters of the Global Family sponsorship program.

Helen and her late husband Frank sponsored their first student from India in 1965. Now, 40 years later, they have contributed to the education of nine students who would have little or no opportunity for schooling without the support of sponsors.

Fast attributes her long-standing commitment to the education of children in developing countries to her faith and life experience. She learned about MCC from her family, who moved to Canada from Russia when she was a baby. "As a small girl, I remember hearing about how scared people were, how hungry they were, and how unsure they were about their futures during the (Bolshevik) Revolution," she says. Through her church, she became involved with various MCC projects from an early age. "It's in my blood to help," she says, "and it feels very good to be able help others."

Their own children referred to the students as their "brothers and sisters." While many letters sounded like they could be from any child living anywhere in the world, others included stark differences. "There have been heavy days of rain in Calcutta, which has broken records of the last 50 years. The cost of food has been raised as a result," wrote one student. His sister added, "Your gifts are a great help to us, which I cannot explain in any language."

Committed seniors like Helen Fast play an important role in the continuation of the Global Family Program. It began in 1953 to help children affected by the Korean War. Ten years later, the India

Over the years, the Fasts received letters from their sponsored children.

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—Cropo Funeral Chapel release

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program began with 200 individual cases. Today, in India alone, sponsors support 1,270 individuals.

To find out more about the program, including how to get involved, visit [www.mcc.org/globalfamily](http://www.mcc.org/globalfamily) or call MCC toll-free at 888-622-6337.

— MCC Canada release by Tara Tharayil

Photo by Joanie Enns



**Helen Fast, a long-time supporter of MCC's Global Family program, left, reads some of the letters she has received over the past 40 years.**



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## People & Events

**Athens, Greece**—Janet Plenert, a member of Mennonite Church Canada's Global Mission Fellowship, addressed a plenary session of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism on May 12. The session dealt with the relationship between missions and violence. "Fear is the main and deepest motivation to be involved in violence," Plenert said. "It is fear that makes us listen to the voices of self-preservation, race superiority, national security." As well as fear, other issues remained open as the plenary came to an end. The session was not actually intended to respond to all the questions. Ambiguity will remain. But in order to live with it, passion is needed. As lighted candles were brought to the stage by the same young people who first carried the symbols of violence at the start of the meeting, the gathering put the issue before God in prayer, and sang the theme of the conference: "Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile." Other Mennonites attending the WCC event were Hans Ulrich Gerber of Switzerland, leader of the WCC initiative "Decade to Overcome Violence," and Omar Cortes-Gaibur, MC Canada Witness worker in Chile. —From WCC release by **Juan Michel** and MC Canada

**Strasbourg, France**—As part of the ongoing relationship between Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite World Conference (MWC), MWC Peace Council secretary Paulus Widjaja has been named to MCC's Peace Committee. It is the first time that MWC has named a member of the Peace Committee, and Widjaja also is the first committee member from outside North America. "This is another example of MCC working closely with the Mennonite World Conference in local and global contexts," said Ron Mathies, MCC executive director. "This will

strengthen the work of the Peace Committee, and provide additional international and world church perspectives to the important work of peacebuilding." MCC's Peace Committee advises on issues of peace and justice as they relate to MCC's international work. The committee is made up of 12 people from MCC's constituent churches, plus the newly appointed MWC representative. —MWC/MCC joint release



**Abbotsford, B.C.**—The ninth annual Columbia Open fundraising golf tournament raised \$75,000 for the college. A full field of 144 golfers plus guests enjoyed a beautiful round of golf at Chilliwack Golf and Country Club, followed by a dinner and silent auction at Columbia Place. A variety of special guests took part in the tournament, including Abbotsford mayor Mary Reeves (pictured). Money raised from the tournament will go to support the mission of Columbia Bible College. —CBC release

## Transitions

### Births/Adoptions

**Cook**—to Sandra and Robert, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Brooklyn Elisa Rayn, May 1.  
**Dick**—to Andrea and Ron, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., a daughter, Corinna Michelle, April 30.  
**Epp**—to Kristi Dyck and Weldon Epp, Ottawa Mennonite, twin sons, Ian and Graeme, April 25.  
**Filsinger Lightfoot**—to Erin Filsinger and Dennis Lightfoot, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Hayle Ann Nichole, April 22.  
**Heppner**—to Margaret and

James, Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man., a son, Rohn Jamison, March 16.

**Hildebrand**—to Twyla and Peter, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, a son, Karsten James, May 10.

**Klassen**—to Ashley, Warman Mennonite, Sask., a son, Shayden Riale, Jan. 20.

**Laurence Chung**—to Serena and Trevor, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., a daughter, Emma, April 23.

**Kraeker**—to Kelly and Bryce, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Taite Emilia McIlwain, May 12.

**MacKinnon**—to Meghan MacKinnon and Alfred Rempel, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Flora Liese, April 7.

### Marriages

**Dueck-Yalan**—Ernst and Shi, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., in China, May 1.

**Harder-Letkeman**—Les and Crystal, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 16.

**Reimer-Friesen**—Eduard and Rebekka, Steinbach Mennonite, Man., in Paraguay, April 23.

**Thiessen-Kehler**—Brent and Amber, Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 16.

**Toews-Friesen**—Lyndon and Heidi, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 9.

### Deaths

**Braun**—John A., 87, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 5.

**Buller**—Helen (nee Wiens), 84, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, May 5.

**Horst**—Elva, 87, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., April 25.

**Klassen**—Anne, 97, Toronto United Mennonite, May 2.

**Pettker**—Emma, 90, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., May 9.

**Reimer**—Elizabeth, 92 (b. Dec. 24, 1912), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., April 27.

**Segedin**—Carl, 84, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 9.

**Zamara**—Dylan, 20, Toronto United Mennonite, date of

death unknown (funeral on May 18).

### Baptisms

**Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.**—Scott Friesen, Jenny Hiebert, Janelle Hoffman, Lyndon Toews, Cory Voth, Kerensa Voth, Sherry Voth, Amanda Wiens, May 15.

**Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.**—Greg Banman, Brandt Kehler, Courtney Rempel, TeJay Rempel, May 15.

**Bloomfield Mennonite, Ont.**—Stephanie Chandler, Keri-Lyn Fehrenbach, Marty Hoch, May 15.

**Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg**—Emmanuel Allieu, Carl DeGurse, Paul DeGurse, Jessica Dyck, Krista Janzen, Robert Mauer, Katrina Sklepowich, Stephanie Smith, May 15.

**Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg**—Jorge Garcia, Rebecca Peters, May 15.

**Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man.**—Tara Bergen, Heather Booy, Amy Friesen, Ashley Friesen, Barbie Friesen, Kate Friesen, Cindy Hamilton, Jason Hamilton, Vanessa Klassen, Jonathan Neufeld, Loresa Peters, Barb Reimer, Rick Reimer, Aaron Suderman, May 1.

**Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.**—Marlie Regehr, May 15.

**Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francis Xavier, Man.**—Wendy Goosen, Amanda Abrahams, May 15.

**Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver**—Bethany Klassen, May 15.

**Warman Mennonite, Sask.**—Ashley Klassen, Karen Bergen, Sheldon Bergen, May 15.

**Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.**—Kelsey Bowman, May 8.

*Canadian Mennonite welcomes Transitions announcements within four months of the event. Please send all Transitions announcements by e-mail to [transitions@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:transitions@canadianmennonite.org) including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.*



## Mennonite Church Canada

### June Equipping available in churches

Items which stand out in the June issue of *Equipping* include:

- A reflection, by Jack Suderman, entitled "A Buddhist witness to Christian faith," which grew out of a workshop discussion on whether or not a charitable organization should disconnect from its Christian faith-based roots.
- A letter by Sven Eriksson that highlights the importance of developing "health-giving ministry teams" in our churches.
- Another by Al Rempel that draws attention to the "healing and hope" initiative, which offers ministry support opportunities through a Gift Sampler being sent to all homes receiving *Canadian Mennonite*. (For more information, visit: [www.healingandhope.ca](http://www.healingandhope.ca).)
- "Website tips and tools" from Grant Klassen, who notes that there are now 2,000 pages of information and inspiration on the MC Canada website, including a web calendar that invites submissions.
- Many other resources are available at: [www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/current/](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/current/).

## Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

### MCEC appoints new executive minister

In late breaking news, David Martin has been appointed to serve MC Eastern Canada as executive minister beginning some time this fall, says moderator Darrell Fast. Martin is presently pastor at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. A more complete story will follow in a

subsequent issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.

Other transitions include the resignation of Lorraine Sawatsky from her position as administrative assistant to head up the scheduling department of the Niagara Health Systems. Galen Peters has resigned from his position as administrative assistant to begin teachers college at the University of Western Ontario. A hiring process is underway to fill both positions in line with the new staff framework.

### Meet 2005 VBS troupe

The MCEC Vacation Bible School troupe will serve in eight congregations this summer. This year's troupe includes:

- Troupe leader Adrienne Janzen from Niagara-on-the-Lake. Completing her third year at U. of Waterloo, she has taught Sunday school, VBS, summer day camp and Friday night kids club.
- Janna Cressman from Wellesley is completing her first year at Trinity Western University. She brings strong dramatic skills with experience in Theatre Wellesley and her home congregation, Shantz Mennonite.
- Stephanie Dueck from Leamington has been in Guatemala with Canadian Mennonite University's "Outtatown" program since graduating from UMEI last year. She plays guitar, piano and violin, and enjoys drama and crafts.
- John Keller from New Hamburg is completing his third year at Wilfrid Laurier University. He plays trombone, enjoys sports, and has experience coaching children's teams.
- David Neufeld from Waterloo has recently returned from France, where he lived with a family providing child care for five children. He is a gifted guitarist, and plans to begin university studies in the fall.

## Mennonite Church Manitoba

### New camp policy accepted by WSD

A new Camps with Meaning (CwM) guest group policy has been accepted by the Winnipeg School Division (WSD). This means that, after a nearly two-year disruption, WSD schools can again book trips to the three camps. Contacts are being made to renew relationships with school groups that have rented CwM facilities in the past.

In the fall of 2003, the school board instructed its schools that CwM facilities were not on its "approved" list. This ruling was based on MC Manitoba's guest group policy in place at the time, which the school division deemed to be inconsistent with its own policies of inclusion. The school board ruling was part of a wider issue involving Christian camps in Manitoba and their rental policies to gay and lesbian groups.

There is still a case before the Manitoba Human Rights Commission that tests the rights of Christian camps to screen their clients.

The 2003 WSD ruling meant that school board funding was not available for schools booking CwM camps for outdoor education trips. This ruling effectively cancelled the bookings of about two dozen Winnipeg schools, many of which had used Camp Assiniboia and Camp Moose Lake for many years.

In recent delegate sessions, MC Manitoba delegates expressed their concern with the guest group policy on the grounds that it did not adequately concur with MC Manitoba's identity as a body "rooted in the centre and living on the edge." It was at the urging of delegates that a new document more reflective of

MC Manitoba values of inclusion and hospitality be developed (see May 2 issue, page 25).

—Bob Wiebe

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

### First Mennonite looks to create friendly space

First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon held a workshop on May 7 for the congregation to begin looking at ways of reaching out to, and including, community members in their church. The sessions were titled "Creating a free and friendly space" and considered several issues during the five-hour session attended by 50 people.

Pastor Steven Farsaci offered information on the realities of living in a post-Christian society. Small group discussions were used to examine topics like changes at the church, changes in the world and a Christian response to the fluctuating nature of present day society.

"In the past, people could be optimistic," noted Farsaci. "Now, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the future."

As a response to these realities, the church is working on building awareness among its members of the need to be welcoming and hospitable to all who walk through the front doors of the church. To demonstrate how not to practise hospitality with newcomers, participants created humorous skits showing unworkable solutions. One three-man comedy team showed how welcoming a community member in the German language was confusing for the visitor. Others skits showcased themes like welcoming company in the home even when they were unexpected, embracing guests from other cultures, and welcoming

individuals who were very different.

"It felt good to poke fun at ourselves," was the response from one participant.

### Mennonite Church Alberta

## Trinity Mennonite works on new church

Trinity Mennonite has begun construction on its new church building. On April 27, digging began at the site just south of Calgary. Kurt Janz of Calgary First Mennonite will oversee the project along with the building committee. There is no projected finish date at this point.

Trinity Mennonite is also looking forward to welcoming a new pastor, Erwin Wiens. Erwin and Marion Wiens have just completed a mission worker term in Korea and will

be touring Canadian congregations in May and June. They began their tour schedule May 8 at Edmonton's First Mennonite. Wiens is set to begin at Trinity on Aug. 1.

### Mennonite Church British Columbia

## Fire strikes again at Olivet Mennonite

Fire at Olivet Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, made the news in December—and was news again on the evening of April 26, when another blaze ravaged the front entrance of the now-unused church building, causing about \$50,000 in damage.

Since mid-December, the Olivet congregation has been meeting in the chapel of Columbia Bible College. The church building has been boarded up for the past four

months.

Transients are being blamed for the April 26 fire, which was confined mainly to the south door entrance off the parking lot. Church members said that street people had been a problem at the church even before the first fire, but more so after the building was closed. Church staff have frequently had to chase away vagrants or call police to do so, and have more than once found remains of their overnight stays around the church.

Herb Neufeld, Olivet's pastor, told local media that on the day of the April 26 fire, there had been a confrontation with street people at the church, who made threatening remarks when asked to move on. "They spoke about doing major damage to the building," he said. "It was a threat." Though no cause was con-

firmed, it appeared that clothing was set ablaze in several shopping carts under the entrance overhang.

While church members have mourned the loss of their building since December, most are anxious now to move on and rebuild. "It's not the end of the world," said acting church chair Ray Baerg, who added they are waiting now for insurance settlements so the old building can be razed.

"We're resolved to get going on a new beginning [with a new building]."

—Amy Dueckman

*Unless otherwise credited, the articles in TheChurches pages were written by: Leona Dueck Penner (MC Canada), Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Evelyn Rempel Petkau (Manitoba), Karin Fehderau (Saskatchewan), Donita Wiebe-Neufeld (Alberta). See page 2 for contact information.*

## Bonhoeffer teaches discernment lesson

In good times we may think we have reinvented the church. In difficult times we seek wisdom from those who have gone before. One witness who has "gone before" is Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who died 60 years ago. In this post-Easter season I have been re-reading his *Letters and Papers from Prison*. I have also read a number of essays which seek to probe the relevance of Bonhoeffer's life and death for our time.

In the April 2005 edition of *The Lutheran*, Lisa E. Dahill reflects on what Bonhoeffer's life teaches us about Christian discernment.

Bonhoeffer had the opportunity to leave Germany in 1939 to accept a teaching position at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He sailed to New York, but almost immediately regretted the action and soon discerned that he needed to be in Germany no matter what the personal cost. He sailed home on the last ship going from America to Germany before the start of World War II.

While Bonhoeffer had been a committed pacifist, he came to the agonizing realization that the only way to end the war was to remove Hitler

from office, and that would mean participating in violence.

Dahill argues that Bonhoeffer came to realize that there is a fundamental difference between thinking in terms of decisions and in terms of discernment.

In decisions, we are the actors; we are at the centre of the process. We have to choose and we do so well or badly.

In contrast, in discernment, God is the actor, the one at the centre of the process. Discernment is the capacity to look to God for direction. The two temptations, in the face of challenge, is either to act too hastily or to do nothing at all. We lose sight of God, whose ways are not our ways, whose ways may be hidden. Discernment requires prayer and patience, for "the will of God may lie deeply concealed beneath a great number of possibilities."

Mennonite Church Canada faces a number of challenges. While I am not unaware of the grace notes in our life together, it is also true that there is vigorous discussion and disagreement among large segments of our church. We are passionately, and sincerely, engaged in conversations about what church membership means, over education and leadership issues, and whether or not we can offer our blessing to committed homosexual relationships. In all of these issues, and more, we are concerned to know the will of God.

Some voices argue strongly for decisive

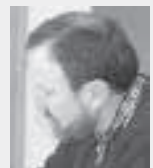
## From our leaders

decisions now, for a drawing of lines in the sand that will effectively quell debate and dissension. Strong decisive action has the appearance of virtue and satisfies our need for order.

Other voices counsel patience. These voices call us to engage in a discernment process that is open-ended. Discernment, however, can look weak. A community in discernment can seem hesitant, lacklustre, so lacking in conviction. The call for the church, however, is not a call to success—whatever that may mean—but a call to faithfulness. This we see modelled for us in biblical characters such as Abraham and Sarah, Jeremiah, Mary and Paul.

In his *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer wrote, "The will of God is not a system of rules established from the outset. It is something new and different in each different situation in life, and for this reason a [person] must forever re-examine what the will of God may be. The will of God may lie deeply concealed beneath a great number of possibilities."

Garth Ewert Fisher, MC Canada General Board executive member and co-pastor of Fiske Mennonite Church



**Employment opportunities**

Columbia Bible College announces  
**FACULTY OPENING FOR YOUTH WORK**

We are seeking a leader for our Youth Work program for Fall 2005. For a full list of qualifications, job description, and contact information, please consult [www.columbiabc.edu](http://www.columbiabc.edu). Please forward resume to the attention of Dr. Ron Penner. We will accept resumes until position is filled. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed in the first instance to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for a position as

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

This person will provide administrative support for staff members working with pastoral services and congregational ministry resources in the context of a larger ministry team. Experience with general office procedures is required.

The ideal candidate will:

- Possess strong communication skills (oral and written).
- Have an ability to work at multiple tasks in supporting more than one staff person, have an eye for detail, be well organized, and be able to set priorities.
- Have general computer proficiencies (word processing, data management), office equipment and Internet communication.
- Serve as office host.
- Be able to work with confidential matters.
- Have a good knowledge of the MCEC constituency.
- Be active in an MCEC congregation.

This is a full-time salaried position (37.5 hours ) with attractive benefits, beginning August 2005. Candidates should be flexible given potential job changes as MCEC implements a new vision over the next year.

Please direct applications (with resume and references), inquiries or nominations by June 15, 2005, to:

**David Brubacher, Minister to Conference**  
**Mennonite Church Eastern Canada**  
**4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2**  
**Phone: 519-650-3806 or 800-206-9356**  
**Email: david@mcec.on.ca**

**HALF-TIME YOUTH PASTOR**

North Leamington United Mennonite Church, in Leamington, has an opening for a half-time youth pastor position. We are prepared to assist with finding suitable accommodation and further half-time employment. NLUMC is a congregation of 450 members and a youth component of approximately 27 young people. Leamington is located about 35 minutes from Windsor and Detroit.

For a copy of job description 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@mcec.on.ca**

Goshen College invites nominations and/or applications for the position of

**PRESIDENT**

expected to assume office sometime between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2006. Goshen College is a fully accredited four-year, liberal arts college located in Goshen, Indiana affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Additional information about the college can be located at [www.goshen.edu](http://www.goshen.edu).

**Qualifications:** The ideal candidate for President will exhibit three essential qualities:

- Embrace and energetically promote the mission of the college, "to educate servant leaders for the church and the world."
- Support and implement the strategic priorities of the institution, including Goshen College's new strategic plan.
- Embody core values of the college and exemplify a mature and vibrant Christian faith, characterized by the gifts of the Spirit.

A terminal degree from an accredited college or university is expected.

**Search Process:** Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or resume may be submitted to

**Rick Stiffney, Chairman of the Search Committee**  
**E-mail: andreas@mennoniteeducation.org**  
**GC Presidential Search Committee**  
**Mennonite Education Agency**  
**63846 County Road 35 Suite 1**  
**Goshen, IN 46528-9621**

The search committee will begin reviewing applications in Spring 2005 and continue until the position is filled.

Women and minority persons are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for

**VOLUNTEER HOST/HOSTESS**  
**plus LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING**

Opportunity to share your faith in the Anabaptist tradition with people from around the world! Menno-Hof provides a lovely completely furnished apartment, with all expenses paid, plus a monthly stipend. Position available September 12, 2005. For more information, contact:

**Joseph Yoder**  
**Box 701, Shipshewana, IN, 46565, USA**  
**Phone: 260-768-4117; E-mail: mennohof@tln.net**

**TEACHERS**

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate invites teaching applications for the 2005-2006 school year. The school is seeking a full-time Grade 6 core teacher for a 1 year term position and part-time teachers for grade 11 and 12 Chemistry and grade 10, 11 and 12 German.

Please forward questions and resumes c/o principal:

**E-mail: principal@rockway.on.ca**  
**Fax: 519-743-5935; Phone: 519-743-5209**  
**110 Doon Road, Kitchener, ON N2G 3C8**

Mennonite Mutual Insurance, a dynamic organization in the business of property and casualty insurance, serves a constituency of Mennonites and others of like faith through church-appointed representatives. MMI has operated in Alberta for over 75 years and continues to experience substantial growth in this community. The insurance program offers a broad range of property and liability products for dwellings, farms, churches and commercial properties. We are seeking individuals who identify with a Judeo-Christian ethic and are committed to a mutual aid approach in serving policyholders and volunteers. Successful applicants will be asked to pursue related training where necessary to fulfill the requirements of the work specific to our company and constituency.

#### ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER

Responsibilities of this full-time position include daily bookkeeping functions, monthly and annual financial statement preparation for management and audit purposes, as well as assisting in the preparation of various internal financial and management reports. The applicant will enjoy working independently, participating in team administration, and possess positive interpersonal communication skills. Strong computer skills are necessary. Previous work experience in this area is required and education or training is preferred.

#### UNDERWRITER

Key responsibilities of this full-time position will include the underwriting review of new applications and policy endorsements for all lines of business, as well as providing technical support for volunteers. We are seeking an individual with a desire to grow in a career in the insurance industry. A general insurance agent's licence and additional insurance education will be required. This individual must have well-rounded communication skills and computer proficiency. Preference will be given to individuals with industry-related training and experience.

Send resume with references by June 30, 2005, to:

**Sheryl Janzen**  
300, 2946-32 St. NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 6J7  
E-mail: sheryl@mmiab.ca; Fax: 403-291-6733

Shekinah Retreat Centre, located on the North Saskatchewan River near Waldheim, Sask. is seeking a full-time

#### CAMP ADMINISTRATOR

This position will become available Sept. 1, 2005. In addition to a retreat facility, Shekinah offers a summer camping program and a year-round Outdoor Education experience. It is a ministry of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Applicants should hold a post-secondary degree, administrative experience and a commitment to the Mennonite/Anabaptist faith. Experience in Education, Youth Work, Camp Ministry and Outdoor Education are desirable assets.

For more information or a complete job description, contact:

**Russ Regier: 306-249-3650**  
E-mail: rvregier@shaw.ca

Resumes should be mailed to:

**Russ Regier**  
150 Wickenden Cres.  
Saskatoon, SK S7N 3X6

#### Housing wanted

APARTMENT WANTED in Waterloo. 1 bedroom for single male. References, non-smoker. 519-885-9648.

#### For rent

Retreat cottage for rent on the Little Mississippi River near Bancroft, Ontario. Wood stove, hydro, running hot and cold water and flush toilet. Accesible year round. Ideal for weekend or week long getaway. Call 519-471-3309 or <kcdrudge@skynet.ca>

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

#### To advertise, contact:

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

#### Announcement

Travellers to the former Mennonite colonies in Ukraine now have the opportunity to stay in Zaporozh'e. Victor and Ludmila Penner have an apartment next to theirs with all modern amenities that accommodates up to 4 persons. The cost per day is \$30US per person per night, all meals included. Victor speaks good English and has a vast knowledge of the former Mennonite villages in the area. He has a car and is available as driver/guide/interpreter. For further info and reservations, e-mail [vpenner@pochta.ru](mailto:vpenner@pochta.ru) or [mnpenner@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mnpenner@uwaterloo.ca)

You are invited to a reunion of the descendants of Joseph and Marie (Bender) Jutzi. The reunion will take place on: **Sunday June 12, 2005 at the Community Centre, Thompson St., Shakespeare, ON. Registration at 10:30 a.m.; Worship service at 11:00 a.m.** A potluck dinner will follow. Local people please bring your own dishes. Pass info on to other members of your family. For lodging contact **Joan Jutzi at 519-595-4952.**

#### Longhurst new CMU communications director

John Longhurst has been appointed as the new director of communications and marketing at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, effective full-time on Aug. 1. He replaces Kevin Heinrichs in the position. Longhurst's roles include setting the strategic marketing and communication vision for CMU and helping the dean develop a new communications program initiative. Longhurst is currently the director of marketing and media relations with Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and was the media relations and communications coordinator with Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Previously, he served as the director of the Dallas Peace Center, Dallas, Texas, and was the founder and editor of the Dallas Peace Times. He is a well-known author, having written *Making the News: A Media Relations Guide for Non-Profit Organizations* in 1997. He contributes regularly to many publications, including *Christian Week* and the *Globe and Mail*, and is an op-ed writer for the *Winnipeg Free Press* in the area of faith. He is the co-founder of the Centre for Faith and the Media based in Calgary. Longhurst is married to Christine Epp and they have two children, Rebecca and Dylan. They are members at River East MB in Winnipeg, where Christine is associate pastor.

## Waterloo Mennonites to celebrate 200 years

**Waterloo, Ont.**—The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Mennonite migration from Pennsylvania to Waterloo Region at its meeting on June 11. The Saturday afternoon program will include a one-act play featuring the Brubacher family, the dedication of a black walnut garden in honour of the pioneers, and a presentation by Edsel Burdge of Pennsylvania on “Ontario Mennonite roots in Franklin County, Pa.”

The reception to follow will provide opportunity to view other displays, including a “hands-on” map of the German Company Tract.

The historical society annual general meeting will begin at 2 p.m., with the play beginning at 2:30 in the Great Hall at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo. Contact Barb Draper at 519-669-1884 for more information.

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**July 1-3:** North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship bi-national conference, Vancouver.  
**Aug. 14-21:** MCC B.C. quilt show and demonstration at Clearbrook Public Library.  
**Aug. 20:** Camp Squeah alumni event. Fundraising memorabilia auction. To register or for more information, visit: [www.squeah.com/alumni](http://www.squeah.com/alumni).  
**Sept. 16-17:** MCC Abbotsford Festival at the Tradex.  
**Sept. 18:** MCC Festival of Praise at Central Heights MB Church, Abbotsford, 2:30 p.m.  
**Sept. 24:** MCC Fall Fair at Prince George Civic Centre.

### Alberta

**July 6-8:** “Passing on the Comfort” quilt exhibit at Foothills Mennonite Church.  
**July 15-16:** MCC Alberta Relief Sale in Sherwood Park,

Edmonton. Call April Hauck at 403-275-3711 or Ernie Wiens at 780-431-2134 for more information. Includes “Passing on the Comfort” quilt exhibit.

### Saskatchewan

**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.  
**July 23-24:** 50th anniversary celebrations at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina. For more information, or to register, call the church at 306-584-2555 or e-mail: [grace.mennonite@sasktel.net](mailto:grace.mennonite@sasktel.net).  
**July 29-31:** Centennial celebrations at Rosthern Junior College.  
**Aug. 8-12:** Bethany sports camp—basketball; on campus.  
**Aug. 15-19:** Bethany sports camp—volleyball; on campus.

### Manitoba

**June 6-8:** Plus 55 Retreat at Camp Koinonia with speakers Jake Neufeld and Jake Harms. Theme: “Parables of Jesus.”  
**June 6-10:** Congregational peacebuilding training with Nan Cressman and Dean Peachey at CMU. Contact Shirley Plett at 204-487-3300.  
**June 12:** Eden Foundation, Big Brothers/Big Sisters charity golf tournament, Winkler. For information or to register, call 866-895-2919.  
**June 16:** Eden Health Care Services’ Spring Event at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Dan Unrau. Theme: “In the end, these three things remain.”  
**June 17-18:** MCC Festival and Relief Sale at Canadian Mennonite University campus.  
**June 25:** Camp Koinonia golf tournament, Winkler Golf Club. Contact Matthew at 204-534-2504 for more information.

**June 25-26:** Bike the Whiteshell (MCC fundraiser for water projects in Honduras and Brazil). For online registration, visit: [www.mcc.org/manitoba/bike](http://www.mcc.org/manitoba/bike).

**June 27:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Senior 4 graduation at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

**July 2:** Cycle Clear Lake to support MCC health education projects in Laos and Sudan. For online registration, visit: [www.mcc.org/manitoba/bike](http://www.mcc.org/manitoba/bike).

**July 2-3:** Heritage reunion picnic with book dedication and monument unveiling at Halbstadt community centre. Includes former school districts of Halbstadt, Strassberg and Blumenthal (Houston).

**July 2-3:** Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church centennial celebrations.

**July 3-9:** Camp staff training week.

**July 7:** Eden Foundation “Iron Man Golf Marathon,” Winkler. For information or to register, call 866-895-2919.

**July 20:** MCC fundraising golf tournament at Quarry Oaks. For online registration, visit: [www.mcc.org/manitoba/golf/form](http://www.mcc.org/manitoba/golf/form).

**Sept. 10:** Eden Foundation “Head for the Hills” bicycling fundraiser, Lake Minnewasta, Morden.

**Sept. 30-Oct. 2:** Camp Moose Lake workathon.

**Oct. 1:** Equipping the Congregation conference at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

### Ontario

**June 4:** Garage and bake sale at Preston Mennonite Church, Cambridge, 7 a.m. to noon.

**June 4:** Meet the MEDA international board at a dessert night at the Healing Barn, St. Agatha. Free.

**June 4:** Community sale at UMEI, Leamington.

**June 4:** Hac Attack 3-on-3 basketball tournament at Hidden Acres Camp. To



**On April 25, Alf Redekopp, director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, left, honoured Helene Friesen for her work on the “Bote” index, volumes 3, 4 and 5. Present were members of Der Bote editorial committee, Der Bote and other staff of Mennonite Church Canada, as well as other interested persons. Volume 5 of the index (1992-00) has now been published and is available for sale through the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Earlier volumes are also available.**

register a team, call 519-625-8602.

**June 4:** Ride for House of Friendship motorcycle fundraiser. 10 a.m. start from Kitchener Auditorium. Barbecue and music to follow ride. E-mail [ebyoffice@houseoffriendship.org](mailto:ebyoffice@houseoffriendship.org) for more information or to register.

**June 10-12:** Homecoming at Breslau Mennonite Church. Call 519-569-8637 or visit [www.breslau.org/homecoming](http://www.breslau.org/homecoming).

**June 12:** Annual spring choral concert at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. Guest pianist: Ross Inglis.

**June 14:** UMEI strawberry social, Leamington.

**June 14:** Annual chicken

barbecue at Hidden Acres Camp, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Bring your own mug. Call 519-625-8602 for tickets.

**June 19:** Open house to celebrate Martha Smith Good's 30 years of ministry at Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, 2-5 p.m. Program starts at 3:30 p.m.

**June 23:** MEDA breakfast meeting at St. Jacobs Stone Crock. Speaker: Dr. James Snider.

**June 23:** Fundraising banquet for the Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training at Conrad Grebel University College, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Jim Lapp, Franconia Conference Minister. For tickets, call 519-885-0220 ext. 223.

**July 3:** Truckers Sunday with Transport for Christ at Milverton Mennonite Fellowship. For details, call 519-595-8762.

**Aug. 7:** Benin Festival at Steinmann Mennonite Church. MC Canada Witness outdoor celebration of ministries in Benin, West Africa.

**Aug. 19:** MEDA summer barbecue at Strom's Farm. Details to follow.

**Sept. 30-Oct. 2:** Young Adult Fellowship annual retreat at Hidden Acres Camp. Theme: "Morality: Learning at the Mountain." For more information, e-mail: [bwiebe@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:bwiebe@mennochurch.mb.ca) or [markrachel@golden.net](mailto:markrachel@golden.net).

**Quebec**

**June 10-12:** Montreal Peace Festival 2005: Promoting a peace culture. Supper conference (10, 6-9 p.m.), ecumenical service and outdoor concert (11, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m.), concert (12).

**United States**

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

Please send **Calendar** events by e-mail to: [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org)



MC Canada photo by Dan Dyck

**Ray Dirks, curator of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Art Gallery, Winnipeg, left, honours Michino Phillips (Tsuboi) at an April 20 Mennonite Church Canada volunteer recognition dinner. Dirks first met Phillips through her artist father while in Japan collecting artwork for the *In God's Image* art exhibit for the Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe. Phillips later travelled to Canada to study English, has since been married, and now resides in Winnipeg, helping out at the gallery whenever called upon. Numerous MC Canada ministries benefit from volunteers, including PrayerNet and the World of Witness International Report, among many others. In addition to volunteers from member churches, spouses of staff were also recognized for their contribution in helping to host events, cooking, and providing hospitality for travelling guests of MC Canada. In all, 47 were honoured.**

**Subscriber services**

**How to subscribe:**

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

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**Subscription changes:**

1. When submitting a change of address or cancellation, please use the subscription number:

**Subscription number      Expiry date**

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Kathy Mennonite  
999 Menno St.  
WINNIPEG MB X0X 0X0

2. Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)
3. **Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.**

**Contact information:**

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5,  
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7  
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Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: [office@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:office@canadianmennonite.org)

**In the tsunami-devastated Andaman and Nicobar Islands, off the coast of India, Mennonite Central Committee worker Carolyn Heggen taught teachers trauma healing techniques, including painting and drawing, to help students process the horrors they had seen. A middle school teacher then gave Heggen pictures her students had created of the Dec. 26 tsunami and the devastation it caused. This one was painted by 15-year-old Sheker. Artwork by six more students can be viewed online at [www.mcc.org/asiaearthquake](http://www.mcc.org/asiaearthquake).**



# disaster relief



**In Sri Lanka, families that relied on the sea and fishing for their income lost their boats and nets in the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami that devastated much of southeastern Asia. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing Gospel House, a partner organization, with more than \$36,000 to help fishing families build new boats so they can resume their work. The contribution is also helping to establish other income generation projects such as the spinning of coconut fibre twine.**