

C A N A D I A N
Mennonite

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panhandlers?**

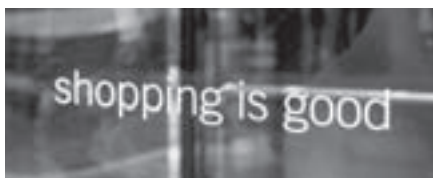
The call of the mall

The message that things matter more than anything else is at its height during the weeks before Christmas. Canadians spend more at retailers during the Christmas season than any other time of year (with Halloween now an astonishing second in terms of consumer spending, according to the Retail Council of Canada).

Almost everywhere we look these days, we are told that money can buy love, riches can repair relationships, that luxuries are now essentials—with nothing down and no payments for 90 days. Our consumer economy tells us that the decisions that matter all boil down to a choice between this thing or that thing.

The whole idea of a giving even starts to look a lot like getting when we trade Christmas lists and then act as each other's personal shoppers with delivery due on Dec. 25.

Our most important public spaces, once churches or town halls, are now malls. In some cases, our airports and churches are now even designed to look like malls. "The mall becomes our cathedral of consumption and Santa our patron saint," writes scholar James Farrell in *One Nation under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping*. "We all join the repeated processional and recessional throughout the season. Muzak carols are our sacred hymns; the food court is our communion table. We pray for bargains, and if we find them, the sale is our salvation. While the church doesn't sell indulgences any more, the mall does sell indulgence, and many of us buy. The cash register is the tabernacle that contains the Holy of Holies, the Almighty Dollar, and the sales counter is the altar upon which we sacrifice our money and our lives



for the redemption that consumption promises to bring."

When someone is starving and then gets as much food as they want, they'll eat until they are sick. In Canada, for the past 15 years, consumer spending has consistently grown faster than personal disposable income. As of 2004, according to Toronto Dominion Bank figures, this trend finally wiped our national personal savings rate to zero percent and lifted personal debt levels to a record high of 113 percent of personal disposable income. Are more things really what we are starving for?

Earlier this month I got a lesson on giving. I was over at a friend's place enjoying an invitation for supper. During conversation about our lives, I commented that I had a lengthy series of board and church meetings coming up and my watch had just broken, making it hard to know when to pick people up at hotels and coordinate meeting schedules. Moments later, one of my hosts simply took off her watch and offered it to me for as long as I needed it. I was totally floored because

it was such an unexpected offer—a profoundly countercultural thing to do. That watch got me through my meetings.

I don't think that giving material gifts at Christmas is wrong. It's a genuine way to express love. However, as Christians, we need to sort very carefully through the values we hear all around us right now. The message that Christmas is all about shopping is a consumerist con job. Perhaps this Christmas can be an occasion to do creative things like sharing lists of "borrowables" with one another. Sharing care, skills, things, food, time and other resources can all be much deeper tributes to the celebration of God's gift to us than a swipe of plastic might be.

—Tim Miller Dyck

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Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted on our web site at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check out the Dec. 19 issue by Dec. 15.

Cover: "Would Jesus give to panhandlers?" is the title of this issue's InConversation piece. But do we even see such people—often tucked into doorways—in our rush to the malls and shops at this time of year?
Photo by Ross W. Muir



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Winnipeg

Bubbles of time: Reflections on the anniversary of Deirdre's death

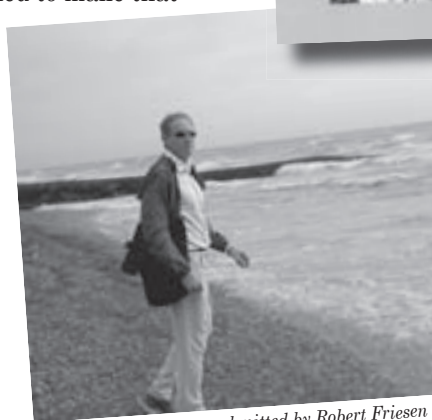
Deirdre called them “bubbles of time.” They were occasions when worries and stress would evaporate, the sun would shine through the cracks in the clouds brought on by her illness (ovarian cancer followed by a stroke) and she was truly at peace and serene. She would tell me that prayer, Bible study, reading a wonderful book and our trip to Hawaii were “bubbles of time.” She had many of them during her illness and she often expressed the happiness and contentment she felt during those episodes.

Often during our marriage she talked of the wonderful years she spent as a young child in Brighton, England, following the tragic death of her father. Every picture of her during that time shows a pretty young girl with a smile as wide as the English Channel. It was a “bubble of time” that faded the sadness of her father's death, a sadness that had interrupted her innocent childhood.

Deirdre's intention had always been to take us there someday, to allow us to appreciate the beauty of the place, and why it meant so much to her. Sadly, she never had the chance. So when I had the opportunity to go to London, England, for a conference in September, Rachel (our youngest daughter) and I decided to make that trip to Brighton.

Walking up to the front gate of her childhood home at 51 Queen's Park

Robert Friesen pictured at Brighton Beach, England, where his late wife, Deirdre, spent some of the happiest days of her childhood.



Photos submitted by Robert Friesen

Terrace, it was not hard to imagine her as a five-year-old running out the front door in her school uniform, ringing the door bell of her cousin who lived next door, racing each other through the neighbouring park to the primary school at the bottom of the hill, laughing all the way.

We retraced her route, each of us imagining her life here and appreciating why it was such an important part of her life. We walked from her house, through the park, past her elementary school, and down to the beach. We smelled the freshness of the sea air and threw stones into the sea like she did with her sister and cousins many years ago.

Grief keeps its own time and my experiences mirror what C.S. Lewis wrote after the death of his wife—that grief feels like suspense. It comes from

the frustrations of so many impulses that had become habitual. Thought after thought, feeling after feeling, action after action—all had Deirdre for their object. Now she is gone and I am left repeatedly with no further focus than myself.

It is hard to move on when the one you love is gone. We love many people during our lives (children, friends, family), but marriage is different. Marriage is memory, marriage is time, but in a way it's also the denial of time.

For the 24 years we were married I saw myself through Deirdre's eyes, and we did not age. This past year I saw myself through the eyes of others.

We can never expect that inner sense of loss will ever go away, even if the pain of our longing and loneliness eventually begins to subside. In some manner, that has begun. We miss her so much, but sometimes the memories of her are becoming “bubbles of time.”

—**Robert Friesen**

Originally published in the October 2005 issue of Grapevine, the Charleswood Mennonite Church Newsletter, Winnipeg. Canadian Mennonite profiled Deirdre Ramsey Friesen in a health series (Nov. 18, 2002, page 4) soon after her illness was first diagnosed. She died on Sept. 25, 2004.



A collage of photographs of Deirdre Ramsey Friesen from her memorial card.



Daughter Rachel Friesen pictured in her late mother's hometown of Brighton, England.

Whatever happened to ‘living simply’?

Back in the 1970s and '80s, a popular slogan went like this: “Live simply so that others may simply live.” I remember seeing the message posted on university campuses and hearing it preached from church pulpits.

I liked the slogan. It spoke truth, for it conveyed the idea that alleviating need was about resolving the basic injustice of some people having too much and others having not enough.

The slogan has fallen out of use and so, it seems, has the movement. To be sure, there continue to be small groups of people who choose “voluntary simplicity.” And there have been other movements over the years, such as “living more with less” and “living with enough,” as well as the more recent “Buy Nothing Christmas.” But in general the call to live simply seems conspicuously absent these days.

Perhaps the message of living simply so that others may simply live is just too simplistic (no pun intended). Just because I eat less meat or tropical fruit, it doesn't follow that peasant farmers in the Philippines will have more food for their children. Economic systems and structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice need to be transformed.

But the need for change at the macro-level does not mean that micro-level change—individuals choosing to live simply—is foolish or without value. There are many reasons why living simply is as critical today as ever, perhaps more so. Here are a few:

1. Living simply is an act of discipleship

Jesus soundly condemned the wealth-seeking of his own day. He called his disciples to seek first the kingdom and not to worry about what they would eat, drink or wear. He called the poor blessed and uttered “woes” against the rich, telling stories to illustrate his point. He declared

that mammon (love of wealth) prevented people from serving God. He warned against “laying up treasures on earth,” and told people to give away their possessions. A commitment to Jesus led members of the early church to share their goods with one another. Surely those who claim to be Christ's faithful followers must grapple with his clear call to a simple life.

2. Living simply encourages generosity

Jesus honoured the poor widow who placed two copper coins—all her wealth—into the synagogue treasury. He recognized that often times it is the poor who demonstrate the greatest spirit of generosity. The more stuff we acquire, it seems the less we are willing to part with it. A commitment to living simply encourages us to be more generous. When we are less attached to “our” money and “our” possessions, we are freed to share them with others. And when we give more freely and generously, we, in turn, find ourselves less concerned with acquiring more things.

3. Living simply demonstrates resistance

Our economy is driven by a culture of consumerism. Marketers and advertisers continually make us feel ashamed if our clothes are out of style, our car is old or we don't have the latest electronic gadgets. Living simply is a way of resisting this insanity. It is a way of being conscientious objectors to a society and an economy that depends on people being kept in a state of perpetual dissatisfaction. Someone has written that “conformity to a sick society is to be sick.” A tradition of nonconformity has historically been an important piece of the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage.

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A commitment to live more simply...pushes us to make intentional choices about those things which are truly life-giving, perhaps even limiting involvements that are good and worthy.



Photo by Ross W. Muir

Slogans such as this resonate with many consumers, making living simply more difficult.

Simply *From page 5*

That tradition, especially as it applies to the culture of consumerism, is worth rediscovering.

4. Living simply fosters sustainability

Living simply is a way of preserving God's creation. We all know that extravagant and wasteful lifestyles contribute to environmental depletion. Indeed, scientists with the "ecological footprint" movement indicate that if everyone consumed in the way that most North Americans do, we would need two to three additional planets to provide the resources and process the waste. The earth cannot sustain such a level of consumption. A commitment to live simply is a necessary part of valuing and helping to preserve God's creation.



Photo by Ross W. Muir

Ever notice how modern malls are designed to resemble medieval cathedrals where shopping can be worshipped?

5. Living simply invites discernment

A colleague recently lamented that her life was too busy to allow her to live simply. The pressures of time forced her to act in unsustainable ways. Too often she found herself throwing together meals of processed food when there were only 15 minutes to eat or making many extra excursions with the car to get her children to their various activities. Many of us know that reality. A commitment to live more simply makes us consciously confront the stresses and pressures in our lives. It pushes us to make intentional choices about those things that are truly life-giving, perhaps even limiting involvements that are good and worthy. It helps us to be discerning about our lives.

6. Living simply is an act of witness

A friend of mine chooses to take a bus rather than an airplane to Calgary, not because the bus is cheaper, but because it uses less fuel and thus is less harmful to the environment. The family of a colleague—one with teenagers, no less—chooses to live without a car. Yet another family chooses to shop at a downtown independent grocer rather than at the big superstore in the suburbs, thus paying considerably more for their groceries; they say they can better support local producers this way. All of these people are a witness and an inspiration to me. They encourage me to take another step on the path of faithful living and they remind me that there are others on the journey.

7. Living simply evokes celebration

Much of the impulse for the simple living movement has been middle class guilt. But guilt has little staying power. Moreover, guilt-motivated simple living will likely find expression in legalism and rigidity. We will find ourselves judging those who buy a certain house or take a certain vacation. Spirit-filled simple living, on the other hand, is characterized by joy, freedom and peace. It is grounded in God's promise of abundant living and enough for all people. It is the outward expression of a life focused on seeking first God's kingdom. It is an act of celebration.

—**Esther Epp-Tiessen**

The author is Mennonite Central Committee Canada's Peace Ministries coordinator.

do not have a simple answer for those who ask for our spare change. Many people hope that a Christian like me—who works in an emergency shelter—would have one, but I don't.

However, I do know my homeless friends long to be treated with respect and dignity. They no more want to be lumped together than you or I want one media-defined image of “church” or “Christian” to stand for all of us. Homeless people long to be listened to and really heard, as do the rest of us.

More people are homeless than most of us imagine. Every night thousands of Canadians have no other option than to stay in an emergency shelter. Even more disturbing are the large numbers of people who are sleeping on the streets or “in the rough.”

What would Jesus do? We know that Jesus had special care for the poor. He even kept a special money-box with funds for the poor. If the poor were of concern to Jesus, they should be of concern to us. If you want to show Christ's compassion for the poor, find out what resources are available in your local community and generously support them.

Be ready to help someone navigate his way through the bureaucracy to get the help and support needed. Do give money to individuals—if it makes sense. Or take the time to buy them a cup of coffee or a meal. Remember that transportation is always difficult, so a bus ticket may be even more appreciated.

You can also advocate for changes with city, provincial and federal politicians—changes that will deal not just with the symptoms, but the real issues of inadequate funding for those on social assistance and the lack of safe, affordable housing. Ask politicians to show care for those who are vulnerable in our communities.

Many Canadians look at homelessness and want to blame the victims, rather than see the strengths of those who are surviving. There is an alarming trend towards criminalizing a variety of street activities and classifying

Would Jesus give to panhandlers?



Photo by Ross W. Muir

certain individuals as the “unworthy poor.” You can ask politicians to resist attempts to criminalize the poor and the homeless. Fines and jail are not good answers.

The issue of homelessness is complex and overwhelming to most of us. When it personally intersects our lives—when someone asks us for money—we want to do the right thing. We want to do what Jesus would do.

Jesus broke through all stigmas and stereotypes. Jesus defended the vulnerable. Jesus gave with generosity, preserving the dignity of those he gave to. Jesus treated everyone equally and with respect.

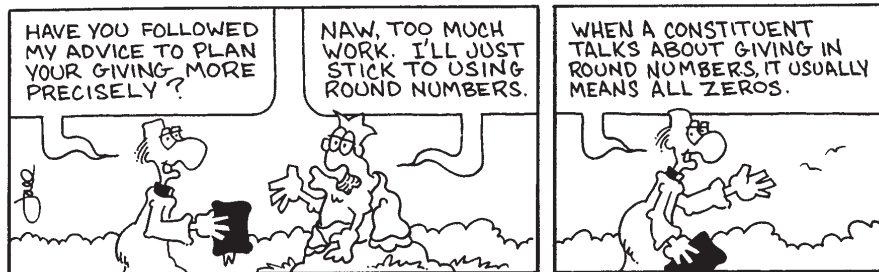
Would Jesus give to panhandlers? At least he would not have simply passed by or looked the other way. He wouldn't have seen a “panhandler” at all, but a unique, precious child of God. He might even have recalled the words of the prophet Micah, who summarized the Lord's requirements this way: “To love mercy, to do justice and to walk humbly with our God.”

—Leaurie Noordermeer

The author directs Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter, part of Mission Services in London, Ont. (originally begun in 1951 by Mennonite Alvin Roth). This column is one of a series from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Poverty and Homelessness Roundtable; it was originally published in Faith Today, September/October 2005, and is reprinted by permission of the author.

What would Jesus do? We know that Jesus had special care for the poor.

Pontius' Puddle



Letters

Key to land promises found in Genesis

I read with interest the articles in the Oct. 3 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* on Christian Zionism. I think there are clues to how the promise is intended to be received found in the text of Genesis itself. There, we see how Abraham, who received the promise, responded to it. Abram (before his name change to Abraham in Genesis 17) does not grasp for the promised land. Rather, he consistently acts as an alien and sojourner in it, thus reflecting his trust that it is God who is its rightful owner. His son Isaac shares his attitude.

In Genesis 13, the herders of Abram and Lot quarrel about grazing land. Abram gives Lot first choice of land, and goes the other way.

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

In Genesis 14, Abram does not take any booty from the defeat of King Chedorlaomer and the kings with him, even though Melchizedek identifies the source of the victory as "God Most High...who has delivered your foes into your hand."

In Genesis 23, Abraham calls himself a "resident alien" and asks the Hittite elders to approach Ephron son of Zohar on his behalf, so that he may purchase the cave of Machpelah. His polite, careful bargaining—and his refusal to accept the land for nothing—speak of his attitude of faithful

waiting, rather than grasping.

In Genesis 26, Isaac deals with a conflict between his herders and the Philistines over water by moving away until he finds space.

If we regard Jesus as in some way the inheritor of the promises made to Abraham, then we might further ask: How did Jesus exercise his kingship? His attitude is one of giving, of taking evil into himself, rather than perpetuating it. He loves his enemies, and does good to them. What would Jesus do, given these promises?

—**Marci Frederick, Edmonton**

Sending peaceful 'fires' this Advent

Have you ever considered sending "fire" in the mail as a great way of being a witness for peace? Not just any "fire," mind you; it should be "fire" created by the Advent candles on your dining room table.

Before going over the instructions for sending this "fire" in the mail, let's consider one of the famous Advent texts from Isaiah 9: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined."

Reading this passage as people living in the 21st century, we might think of newspaper headlines that speak of violence, racism, poverty and other marks of our own "land of deep darkness." But we might also think of how God is transforming the darkness with the good news of salvation, peace and reconciliation. Even while we stumble in the darkness, we wait with fervent hope for Christ to be born and for the world to be renewed.

So we light our Advent candles with hope. We light them with the conviction that the Prince of Peace is coming. We light them in anticipation of Luke 2, when the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all!"

We light the Advent candles because we ourselves are "on fire" for the coming of Jesus Christ the Great Light.

As we go about sharing this "fire" with the world, we open our peacemaking toolbox and find the well-used tool of letter writing. During Advent, let us add a distinctive touch as we compose letters to government officials and other powers-that-be. Let us not only speak clearly

Shoes for your feet

Matthew
Bailey-Dick



about ending violence and overcoming injustice, but let us be open about the Christian "fire"—faith—that motivates us to do such things in the first place.

Here's where the "fire" in the mail comes in: Make a commitment to write one letter to a political leader on one of the Sundays of Advent this year. Focus on an issue that you feel strongly about as a Christian—international debt cancellation, military spending, affordable housing, environmental protection—and express your views with confidence.

Leave some blank space at the top of your letter for the next instruction.

Since you are writing your letter by the light of the Advent candles—both literally and figuratively—take the first page of your letter and hold it over one of the Advent candles for a moment so that the candle begins to burn a hole in the paper. Make sure the candle burns a spot where there is no text, and make sure you stop the flame before it burns the whole paper. Then add a note explaining that this hole was burned from an Advent candle, and that this candle represents the Christian faith that drives you to be an active peacemaker.

Sound cheesy? Perhaps. On the other hand, think of the person who will open the envelope to find a letter with a charred hole in it. How curious! What's this about? You will convey the depth of your faith conviction even while you share your thoughts about an important peace and justice issue.

If you feel even more "flammable," send another letter to a Mennonite denominational leader. Burn a hole in that one as well, and write to that person about the importance of strengthening our church's peace witness in the world.

The author is the husband of one, father of two, and half-time pastor of many at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

Does God still consider Israel his favourite?

After reading the series of articles in the Faith&Life section of the Oct. 3 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, I feel appalled by the opinion in the articles. It seems that there's a need to cut the special relationship between God and Israel. One of the end results for that is to justify unlimited support to the Palestinian cause while forgetting the Israeli side.

The author of the "Christian Zionism: Their theology, our nightmare!" article uses Acts 10:34-35 to state that God has no favourites anymore. One cannot help but wonder if that was Jesus' intent? Could it be that Peter said that to encourage more non-Jewish people to join the emerging Christian church?

Now obviously one cannot simply ignore the message of the Old Testament. Moreover, some people seem to want to put limits to a limitless being as God. What about Amos, Hosea, Nahum and all those Jewish prophets to whom God promised that

Israel will be better off than other nations? Is it possible God forgot that he said that?

—**Rafael Leal, Winnipeg**

Honeyed words mask intolerable attitude

I shudder to think how a gay or lesbian person would have felt listening to Tony Campolo give his view of the world as it relates to people who are homosexual ("Is the homosexual my neighbour?" Nov. 14, page 17).

How their hopes would have soared as he argued eloquently that homosexuals are equal in all aspects of their make-up, how homosexuality is not a choice, how homosexuals are equal in the sight of God, and how everyone is responsible to show love to anyone who is marginalized.

How their euphoria would have been shattered as suddenly near the end of his sermon he disallowed their need for sexual expression and, in a blatantly condescending way, offered "AA like groups" in which they could find support for their frustrated need

for intimacy.

In my opinion, Dr. Campolo ended up placing individuals who are homosexual in a no-win double-bind and conveyed a most unloving and intolerable attitude with his honeyed words.

—**Ken Drudge, Komoka, Ont.**

White poppy campaign a peaceful alternative

I learned recently that a white poppy campaign has been present in the UK since the 1930s. White poppies are for peace.

Regardless of whether one also wears a red poppy, I think it's a good idea to start a white poppy campaign in Canada.

The politicians of the world must do more for peace, including implementing more alternative conflict resolution strategies, creating just conditions for all and prioritizing development.

White poppies are another means of reinforcing this message.

—**Howard Boldt, Saskatoon**

Grey hair: A countercultural statement

My hair is greying. Nicely, my mother tells me. I value her affirmation. Her black hair shaded beautifully into the soft white curls that frame her face now. The salt and pepper stage was particularly attractive. I only remember her mother, my grandmother, with grey hair. Now 95, her dimpled apple-like face is crowned with snow, soft as a baby's hair.

I have a choice about the colour of my hair, something the stylist reminds me regularly when she cuts it. In truth, it's partly laziness that determines my choice. I have difficulty imagining how I would keep up with regular hair colouring if I should go that route. This confession includes an acceptance of others who choose differently. Each one of us responds to our aging in a way that seems to fit us. Our context, histories and family patterns shape how we respond to the inevitable seasoning that the years wear into our bodies.

In my situation, I believe allowing

my hair to grey is a way of journeying the path of my elders. The white hair we three generations now share clearly marks us as no longer young. My hair, like theirs, is a testimony to the years I have lived. There is accomplishment in living half a century (in my case), threescore and ten (my mother) or nearly a century (my grandmother). It is good to celebrate the years rather than mourn the loss of youth.

Family Ties

Melissa Miller



I have been intrigued by the response of others to my grey hair. People who are younger than me hold open doors so that I can pass through ahead of them. I like this! The new dentist, a chirpy young woman with a ponytail, who appears to be about 16, recently patted me on the shoulder when she sensed I was anxious about a procedure—a response I found to

be both comforting and dissatisfying. It came across as a wee bit patronizing. On the positive side, I receive fewer catcalls from male strangers. Finally!

Outside my window, stately elm trees line the street. Bare of leaves, the beauty of their lines is revealed. Dark against the sky, their strong branches arch upward, each one unique in its twists and angles. The neighbour's crabapple, nearly leafless, is peppered with wrinkled dark red fruit. Its curled branches bow eastward, pressed by the west wind's steady force. A winter tree brings a different perspective, a different gift than that of a spring or summer tree. So it is with people.

My greying is a countercultural statement. Our dominant culture tends to ridicule and isolate its elders—a contrast to biblical understandings that those who have lived long should be respected for the wisdom they carry. Proverbs 23:22 can be paraphrased, "Listen to your male elders who gave you life and do not despise the wise women when they are old." Standing in our Christian tradition of countercultural witness, let us honour the grey in ourselves and in others.

Melissa Miller is a pastoral counsellor, author and teacher from Winnipeg.

Toronto

Bergen wins Giller prize

David Bergen, a writer and English teacher from Winnipeg, won the 2005 Giller prize for his recent novel, *The Time in Between*. The story is set in Vietnam, where a sister and brother search for their father who returned to Vietnam many years after the war. Bergen researched the book when he travelled to Vietnam as part of an assignment with Mennonite Central Committee.

This year, the Giller prize, awarded for excellence in Canadian fiction, is co-sponsored by Scotiabank and the prize was increased to \$40,000.

Bergen's earlier novels include *A Year of Lesser* and *See the Child*, as well as *The Case of Lena S*, which won the Carol Shields Winnipeg Book Award and was a finalist in the Governor-General's award for fiction.

—Barb Draper



thebuhouskiagency.com photo

David Bergen won the 2005 Giller prize for his novel *The Time in Between*.

Lisa Toews of Kitchener, Ont., sets type in the "History of the book" class at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. "There's something extraordinary about [books]," says Paul Dyck, CMU English professor who teaches the course. "It connects you with history when you touch something that was touched by readers hundreds of years ago." As part of the course, students also get to use an old printing press to print a poem, their own writing or some Scripture, using the age-old technology of moveable type—similar to what Johannes Gutenberg used when he invented the printing press in the 15th century. Dyck's goal is to help students see that books are more than just words on a page. "There's something incarnational about books," he says. "We can't fully think about knowledge without taking the technology of the book into account."

—CMU release



CMU photo by John Longhurst

Fresh recipes 'simply in season'

Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert. *Simply in Season: Recipes that celebrate fresh, local foods in the spirit of More-with-Less*. Herald Press, 2005.

The choices we make about the foods we eat reflect our values. *Simply in Season*, a cookbook commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee, challenges the reader to be in touch with how food is produced by choosing food that is in season and has not travelled a long distance from farm to table.

This is not a meat-and-potatoes or a fancy dessert cookbook. While there are 18 chicken recipes, 40 others include carrots. More recipes call for spinach than beef. Dessert recipes primarily involve fruit. The recipes are wholesome rather than exotic, but they stretch traditionalists to try new herbs and vegetables. Old-fashioned ideas are not forgotten, however; two recipes call for ground cherries!

The recipes of *Simply in Season* call for basic ingredients, not processed food. Even canned soup is only an alternative to "Cream Soup Substitute," and most ingredients can be found in a well-stocked kitchen.

The cookbook, with its vivid colour photographs, is organized into spring, summer, fall, winter and all seasons, according to when the vegetables and fruits are in season; some may well encourage the uninitiated to try new foods. Like the *More-with-Less* and *Extending the Table* cookbooks, this one also includes reflective pieces dealing with food issues. As well as nutrition suggestions, there are prayers and reflections on gardening and food preparation.

An unusual but very practical feature is the key ingredient list at the back. If you find something in the refrigerator that needs to be used up, it is easy to find possible recipes. Another interesting section is the guide to fruits and vegetables that includes descriptions and nutrient information, as well as suggestions for storage, preparation and serving.

—Barb Draper

Winnipeg

Spiritual rootedness emphasized at General Board meetings

An emphasis on spiritual or theological rootedness, combined with gratitude for organizational wellbeing, marked recent Mennonite Church Canada General Board meetings here. Members dealt with significant staff transitions, gave “due diligence” to a healthy year-to-date financial report (see sidebar article, this page), listened to council and committee reports, and discussed a variety of issues in preparation for Leadership Assembly next March.

The spiritually rooted tone of the meeting was set in the opening meditation by outgoing general secretary Dan Nighswander, who showed the new MC Canada video—*The Church: Why Are We Here?* The video empha-

sized that it is “God’s church” which precedes us and to which we belong, while our purpose is to be a blessing to others. This theme was picked up again at a farewell dinner for Nighswander celebrating his eight years of work with MC Canada, two as denominational minister and six as general secretary.

In closing remarks, Nighswander cited Ephesians 5:25—“*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*”—and said, “If there is anything left to think about as a lasting memory, I hope you will remember me as one who followed Christ also in this, that I loved the church.”

“Gratitude for organizational wellbeing” was reflected not only in a positive financial situation, but also in senior staffing transitions that were made easier, in part, because they were “routine” occurrences and several experienced replacements were found within the organization. Walter Franz, Peter Rempel and Nighswander all voluntarily moved on to other callings, while Jack Suderman, Janet Plenert, and Neill and Edith Von Gunten took up new roles within MC Canada.

The first report from the newly created Faith and Life Committee, given by chair Rudy Baergen of Bethel (Man.) Mennonite Church, “laid the groundwork” for the committee. The report was strongly affirmed by the General Board,

MC Canada finances holding steady

Mennonite Church Canada is reporting an encouraging financial situation to this point in the year. At General Board meetings, held Nov. 3 to 5 in Winnipeg, leaders reported that as of October revenues are 2.4 percent higher than forecast, while expenses are 2.6 percent below the financial plan for this fiscal year.

While the overall results are positive, staff are closely watching congregational giving, which this year is slightly less than last year.

“Congregations continue to be generous partners in all kinds of ways,” said Al Rempel, director of resource development. “Several congregations this year are funding new building or building expansion projects, and this may be having an effect on giving to MC Canada,” he speculated. The total value of gifts from individual givers continues a trend upwards, offsetting the decline from congregations.

This year is comparable to patterns from previous years: MC Canada normally receives 44.3 percent of its income in the last three months of the fiscal year (November to January).

“We are thankful for the generosity of givers and prayerfully encourage strong financial support from all of our ministry partners in these last months,” said incoming general secretary Jack Suderman. “We are considering some exciting opportunities for ministry growth and development. Hopefully we will be able to commit once we are confident that the year has finished well.”

—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**



Staff, family and General Board members presented Dan Nighswander, outgoing general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, and Yvonne Snider-Nighswander with an original painting of an African woman by artist Ray Dirks. “I was wondering where this painting had disappeared to,” quipped Nighswander, noting that the admired artwork had recently been on display in a conference room. An ethnic meal helped prepare the couple for their next role as MC Canada Witness workers in South Africa. They plan to begin their new work in August 2006, after Nighswander completes work on the Believer’s Church commentary on 1 Corinthians.

which congratulated the committee on its proactive stance and offered some counsel on how the two groups might work together on priorities.

Council business included:

- Approval of three property transfers from Witness/Native Ministries to aboriginal congregations and Mennonite Church Manitoba; and adding interim pastors to the group insurance plan for Support Services Council.

Continued on page 12

Photo by Dan Dyck

Whistler, B.C.

MEDA convention connects faith and work

Rarely can the sheer magnitude and magnificence of God's creation be clearer than it is from a gondola at 6,000 feet above sea level. For delegates at the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) convention, travelling to the snow-capped peak of Whistler Mountain was one of many highlights of a weekend filled with inspiring—and sometimes challenging—activities.

More than 400 people from across Canada and the United States gathered from Nov. 3 to 6 in Whistler for MEDA's 52nd annual convention whose theme this year was "Create a better world."

CEO Allan Sauder said the convention theme was seldom more fitting than in 2005. "A year that began with a growing awareness of the horror of the tsunami, that saw the devastation of hurricanes and earthquakes, and that is ending with the prospect of a global pandemic of avian flu, is surely a year when we need God's message of hope and new creation," he said.

MEDA programs of economic development and the commercial delivery of healthcare benefited 1.9 million families last year, according to Sauder. Among the highlights was a program to help home-based women embroiderers in Pakistan gain access to commercial markets that won a Canadian Award for International Cooperation

this year.

Sauder noted that MEDA has been working in "tough places" like Angola and Afghanistan. "We are often among the first into these post-conflict areas," he said. "We believe that just as economic development can help people become less vulnerable to natural disasters, micro-finance can help those who have suffered from years of warfare to recover a sense of community and stability. It is truly a powerful engine of peacebuilding."

The keynote speakers also reflected a desire to create a better world.

Privileged countries are not doing their part in the global fight against AIDS and "we can count the losses in millions of lives," according to Stephen Lewis, United Nations special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. The pandemic's "ferocious assault on the human condition" is "turning countries into cemeteries," he said. Despite this grim scenario, Lewis saw "glimmers of hope," as drugs have become more affordable, and testing and treatment more widely available.

Graham Kerr, having come a long way since his days as television's wine-imbibing "Gallop Gourmet,"

'Round" Sunday school curriculum and the *Sing the Journey* hymnal supplement.

Other issues discussed included the Joint Executive Committee report on the future of joint assemblies, a proposal for an education funding plan, MC Canada priorities and membership issues, all of which will receive further attention at Leadership Assembly.

—**Leona Dueck Penner,**
with files from **Dan Dyck**



Photo by Wally Kroeker

After his speech, Stephen Lewis signed a copy of his new book, *Race Against Time: The 2005 Massey Lectures*, for Margaret and Bill Fast of Winnipeg.

encouraged the audience to convert "habits that harm into resources that heal." Some time ago, he and wife Treena decided to eat less meat and more vegetables. Not only did this amount to a healthier diet, but by giving their monetary savings to a worthy cause the couple also contributes to creating a better world.

Two-time Olympic speed skating gold-medalist Catriona LeMay Doan told how, after a devastating fall at the Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, she became a Christian, pushed herself to follow her dream, and went on to win back-to-back gold medals in 1998 and 2002. LeMay Doan is now a widely admired Christian athlete; her message of striving for excellence was as relevant to MEDA businesspeople as it is to athletes.

Barj Dhahan, a Vancouver-area commercial real estate developer, described how his business has been a source of hope in the community and, ultimately, central to his faith.

—**Stephen Yantzi,**
with files from **Wally Kroeker**

Yantzi attends Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont. He is a fourth year political science student at Huron University College, the University of Western Ontario, London, Ont. Kroeker is editor of Marketplace, MEDA's magazine.

Meetings *From page 11*

- Acceptance—subject to legal counsel—of a new personnel policy manual for international workers, which involves liability issues drafted by Witness.

It was also reported by Lloyd Plett that Mennonite Publishing Network is "treading water" financially, but it has sold some stores that were not making money and is meeting its payments on schedule. In the interim, it is producing such new materials as the "Gather

Tavistock, Ont.

Delegate session enters 'the world of enough'

In the opening worship service at the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada fall delegate meeting on Oct. 29, several people circulated through the sanctuary, distributing chunks of bread at random to people in each pew. Those who received bread spontaneously began to break it into smaller pieces to share with those beside them. And behold, 12 baskets of bread were carried to the front by the servers! Thus all who gathered at East Zorra Mennonite Church that day were reminded by newly appointed executive minister David Martin—during his reflection on Jesus' feeding of the five thousand in John 6—that there is "more than enough."

"The miracle we need is for every member of MCEC—congregations, staff, pastors and people—out of generous and caring hearts to say, 'There is not much, but take it for blessing our sisters and brothers, here and around the world.'"

The delegates responded in hope, accepting the proposed new structures, and a revised council and staffing model, with a number of comments of affirmation and no dissenting votes. There was concern for youth and young adults, feeling that at least some staff time needs to be allocated to these areas. There was also a plea for attention to camps and schools in the new structures.

David Brubacher, departing minister to conference, and Martin spoke to the concerns and explained the changes.

The nine current commissions and Executive Board are being restructured into five councils: Executive Council, Mission Council, Leadership Council, Congregational Ministries Council, and Administrative and Financial Services Council.

Staff will be led by a leadership team, with a strong focus on collaboration. Although much of the work and ministries of the area church will be decentralized into the congregations



Maurice Martin photo

Grace Lao Mennonite Church was received into full MC Eastern Canada membership at the fall delegate sessions in Tavistock, Ont. The congregation shared in a litany with representatives from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, reflecting their special relationship, as they had met for 16 years in the St. Jacobs church facilities.

and the volunteer sector, there will be staff support as well as logistical support available from the conference office.

The 10 employees currently on staff will be joined by several more, some in the role of regional ministers. Martin noted that these regional ministers will be seen as "dispersed staff" within an as-yet-to-be-determined geographical formula. They will serve as resources to pastors and congregations,

helping congregations connect with each other and acting as brokers for resources in various areas as requested. "The philosophical shift is that all staff get 'out there' to build relationships," Martin said.

Brubacher explained that a leadership assembly is being planned to discuss how various groups interact and form a network of relationships through which congregations are kept

Continued on page 14

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Delegate *From page 13*

informed and served as needed. “We need to work on a communication model,” he said.

Budget concerns were addressed by Larry Martin, who said the plan is to work within the present budget plus a 3 percent inflationary increase, which he hopes congregations will raise.

Grace Lao Mennonite Church was received into full MC Eastern Canada

membership at the fall delegate sessions. The congregation shared in a litany with representatives from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, reflecting their special relationship, as they had met for 16 years in the St. Jacobs church facilities.

David Martin was installed as executive minister. He reaffirmed his baptismal and ordination vows, and was confirmed by prayer and the laying on of hands for this role.

—**Maurice Martin**

Nyangungu, Burundi

School provides ‘hope’ for Batwa students

Education has a special significance for Adrienne Nahimana, a mother of six children in Nyangungu, a hillside village of low brick houses, reddish dirt paths, and small plots of corn, banana and coffee.

Nahimana, 40, was never able to attend school as a child. She and her family are Batwa, an indigenous ethnic group that makes up about 1 percent of the population of Burundi, one of the

poorest countries in the world.

The Batwa have traditionally lived as hunters and as makers of grass mats and ceramics, but wild animals have all but disappeared and the market for Batwa crafts is vanishing too. Today, Nahimana is sending her children to school to learn how to survive in a changing world.

“Since I never received an education, I have no choice but to continue making pottery for a small income,”

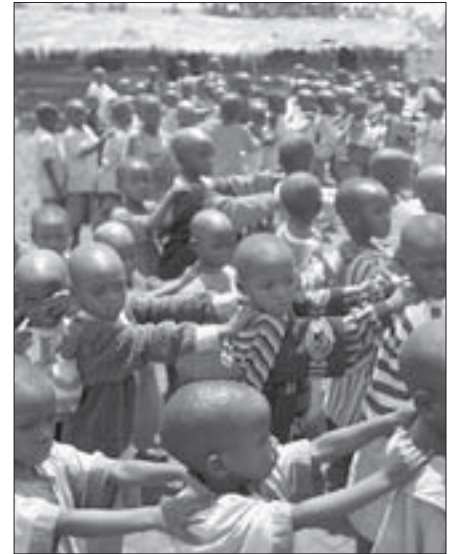


Photo by Matthew Lester

Students at Hope School line up in the schoolyard during an assembly.

Nahimana says. “I hope my children will have the chance to continue studying until secondary school so that they can have the chance to become something more.”

Two of Nahimana’s children attend Hope School, an elementary school in Nyangungu that she and other parents started in 2000 to serve the Batwa community and their neighbours. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has supported Hope School since its founding with about \$2,800 each year from its Global Family program.

The Batwa are believed to be the original inhabitants of Burundi, which is also home to an ethnic Hutu majority and an ethnic Tutsi minority. Misperceptions about the Batwa exist in Burundian society. The Batwa are often viewed as “unclean” people by members of Burundi’s other ethnic groups and are excluded when food is eaten. At Hope School, these ethnic divisions are being overcome.

“When we started the school, the Batwa students would go outside [at lunchtime],” says Zoe Safari, director of Hope School. “After that, we taught them that we are not Batwa, we are not Tutsis, we are not Hutus—we are one.”

Hope School is built on a hillside next to Nyangungu, and the schoolyard is the village’s main gathering area. It has four brick classrooms, six teachers and 180 students in match-

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ing green and yellow uniforms. Hope School includes a Kindergarten, which is unusual in Burundi, and teaches Kirundi (the national language), French, English, math, geography, history and science in three primary grades. Parents are pitching in by building a new classroom every year and tending a school garden.

"Next year, we are going to build the fourth grade here," says Rock Butoyi, a Batwa man with two children at Hope School. "As students, the kids are together—as parents, we also are one."

Butoyi recalls that there were only four other Batwa students in his class when he attended Grade 6 in a neighbouring town. "It was difficult for us," he says. "We couldn't get the school fees, so I dropped out.... There was no motivation—there was no one to encourage us to go to school."

Today, the village of Nyangungu has embraced education as never before.

"This school is...our heritage to our children," says Chartiel Nzibariza, the chief of Nyangungu. "Long after we are gone, our children will talk about the time this school was built—a school which I hope will open up opportunities to many Batwa, a school which will bring forth leaders in our community, in government. And many among them will be educated people in a just and peaceful society."

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Zachee Nzeyimana and Deanna Hiebert, MCC workers in Burundi, contributed to the article.

Bayou La Batre, Ala.

Gulf Coast grateful for Canadian relief workers

A group of 15 Mennonite Disaster Services (MDS) volunteers from western Canada returned last week from a weeklong work camp in Bayou La Batre, where they cleaned up and rebuilt homes in the wake of two devastating hurricanes—Katrina and Rita. Television images had prepared them for the physical devastation of homes, buildings and livelihoods, but many were not expecting the spirit of optimism,

Continued on page 16




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Volunteers *From page 15*

hope, warm hugs and gratitude they encountered.

"I thought they would be more depressed and there would be more tears," said Marianne Sawatzky, a Steinbach, Man., travel agent. "But they are so thankful and encouraging. I expected more people to be bitter, and they're not."

The crew of 14 from southern Manitoba and one Albertan left for Alabama to fix roofs, clean up yards and houses, and tear out drywall and the insulation to keep mould from growing in the homes in this Gulf Coast community known for fish, oysters and shrimp.

Reola Owens had her house and yard cleaned up by MDS volunteers. "I love them to death," she said. "They helped me not only physically, but morally and spiritually too. They will always be in my prayers."

In April, Danny and Christi Jones had purchased the house Christi had grown up in from her parents. It had



Photo by Bruce Hildebrand

Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers from Manitoba and Alberta repaired homes in Bayou La Batre, Ala., damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

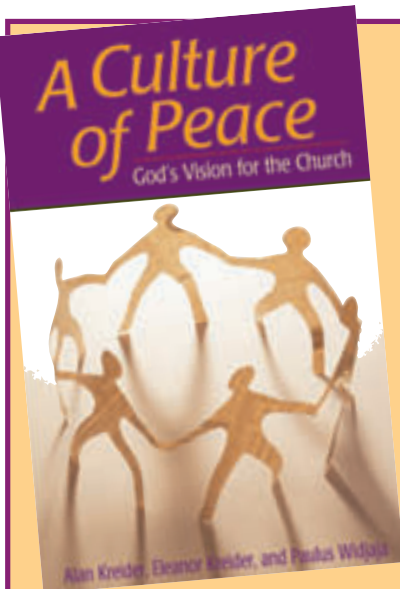
never been flooded—until Katrina. She never thought it would be possible, but now her family will be back in

their home for Christmas. "I have the people from Canada to thank," Christi said. "It's wonderful."

Bayou La Batre has weathered many other hurricanes, but only suffered wind damage in the past. This time, flooding added a whole new dimension to the damage. Dozens of fishing boats were washed up onto the shore. Houses along the coast, typically built on three-metre stilts the thickness of telephone poles, were torn off their moorings and pushed hundreds of metres into the bush behind them. Houses further inland, which had weathered many other storms but had never been flooded, were filled as the swells came inland.

According to project leader Bob Klassen, MDS is the only aid agency in this area for the long-term. He estimates crews will be here for three years and was thrilled with the workers who came from Manitoba. "They came here to work, and that's great," he said.

The team included Manitobans Jeff Reimer, 20, of Stuartburn, and



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his cousin, Paul Martens, 18, from Stephenfield. At first, Reimer did not think he would go. He had just bought a new truck and there was a lot to do on the farm. But while he was in the shower, he started thinking, "God doesn't call at a convenient time. And when he calls, you should go."

Martens was impressed at the gratitude expressed by the local residents. "People are so thankful," he said. "When they know you've come to help them, they brighten up."

Canadians have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to MDS for hurricane cleanup.

"Now I can see how important it is to donate money," said volunteer Ben Hiebert of Steinbach. "And not just money. Without the people here to do the physical work, it wouldn't happen."

More MDS teams from Canada and the U.S. were to continue coming to the area until mid-November. After a break for the holidays, they will resume in the new year.

—**Bruce Hildebrand**

Panabaj, Guatemala

Mudslides cause misery in Central America

Ariver of mud and boulders swept over this village of about 3,500 people when Tropical Storm Stan dumped torrential rains on a nearby mountainside in the early morning of Oct. 5.

"The sound [of the mudslide] was like a helicopter coming at 2 a.m.," says Lidia Ruth Recinos de Letona, as she recalls lying in bed on that dark and rainy night. "Then at 4 a.m., we heard the sound, and it was noisy like an earthquake."

Lidia and her husband Felipe Noé Letona Estrada saw the backyard flowing with mud, and they knew they were in a deadly situation. "All the neighbours started to cry for help, crying, 'O my children, O my children,'" Letona says with tears in her eyes.

Many of Panabaj's houses filled

rapidly with mud, but the Letona's house was on slightly higher ground, which allowed them to evacuate after the worst was over. Now Lidia, Felipe, their three children and a baby grandson are staying with more than 300 other survivors in a Baptist church in the neighbouring town of Santiago Atitlán.

The loss of their home is only one of thousands of tragedies in the wake of Stan, which caused flooding and mudslides in Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico. More than 1,000 deaths have been confirmed in Guatemala, as well as 72 in El Salvador and 28 in Mexico. In Guatemala, the hardest hit country, nearly 5,500 homes were destroyed and 75,000 people lost their belongings.

Mennonites in Guatemala City sent teams of church leaders and young adults to Santiago Atitlán, which is about 80 kilometres away, in the days and weeks after Stan hit. They brought food, clothing and bottled water to displaced families, and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided transportation and paid for some of the supplies.

On the first delivery, a team carried food and supplies by hand over a fallen tree trunk because a bridge had been washed away. The team met with shelter residents and learned about their sleeplessness, anxiety and other symptoms of trauma.

MCC is sponsoring teams of Mennonite youths and young adults from Belize, Guatemala City and Guatemalan K'ekchi communities to do cleanup, reconstruction and social work in the vicinity of Santiago Atitlán and in other affected areas of Guatemala.

MCC is providing \$750,000 for disaster recovery work in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and southern Mexico. This aid includes funds for building and repairing houses, providing seeds and tools for farmers who lost their crops, and sponsoring work teams from Central American Mennonite churches. MCC is also collecting relief kits, blankets, health kits and school kits for people affected by the storm.

Mario Higueros, a former dean of the Latin American Anabaptist semi-

nary, SEMILLA, plans to offer courses to help people deal with the trauma as soon as the roads become passable again.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**, with files from MWC

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Steinbach, Man.

How to be thankful when the crops are poor

It is easy to be thankful when the crops are great and the bins are filled to overflowing, but what if the crops are poor? What if there is no crop at all?

This was my assignment, to be presented at our Thanksgiving service on Oct. 16, as given to me by Pastor Mel Letkeman earlier in the week. Having grown up on a mixed farm just outside Steinbach, I didn't have far to go in order to carry out my research. A quick call to my parents—John F. and Mary Wiebe—and the interview was scheduled. I arrived just in time for lunch on the Thursday before Thanksgiving.

As mom and dad recounted the events of not just this year's struggles on the farm, but the disastrous year previous, I marvelled at the unshakable faith that had sustained them and wondered how I would respond if faced with such a test.

Mom brought out her diary—she keeps a journal of the farming activities each year—and as she read the entries (from 2004) I was struck by the repetitiveness of the lines:

May 1: Cultivated wet spots.

May 25: 14 mm of rain; fields quite wet.

May 30: More rain.

June 7: Another 32mm; getting stuck quite often; lots of mosquitoes.

Aug. 6: Still raining.

Aug. 26: 20 mm; on average, it rained every other day in August.

Sept. 9: Got stuck trying to swath; fields are terribly weed-infested.

Sept. 21-24: Alfalfa is wet; beef cattle little or no value, still need to have feed.

Sept 27: Start combining; crops poor; lots of weeds; getting stuck a lot.

Oct. 8: 12 mm of rain.

Oct. 19: Rained again; can't swath.

Oct. 24: Burned some of the crops that are so weed-infested.

Nov. 18: Temperature -4; have to plug in the combine.

Nov. 25: Put combine away; just



Photo submitted by Ken Wiebe

Fields in southern Manitoba have been so wet the last two years, that John F. Wiebe's combine got stuck on more than one occasion.

can't finish; too wet; very hard on machinery.

Now, let's fast forward to May 2005:

May 7: The large field of canola that was left in swath last fall: a 20-mph breeze, a two-cent match, and six hours later—\$60,000 was smoke and ashes.

That set the stage for the 2005 crop year, a year that was to be every bit as disastrous as the one that preceded it. With more than 50 centimetres of rain this year from April to July, the farm managed to seed only about 15 percent of the land. Many of the fields had such poor germination that they had to be cultivated to control the weeds. The combine, which normally puts on hundreds of hours in the busiest of seasons on the farm, hardly ran at all.

Mom got up to make the whipped cream for the pie. I glanced at the diary and saw that her latest entry was taken from Habakkuk 3:17-19: *"Though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, though the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation; The Lord God is my strength...."*
—Ken Wiebe

The author is a member of Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Man.



Mission Services of London photo

The late Alvin N. Roth (1913-2002) was remembered at the official opening of the Men's Mission and Rehabilitation Centre in London, Ont., this spring. Roth and his widow, Madeline, started the Goodwill Rescue Mission in 1951, which, in later years, became Mission Services of London, serving the city's homeless men, women and children. Pictured at the May 27 ribbon-cutting for the men's centre—which now provides 167 beds—were members of the "Campaign of Compassion" team; federal, provincial and municipal politicians; representatives from various government and social service agencies; donors and residents. Roth's widow, Madeline, was among the celebrants.

Virgil, Ont.

'Dreams bigger than memories'

Row by row, God will make this garden grow...." These very fitting words were sung by Sunday school children during the worship service that helped kick off the 40th anniversary celebrations at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, early last month. Still surrounded by vineyards and orchards, Bethany is a faith community guided by the organic vision of "growing God's goodness" and a mission of sharing a passion for the love of Jesus which meets the needs of our communities.

Birthdays and anniversaries involve memories, and these were shared throughout the weekend. However, the greater emphasis on seeking God's will for Bethany, now and in the future, was reflected in our theme, "Our dreams are bigger than our memories."

Following a potluck supper on Oct. 7, children marched up the centre aisle dressed in painter's caps and waving paintbrushes and rollers. This set the tone for our 40th anniversary fundraising project—refurbishing and enhancing the Sunday school wing. Increasing enrolment in Sunday school and Pioneer Girls Club, along with the need for a children's library, made improvements to the existing facilities necessary.

Walter Bergen, vice-president of development at Columbia Bible College, was guest speaker. Throughout the weekend, his stories—based on family and Mennonite history—kept listeners, both young and old, spellbound. His stories were designed to inspire us to more clearly envision a Christ-centred future for Bethany. His clear message was that God has woven a remarkable salvation story for us. "He [God] poured out blessings for Bethany, so that you might be a blessing for others," Bergen said.

Saturday's activities included a hike led by Buddy Andres. Eight men hiked the Niagara Glen, enjoying nature, challenging muscles and "bonding" while engaging in much discussion.

During the evening worship service, congregants acknowledged that Bethany has endured stress and growing pains, and that what has been accomplished is by the grace of God. This was symbolized by the "burying" of a seed in a pot of earth. Each person was invited to envision something the seed might symbolize, such as pain, injury or an unfulfilled dream.

The culmination of Bethany's 40th anniversary celebrations occurred on Sunday morning at a powerful Thanksgiving worship service. During

the senior choir's opening song, "Lord, We Come to Thank You," 40 congregants of various ages processed down the aisle carrying baskets of fruit and dry goods, symbolic of thanksgiving for Bethany's 40 years. The congregation was given opportunity to purchase the fruit following the service, and the proceeds—as well as all non-perishable items—were donated to Newark Neighbours, a community food bank.

Bergen's message was again a reminder that Christianity does not require specialized training. "Everyone can share love," he said. "It just needs exercise; you just do it." A response to this challenge was echoed in a verse from Bethany's 40th anniversary Litany:

"Praise be to you, God of Niagara, Canada, and all the world! We look to you to empower us; to grow your goodness in our communities! Set us on fire to be a light to the nations! We are your servants!"

—**Sylvia Wiens**

Advertising Due Dates

Issue	Copy due
Dec. 19	Dec. 6
Jan. 9	Dec. 27
(Focus on finances)	
Jan. 23	Jan. 10
(Focus on post-secondary education)	



The culmination of Bethany Mennonite Church's 40th anniversary celebrations occurred on Sunday morning, Oct. 9, during a powerful Thanksgiving worship service. During the senior choir's opening song, "Lord, We Come

to Thank You," 40 congregants of various ages processed down the aisle carrying baskets of fruit and dry goods. These were symbolic of thanksgiving for Bethany's 40 years.

Bethany Mennonite Church photo

Steinbach, Man.

Changes energize church

Many who attended the Thanksgiving service at Steinbach Mennonite may have wondered just what is going on at the church, as congregants appeared to dispel some persistent language assumptions. The service that morning included Scriptures read in German, Spanish, Sindabele, Amharic and English, while prayers were said in English, Spanish, Hindi, High German, Low German and Russian—all languages spoken by Steinbach Mennonite congregants.

Although English became the dominant language at Steinbach Mennonite over the years, the German service—while never entirely dropped—dwindled to a handful of senior participants. But with the recent massive influx of German- and Spanish-speaking immigrants from South America, the German service has grown to a good-sized congregation of around 150, many of them young families and youths.

In addition, the German-speaking youths and young adults now have their own praise and worship event—Powerline—that raises the once-staid rafters of Steinbach Mennonite in English, German and Spanish every other Saturday night.

Currently, the German and English services are held separately, but plans are being made to bring the two together, quarterly for now, but with increased frequency in the future.

Language isn't the only area in flux. The congregation now offers a traditional service, which includes hymn singing as well as popular praise choruses, and a more informal family-friendly service once a month. And just weeks after that breakthrough multilingual Thanksgiving service, a group from Steinbach Mennonite planted a church in Steinbach with the innovative name "God's Workshop"; its mission is to reach out to those who have felt on the fringes of church or community.

As well, Steinbach Mennonite's



Olga Epp photo

The Coaldale (Alta.) Mennonite Church Sunbeam Sewing Circle recently celebrated 60 years of service to the congregation, community and the wider Body of Christ. Charter members Anne Neufeldt (back row centre) and Erna Goertzen (back row right) are still active in the sewing circle.

youth programs are serving large numbers, with the Junior Youth program alone bringing in up to 34 children weekly. One enthusiastic Junior Youth put it this way, "It's where everyone wants to be!"

With so much happening, it is difficult for some members to keep up with all the changes, and there is always

a risk of alienation. The challenges at Steinbach Mennonite, as for many congregations, will be to adjust to changing demographic realities of the community while maintaining a feeling of being a stable church home to the many faithful long-time members.

—Noreen Janzen

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Leamington, Ont.

New retirement residence opened

A crowd of 400 gathered on Oct. 30 as Leamington Mennonite Home officially opened its new retirement residence. The opening marked the completion of the second phase of Project Home Rebuild, a \$9.9 million project that included the construction of a new long-term care wing and the redevelopment of the retirement residence.

The newly developed retirement residence now offers all private suites with adjoining washrooms, new lounges and renovated tub and spa rooms. The facility also includes three short-stay respite beds, and a palliative care room with adjoining family and sitting room.

The retirement residence provides 24-hour registered staff care, physiotherapy and a personal care program specifically designed for each resident. A highlight of the

renovations was the development of the new J.C. Neufeld Place of Fellowship, which will allow all residents in Leamington Mennonite Home to gather together for special celebrations, events and worship services. The new fellowship centre was made possible through the sponsorship of the J.C. Neufeld family.

—Leamington Mennonite Home release



The grand opening and dedication of Leamington Mennonite Home's new retirement residence took place on Oct. 30. Pictured from left to right: Agatha Neufeld, wife of the late Rev. J.C. Neufeld; board chair Robert Schmidt; and administrator Linda Tiessen.



Leamington Mennonite Home photo

Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home held its fourth annual gala dinner and silent auction on Nov. 5. The evening raised \$36,000 and was enjoyed by the 280 supporters that attended. Proceeds from the event will be used to purchase one resident lift and for the installation of protective wall mouldings throughout the new long-term care facility.

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Mission & Service

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As the binational disaster response agency in Canada and the U.S. representing most Mennonite conferences and churches, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) responds, rebuilds and restores.

Volunteers respond in the name of Christ by helping communities with disaster responses in most provinces—Quebec and Labrador/Newfoundland need developing in this regard—under the direction of area MDS boards. Recent Canadian disasters have included floods in Peterborough, Ont., southern Manitoba, Cudworth, Sask., and Calgary, and tornados in Manitoba and Perth/Wellington counties, Ont.

MDS clients include homeowners who are un-insured, senior, disabled, widowed or single parents—those whose needs are unmet by the structures of family and government.

Since 1994, MDS has been financially separate from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and relies exclusively on donations to support volunteers who bring hope and restoration to disaster survivors.

MDS has received generous cash and in-kind donations since hurricanes

Continued on page 24

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MDS From page 23

Katrina and Rita hit the U.S. Gulf Coast. These monies will be used over the next several years to transport, house and feed volunteers who donate their labour to survivors; and also to buy or rent vehicles, tools, kitchen supplies and trailers for volunteer housing at project sites.

The majority of volunteers come from Mennonite or other Anabaptist churches, either for the short-term (one to three weeks) or for the long-term (two months or more). Short-term volunteers clean up, repair and rebuild the homes of survivors under the direction of a long-term team. Mennonite college students serving work-term requirements are welcome at project sites, as are youth groups who may apply for a week of service at summer youth projects.

On average, about 500 Canadian volunteers serve at binational projects each year; more than a third of them are under 26. More than half of the 200 long-termers are Canadians each year. Another 500 volunteers serve at local projects across Canada.

Currently, MDS is working at six sites in the Gulf Coast area and three more in Florida. Short-term volunteers are still needed at some of the Gulf sites before Christmas (until Dec. 17), along with both short- and long-termers from next April to September.

Partner non-governmental organizations and governments are asking MDS what its role might be if a pandemic or other public health emergency—such as avian flu—arises. The larger church body is also beginning to explore its role in such an event, which could affect large groups of people in our faith and larger communities. MDS is meeting with these groups and interested individuals to discern where and how MDS and the church could be of help in such a disaster.

For more information about MDS and its ongoing projects, visit www.mds.mennonite.net or call 1-800-241-8111.
—MDS release by **Lois Nickel**



Photo by Evonne Komaromi

Various Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) units are alive and well in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Lethbridge, Alta., under the new name of Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure. Anne Baumann, a Toronto MVSer, is pictured at Day Care Connections, where she serves. “When another volunteer and I first arrived, there were two MVSErs already living in the house,” she says. “They made a meal for us and when they said grace they thanked God for us.... Now we are all friends. We have a meal together every Sunday and we share the cooking during the week. We have invited the congregation of Danforth Mennonite Church over for a potluck to get to know the MVS community and what they, as a church, support.” The Montreal MVSA unit is looking for applicants willing to make a two-year commitment.



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Borabur, Thailand

Missionaries get visit from home church

Thailand may be a country with much poverty, but it is rich in happy, friendly people, four members of Bethel Mennonite Church learned on a recent missions trip.

Teachers Jessica Horst and Charlene Redekop, homemaker Monica Epp and daycare worker Annette Wiebe spent Oct. 13 to Nov. 1 visiting and supporting fellow Bethel members and Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Pat and Rad Houmphan in Borabur, Thailand. The trip was arranged and partially funded by the Bethel congregation.

While in Thailand, the four women helped members of the local Living Waters Church and Community Centre run three four-day English camps for children. Each camp day began with singing, followed by skits and language classes to teach English



Charlene Redekop teaches Thai children about fruits and vegetables during an October missions trip with other members of Bethel Mennonite Church, Langley, B.C.

honoured that white people came to her daughter's funeral. She gave us gifts." After the funeral, conducted by Pat Houmphan, the *Jesus* film was shown to those who attended.

The missions trip to Thailand was a first for Horst and Wiebe, but Epp and Redekop had made a previous trip to Thailand three years ago. They observed that the church at Borabur, with only about two dozen attenders in 2003, had sustained "remarkable growth" in the intervening time. "The leadership is strong and they're really committed to the people of Borabur," they noted.

The Houmphans have been serving in Thailand since 1996.

—Amy Dueckman

vocabulary and comprehension.

Using a Vacation Bible School model, the teachers were able to use Bible stories as one method of instructing English. Although Thailand is mainly Buddhist, 2 percent of the population is Christian, and the local children are influenced by both religions.

A funeral that took place during the time the Canadians were there also proved to be a point of witness, according to Horst. "It had a real impact on the family," she said. "The woman who died was Christian, though no one else [in her family] was. The mother was so

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Photo by Bill Bryson

Taking part in the Enbridge CN Tower Stair Climb for the United Way, members of the Toronto Mennonite Volunteer Service Adventure (MVSA) Unit recently made it up all 1,776 steps to the observation deck, raising \$400 in the process. Pictured in descending order are Jerry Kahlert, Albert Dimmel, Daniel Jarzabkowski and Anne Baumann; the latter three are from Germany and are serving with MVSA as an alternative to military service.

People&Events

Harrisonburg, Va.—Justin Zacharias of Winkler, Man., left Nov. 3 for an eight-month assignment with a Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team to Det Udom, Thailand.

The team is sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions, Salunga, Pa.

Zacharias spent three months training at the Harrisburg (Pa.)



Zacharias

Discipleship Center before his departure; he plans to return home in May 2006. While in Det Udom, Zacharias and the four other YES team members will teach English in local schools, build relationships and intercede in prayer.
—EMM release

Winnipeg—A coalition of faith groups (including Mennonite Central Committee), in partnership with a credit union and the Manitoba government, is making a difference in Winnipeg's inner city. Jubilee Fund Inc. is celebrating five years of providing loan guarantees for small business ventures, housing projects and community projects that benefit people with low incomes. Funds for loan guarantees are provided through Jubilee Investment Certificates purchased at the Assiniboine Credit Union. "The certificates are purchased mainly by faith groups and individuals who have a desire to use their money to provide assistance and encouragement to people who dream of a better life," says alternative risk manager Terry Terichow. "The interest rates on these certificates are below market rates and there is some risk attached to them, [but] to date loan write-offs have been minimal." More information about the Jubilee Fund is available at

www.jubileefund.ca. "The founding members of the Jubilee Fund believe in the abundance of God's creation and our responsibility to nurture and share it," says Sister Denise Kuyp, who served as the first chair of the board. "We are convinced that the gross inequality which we see in our city, our country and our world are neither necessary nor inevitable. We are choosing to live out the Jubilee vision that calls for a regular redistribution of wealth."
—Jubilee Fund release

Caronport, Sask.—The Briercrest Family of Schools has appointed Dwayne Uglem as the institution's next president; he was named interim president in May 2004, and officially began a four-year term as president on July 1. A ceremonial inauguration took place on Nov. 10. Uglem's plans for the presidency include clarifying the mission and vision of the organization, finding new ways to connect with the evangelical Christian church, focusing on the assessment of student learning and growth, and refining the institution's funding model to ensure long-term fiscal health.
—Briercrest release

New York—Some 40 college students and faculty from Canada and the United States delved into issues of development, conflict, peacekeeping and the use of force at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) UN office's 10th annual fall seminar, held Oct. 20 to 22. The seminar raises awareness about how the United Nations deals with these issues and the role of MCC's UN Liaison Office. This year's event focused on conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in northern Uganda. "The point of the conference is to really push students going to Anabaptist colleges to look deeper and really grapple with these issues from an international peace and development stance," said Muhawu Lumeya, a program

associate for MCC's UN Liaison Office.
—MCC release

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Enns—to Valerie and Jeffrey, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., a son, Jonathan Ryan Dustin, Aug. 26.

Gedcke—to Lianne Clarke and Greg Gedcke, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., a son, Noah Clarke, Oct. 24.

Pries-Mallet—to Anita and Greg, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., a daughter, Madeleine Rose, Oct. 12.

Reynolds—to Laurel (nee Jantz) and Rob of Winnipeg, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., a daughter, Calla Colleen, Nov. 1.

Sauder—adopted by Julia and Phil, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Gemma Xinai (b. Oct. 2, 2004).

Shigali—to Liz and Shigali, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a daughter, Amani Naomi, Oct. 14.

Shrimpton—to Miriam and Ryan, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a son, Nathan Samuel, Sept. 6.

Voth—to Barb Nickel and Bevan Voth, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a son, William Lukas, Aug. 23.

Marriages

Elias-Hiebert—Ryan (Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Lori, in Winnipeg, Oct. 16.

Entz-Heppner—Zachariah (of Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Robin, in Winnipeg, Aug. 20.

Fischer-Leili—Aaron and Jennifer, North Leamington United, Ont. Nov. 5.

Froese-Bieman—Aaron and Melanie, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 21.

Hoepfner-Cullingworth—Garth (of Morden Mennonite, Man.) and Christine, in Truro, N.S., Oct. 1.

Mauer-Hogue—Robert and Rosemarie, Springstein

Mennonite, Man., Oct. 29.

Rion-Derksen—Jeffrey and Lindsey, Bergthaler Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., Oct. 9.

Willms-Crozon—Waldy and Maria, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Oct. 29.

Deaths

Bartel—John Harvey, 43, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., Oct. 2.

Buhr—Sarah, 79 (b. March 18, 1926), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Sept. 28.

Gerber—Lorne, 61, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., Oct. 27.

Giesbrecht—Minna, 85, Morden Mennonite, Man., Nov. 13.

Martin—Amanda, 89, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 31.

Pauls—Henry H., 94, Morden Mennonite, Man., Nov. 14.

Small—Dora, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., Sept. 1.

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

News brief

Canned turkey shipped to Nepal

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is shipping more than 19,000 cans of turkey to Patan Hospital in Lalitpur, Nepal. The canned meat will supplement hospital patients' diets. Earlier this year, MCC sent hospital beds, newborn kits and baby blankets to stock a new maternity wing of the hospital, which is owned by the government and jointly operated by a local board and United Mission to Nepal (UMN), an umbrella organization for development work.
—MCC release

Mennonite Church Canada

Advent prayer requests

This Advent, as we think about and thank God for what we have, do not have, and still want (see 'Living simply,' page 5), pray for:

- Nima, a widow with three children who received a new home in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, through the help of Joint Christian Services International (JCS). Marlow Ramsay, MC Canada Witness worker with JCS, was involved in helping Nima and her family get a home after learning about how she found needed items for survival by sorting through garbage.
- Neill and Edith von Gunten, co-directors of Native Ministry, as they travel across Canada to network with other Christian organizations that work with aboriginal people, many of whom live in Third World conditions in Canada. Pray that, as individuals and organizations, we may all be good stewards of what God has granted to all peoples.
- Students who want to learn, but cannot afford tuition. In particular, remember students of Benin Bible Institute as they study and learn to become leaders in their communities. Pray for Bruce Yoder and Nancy Frey, MC Canada Witness workers in Benin, as they teach from an Anabaptist perspective and train church leaders for tomorrow.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

'If I had three wishes...'

"I wish there would be an 'agitation agent' in each congregation—doing new things and asking questions," said

one pastor at the new pastor orientation meeting with MC Eastern Canada staff this fall. A staff person wished "that we would 'go out on limbs together' and take risks."

What follows are additional responses to the discussion starter, "If I had three wishes I would wish that..."

- Pastors wish that MC Eastern Canada staff would tend to the vision of our corporate life. They hope for an increased familiarity with, and ownership of, the conference vision statement, "Extending the peace of Jesus Christ."
- Staff wish for a strong relationship between conference staff and congregations. They wish that "the conference would be thought of as 90 churches, and not 4489 King St. E. [conference office address in Kitchener]."
- Staff wish that pastors and congregations would see pastors as life-long learners. Pastors also hope that this supportive relationship would include other congregational leaders as well.
- Pastors wish that MC Eastern Canada "language" would be understood by those in the pew.
- Staff wish that we would stop playing "the Mennonite game" by using acronyms that are not inclusive to new people or visitors.
- In an attitude of mutuality, staff wish that we would hold one another in prayer, that the collegial relationships would be strengthened and we would be able to be "real" with each other about ministry. Pastors wish that God would give the wisdom to know God's wishes!

Transition notes

Several staff members are wrapping up their current interim ministry with MC Eastern Canada:

- Matthew Bailey-Dick—Peace Evangelism;
- Heather Gallian—Youth

Ministries;

- Sandi Hannigan—Christian Education; and,
- Yoel Masyawong—Student and Young Adult Ministries.

We celebrate their ministry and time with MC Eastern Canada.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Delegates discuss church health, future

On Oct. 27, delegates gathered at Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg for the fall delegate meeting of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Much of the meeting was spent in prayer, remembering God's faithfulness in the past, recognizing the signs where God's kingdom is breaking into the world today, and asking for direction and faithfulness for the future.

MC Manitoba invited delegates and the churches they represent to join in a season of prayer as the churches, together and separately, go through an 18- to 24-month process of discerning where we are going. Edgar Rempel, executive director, and MC Manitoba ministry directors helped to clarify that this process—known as "Our health and our future"—is an opportunity for each congregation to reflect on its own purpose, worship and ministry, as well as look at the spiritual and life issues that may require corporate discernment.

Delegates discussed the proposed budget for 2006-2008, approving a 3.2 percent increase over 2005. Some expressed concern that there is still a long way to go to meet the 2005 giving budget.

Delegates also gave provisional approval to the 2006 ministry revenue, expense and capital budget that awaits final approval by the board. The budget line for new program initiatives remains unchanged,

at \$21,000, and this allotment will only be spent when the money comes in. New program initiatives include growth opportunities in church planting and in leadership, and restoring *Canadian Mennonite* funding.

John Klassen, Leadership Ministry director, led a discussion on proposed ordination expectations in MC Manitoba. "We, the churches, share common values," he said. "It is important our leaders are qualified to foster these values."

Sven Eriksson said these expectations "will be useful for candidates from our own ranks and from other denominations. One in five pastor candidates came from other denominations this past year. We need to pay attention to the things we want to cultivate for the long-term."

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Volunteers keep rural churches 'vibrant'

Although on MC Saskatchewan conference books the Vibrant Rural Church Project is officially finished, Naomi Unger and Eric Olfert continue to volunteer time and effort toward the needs of smaller churches in the province.

"We're continuing to share the findings from the listening we did," said Unger recently. The duo have travelled to Saskatoon, Muenster, Sask., and Manitoba, presenting the information that has both delighted and amazed them about the strength, passion and resiliency of rural churches in Saskatchewan.

Now Unger is preparing a facilitator's manual to help churches discern the needs of their communities and how to match the strengths of the congregation to the needs of

their neighbourhoods.

“When we visited the 10 [rural] churches, we saw a real desire to connect with the community,” explained Unger. That desire became the inspiration for a workshop they developed to “help congregations see what God is doing and how they can help.”

Called a “community listening workshop,” Unger and Olfert are offering the collection of suggestions to MC Saskatchewan churches. In addition, Unger hopes to have the manual finished before Christmas and eventually on the MC Saskatchewan website: www.mcsask.ca.

Clarification

In replacing the retiring Vern Ratzlaff at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Ken Bechtel will come on staff as an interim co-pastor. He will minister with the church’s other co-pastor, Anita Jantz. Incomplete information was included in the Oct. 17 TheChurches column. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Guided spiritual retreat offered

From Jan. 24 to 26 the MC Alberta pastors council will be holding a special retreat for pastors and their spouses at the Sanctum Retreat Centre near Caroline, Alta. The focus of the silent, guided retreat is on spirituality.

Sanctum founders and directors Kristoph and Mariette Dobrowski will provide the guidance. They are trained lay Catholic theologians, teachers and musicians with 15 years experience in leading such retreats. The experience should be an excellent time for self-reflection and spiritual renewal.

For more information, contact conference pastor Jim Shantz.

Churches welcome MC Canada reps

On Oct. 23, 16 congregations

from across Alberta hosted speakers from MC Canada’s Formation and Witness Council. The council was meeting in Calgary, and made a great effort to get out to all the Alberta congregations for Sunday morning worship.

Some council members preached, some led Sunday school discussions, and some led congregational singing. In all, this was an excellent way for congregations to be reminded of the work of the larger church and to make connections with the good people involved in doing that work.

Thank you to all those involved in the planning and extra time and travel council members put in on that weekend!

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Sneak peek at ‘Gather ’Round’

Parents and Sunday school teachers of several Fraser Valley Mennonite churches

had an opportunity recently to view the new “Gather ’Round” educational materials that will be available for use beginning fall 2006.

Elsie Rempel of Winnipeg, director of Christian Education and Nurture for MC Canada, led the seminar at Emmanuel Mennonite on Nov. 19 to introduce the new curriculum. Two interactive workshops were part of the half-day seminar, with the host church using the materials the next morning in an intergenerational Sunday school class.

“Gather ’Round: Hearing and sharing God’s good news” is a Sunday school curriculum for children, youths and parents.

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) and Amy Dueckman (British Columbia). See page 2 for contact information.

Farewell reflections

This column is the last of several opportunities for me to say “farewell” as I leave the office of general secretary on Nov. 30.

As I reflect on the years I have served in leadership in the national church (two as denominational minister and just over six as general secretary), I feel a great deal of gratitude. During this time we have accomplished together some very significant achievements that continue to bear fruit in changed lives, strengthened congregations and faithful witness. Some have wished for more; some have disagreed with decisions and actions. But I have been deeply encouraged to hear from so many people who have appreciated and supported the work we have been doing.

When this column was introduced in January 2000, I wrote in the first article a request for your prayers on behalf of us who are charged with leadership responsibility. You have done

so. I have been especially encouraged by notes from people who told me that they were committed to praying for me daily.

Thank you for the support you have given me with your prayers, your encouragement and your participation in our shared ministry. I urge you to give the same, and more, to Jack Suderman as he takes up the general secretary’s mantle. I wish him and all the staff God’s rich blessing.

I am pleased to continue my ministry, together with my wife Yvonne, in the service of Mennonite Church Canada through our/your Witness program. I have been deeply impressed by the commitment and the rich giftedness of our mission workers. I have been moved and thrilled by their reports of what God is doing through them, with your support. I hope you follow closely the mission stories in *Canadian Mennonite* and on the www.mennonitechurch.ca website.

We have a very effective mission program, one that promotes the planting

From our leaders

and development of the kind of churches and the kind of disciples that we believe God wants to have. As our new Identity and Purpose Statement says, we “engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

As I end this part of my ministry I reflect on Paul’s words of thanksgiving to the church in Philippi (Philippians 1:3-11) and note that almost every word expresses how I feel about Mennonite Church Canada. I quote only the final sentence: “*This is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.*”

Dan Nighswander is the outgoing general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.



Messiah benefit for Somali educators

Hanover, Ont.—The Martin Family Singers will perform Handel's *Messiah* in Hanover on Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m.

This is the second time the family has gathered to raise money in support of two Somali graduates of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and Goshen College, who are now building a Mennonite school in the northern part of their country.

Conducted by Robert L. Shantz, the Martin Family Singers will feature Elaine Pearce, Jennifer Enns and Brandon Leis as soloists. An 18-piece orchestra will accompany the group.

Tickets are available by calling Ernie Martin (519-369-3572). The dress rehearsal at Rockway on Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m. is open to the public for a freewill donation.

—**Tim R. Dyck**

Senior Sports Classic set for next June

Goshen, Ind.—The fifth biennial Mennonite Senior Sports Classic will be held on the Goshen College campus, June 15 to 17, 2006.

Sponsored by the Mennonite Association of Retired Persons (MARP), the Senior Sports Classic will include approximately 40 different competitive events and several new events that will be open to walk-on participants. Anyone 50 years and older by July 1, 2006, may compete in as many events as they can schedule during the three-day period.

The new participation events include a fun walk, a recreational bicycle tour and aerobic swimming. Planners are also organizing a tour of the Merry Lea Environmental Center, a photography exhibit, dinners, speeches, and music to entertain the participants

and their families and friends during their stay on campus.

Registration and lodging will be coordinated by the Goshen College Conference and Events Office. The new apartment complex for senior students and other on-campus housing options will be made available to participants at a reasonable cost. Registration forms will be sent to MARP members and other interested individuals in January. —MARP release by **Stuart W. Showalter**

Calendar

British Columbia

Jan. 13-15: Emmanuel Mennonite Church 25th anniversary.

Jan. 27-29: Visit the CBC booth at Missions Fest, Vancouver.

Feb. 3,4,10,11: MCC fundraising banquets—Bakerview MC Church, Abbotsford (3); Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove (4); Yarrow MB Church (10); Fraserview MB Church, Richmond (11).

Feb. 18: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. presents "The David Toews Story" lecture by Helmut Harder, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, 7 p.m.

Feb. 20: Bethel Mennonite Church 70th anniversary.

Feb. 24-25: MC B.C. annual general meeting, Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

March 17-18: Youth workers conference "Stumbling into church" with Renee Altson, at Columbia Bible College.

April 8,9: Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (8), and Knox United Church, Vancouver (9).

April 21: Columbia Bible College spring concert.

April 28-30: Jr. Youth IMPACT retreat at Camp Squeah.

May 7: B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission Inspirational Day, First Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

May 26-27: "Come to the table: A conference on the arts in worship" explores the theme of collaborative worship (dance, drama, visual arts, writing for worship, storytelling and more). Keynote speakers from AMBS: June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough. For more information, e-mail Angelika Dawson at music@emmanuelmennonite.com.

Alberta

May 6-7: Songfest in Edmonton. A choir from Canadian Mennonite University will be the featured guests.

May 26-28: Women in Mission annual retreat at Camp Valaqua. Theme: "Women in conversation: Celebrating women's lives."

June 2-4: Foothills Mennonite Church 50th anniversary celebrations.

Saskatchewan

Dec. 21: Rosthern Junior College Christmas concert, 7 p.m.

Jan. 6-7: RJC Alumni Tournament of Memories.

Jan. 13-15: "Refreshing Winds" retreat at Shekinah. Theme: "Worshipping through music," with a focus on the new *Hymnal* supplement, *Sing the Journey*.

Manitoba

Dec. 3,4: Southern Manitoba Choral Society presents "A Star Shall Come Forth: A Christmas Candlelight Service," Buhler Hall, Gretna (3), and Winkler Berghaler Church (4); both services at 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 18: North Kildonan Mennonite Church Quartet annual Christmas concert, at the church, 7 p.m.

Dec. 19: Westgate alumni holiday reunion, 6 to 8 p.m., cafeteria.

Dec. 21, 22: Mennonite Collegiate Institute Christmas concerts at Buhler Hall, Gretna, 7:30 p.m. (21) and 1:30 p.m. (22).

Jan. 13-15: Young adult retreat at Camp Koinonia: "Get engaged...with the church!"

Jan. 19-22: Canadian Mennonite University presents "Bachfest" (lectures, sing-along and concerts on the theme of "Bach as saint?").

Jan 20: "Infusion," an evening of worship for youth and young adults, Canadian Mennonite University.

Jan. 20-22: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 3-5: MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 10-12: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Feb. 24: Opera workshop, Canadian Mennonite University.

Feb. 24: Leadership seminar at Gretna Berghaler Mennonite Church.

Feb. 24-25: Annual delegate session at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, hosted by Gretna Berghaler Mennonite Church.

March 3-5: Families, friends and persons with a disability retreat at Camp Assiniboia.

March 5: Canadian Mennonite University presents "Choral Connections," 7:30 p.m.

March 10-12: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

April 6: Canadian Mennonite University presents "Jazz at CMU," 7:30 p.m.

April 22: Annual spring concert, Canadian Mennonite University, 7:30 p.m.

May 29-31: Plus 55 retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

June 5-7: Plus 55 retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Ontario

Dec. 6: RESP seminar hosted by Mennonite Savings and Credit Union in Leamington, 7:30 p.m.. Call 1-888-672-6728 to register.

Dec. 7: Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture at Conrad Grebel Great Hall, by former MCC executive director Ron Mathies: "Responding to the tsunami and Darfur crises." 7 p.m.

Dec. 9,10: Fifth annual Christmas concerts by the R.J. Kruisselbrink Sisters, Woodside Bible Fellowship, Elmira, 7:30 p.m. both evenings. Their new CD, *His*

Eye is on the Sparrow, will be available. For more information, e-mail rjk@bmts.com.

Dec. 11: Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Orchestra presents "The Great Choruses of Christmas," Wilfrid Laurier University, 7 p.m.

Dec. 11: "Gloria" Christmas concert by Menno Singers with InterMennonite Children's Choir at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, 3 p.m.

Feb. 11: Menno Singers present "Line by Line: The Art of Polyphony" at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

May 13: Menno Singers present "Psalms and Hymns" with Marilyn Houser Hamm, Zion

United Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m.

U.S.A.

Jan. 23-27: AMBS pastors week, Elkhart, Ind.

March 9-15: MWC mini-assembly, U.S. Center for World Missions, Pasadena, Calif.

June 1-3: "Holding fast to our faith: Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective 10 years later" conference, AMBS, Elkhart, Ind.

Oct. 26: Mennonite/s Writing: Beyond Borders conference, Bluffton University, Ohio. Keynote speaker: Kathleen Norris. Submissions of Mennonite writing sought. For details, visit: www.bluffton.edu/eng/conference/.

Please send Calendar events by e-mail to: calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

For rent

Winter getaway for families or groups—horse and sleigh rides, tobogganing, skiing, snowshoeing and hot tub. 30 min. from ski resorts. Riverstone Retreat Centre, Ernie and Edith Martin 519-369-3447.

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Advertising Due Dates

Issue	Copy due
Dec. 19	Dec. 6
Jan. 9	Dec. 27 (Focus on finances)
Jan. 23	Jan. 10 (Focus on post-secondary education)

Subscriber services Mennonite

How to subscribe:

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

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- 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
Phone: (519) 884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext.221
Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

APPLICATIONS INVITED TO THE FRANK H. EPP MEMORIAL FUND

The administrative committee of the Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund invites applications for study/work projects which further Epp's vision for scholarship and peacemaking in Canada and throughout the world.

The committee annually distributes approximately \$2,200 to support projects dealing with history of minorities (especially Mennonite), peacemaking (particularly in the Middle East), Mennonite ecumenicity and communication of the Christian faith. Preference is given to Mennonite and Brethren in Christ persons who are studying or working in Canada.

Information and application forms are available from our website: grebel.uwaterloo.ca/academic/undergrad/pacs/epp.shtml

Lowell Ewert, Administrator
Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund
Conrad Grebel University College
140 Westmount Rd. N.,
Waterloo, ON N2L 2G6

All applications must be received by January 13, 2006. The award will be announced in March 2006.

Employment opportunities

The Council on Church and Media seeks a part-time

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

to bring creative administration to organizational initiatives, to fulfill CCM's mission of enhancing connections and providing professional development for communicators from peace church traditions. Primary responsibilities include working with the CCM Executive Committee to develop and implement vision, priorities and strategy for recruiting and retaining membership; coordinating logistical and program planning and promotion of CCM annual conference; oversee development and maintenance of CCM website; edit CCM materials; and maintain CCM annual budget.

For more information, contact:

Tony Krabill
Phone: 574-294-2424 or
E-mail: churchandmedia@mennoniteusa.org

Drift Creek Conference and Retreat Center, located 13 miles from Lincoln City, Oregon, in the Coastal Mountains seeks

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

for full-time position beginning February 1, 2006. Exciting opportunity to provide leadership, passion and vision in Christian Camping Ministries for children and adults. Commitment to Anabaptist beliefs and values required. College degree and related experience expected. Responsible for administration, development, staffing and programming. Reply by December 15, 2005.

Contact:

Ken Snyder
E-mail: kenmabel@open.org
Phone: 503-362-5535 or
Gwen Peachey
E-mail: gpeachey@exchangenet.net
Phone: 541-754-6336

Request for scholarly papers

Call for papers: For the conference, "Holding Fast to the Confession of our Hope: The Confession of Faith Ten Years Later," a call for papers is extended to pastors, educators, church leaders, sociologists and people of other disciplines. The conference will take place at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., June 8-10, 2006. The purpose of the study is to describe and assess how Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective has functioned in the church and how well it has guided the faith and practice of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

Send paper proposals to:

Barbara Nelson Gingerich
E-mail: bngingerich@ams.edu

by February 1, 2006. The conference is sponsored by the Church Leadership Center and Institute of Mennonite Studies of AMBS with Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network and Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association.

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo seeks to fill a full-time faculty position at the assistant professor level in the field of Religious Studies with an Old Testament emphasis, to begin July 2006.



Conrad Grebel University College is a Mennonite church-affiliated college on the campus of the University of Waterloo, with an undergraduate teaching program in the liberal arts, and a graduate teaching program in theological studies. Candidates should possess a PhD or ThD in Biblical Studies with research and teaching emphasis in Old Testament. The position will include both undergraduate and graduate teaching. The ability to teach in another area of the humanities or social sciences is desirable. Applicants should be sympathetic to the traditions and beliefs of the Mennonite church.

Applications should contain a cover letter detailing teaching and research expertise, a curriculum vitae, names of three referees, and other evidence of the candidate's suitability for the position.

The deadline for applications is January 9, 2006. Please direct all inquiries and applications to the Academic Dean, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3G6. 519-885-0220, x265 cgucacad@uwaterloo.ca For more information about the College and its programs, visit the website at: <http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca>.

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first of all to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Conrad Grebel University College is committed to principles of employment equity.



Stewardship Consultant

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) is a charitable foundation serving seven Anabaptist church conferences across Canada. MFC is seeking a full-time stewardship consultant to work out of its Kitchener, Ontario office. This person will provide charitable gift and estate planning services and promote biblical stewardship of financial resources in Ontario and Eastern Canada.

The successful candidate will:

- Communicate effectively with individuals and have an aptitude for presenting in a variety of group settings
- Have a good understanding of charitable gift and estate planning
- Be creative, organized, and self-motivated
- Support and incorporate MFC's stewardship mission in personal life
- Be willing and able to contribute as part of an inter-dependent staff team.

The successful candidate must be a member of one of MFC's seven participating conferences.

Submit applications by January 15, 2006 to:
 Erwin Warkentin, General Manager
 12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
 1-800-772-3257 fax: 204-488-1986
 e-mail: ewarkentin@mennofoundation.ca
www.mennofoundation.ca

Amer pauses from his job in the carpenter shop at Nazareth Village, sawdust spit from the 2,000-year-old tools settling into the dust. In his lap, eight-month-old son Majd stirs. Amer places Majd's hand on the saw, and the boy is mesmerized by the ancient apparatus.

Amer thinks about Joseph, a carpenter who once had lived near this shop, and his once-young son. "What was it like to have the son of God work with him in the carpentry shop?" "Did Joseph sit Jesus on his lap as he worked?" "What did they talk about over the saws and awls?"

Shirley P. Roth, Nazareth Village interim director, says first-century fathers were seen as loving protectors. They slept inside the front door at home to defend the family and

Son teaches OF FATHERHOOD in Nazareth

worked long days, often with children and other family members, to provide basic necessities. Through his work at Nazareth Village, Amer says his own thoughts about fatherhood have changed.

"This is a window of understanding of what life was like in Jesus' hometown in the time that he lived," Roth says. "It also gives insights into his teachings...in a new way."

Some of these insights, biblical stories and interpretations, as well as news, photos and recipes, are now available on *The Word on the Street*, a new monthly Internet newsletter from www.nazarethvillage.com, a ministry supported by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network.

Subscribers to *The Word on the Street* who sign up additional members will receive a free gift and be entered into free drawings for further Nazareth Village gift items (see website for details).

—**Ryan Miller and Glenn Witmer**

Amer and his eight-month-old son Majd are pictured in the carpentry shop at Nazareth Village.



Nazareth Village photo