

CANADIAN
Mennonite

October 6, 2003
Volume 7, Number 19



**50 years of
church news**



Fifty years of church news

This issue celebrates the 50th anniversary of English-language publishing for Mennonites in Canada. The launch of *The Canadian Mennonite* in October 1953 began the tradition of publishing for the church that continues in *Canadian Mennonite* today. See pages 17-21 for an anniversary feature.

The original *Canadian Mennonite* was a daring venture. Not only was the paper in English, it appeared in a tabloid format which, as editor Frank H. Epp explained, represented “the everyday work clothes, not the Sunday going-to-church clothes, of journalism.” The paper included more secular material, and the hard-hitting editorial policy got the young editor into hot water on numerous occasions.

Meanwhile, the Mennonite Brethren in Canada launched the *Mennonite Observer* in 1955 with editor Leslie Stobbe. Like *The Canadian Mennonite*, it was published for church members but was not explicitly a conference paper.

The *Observer* “faced stiff competition” from its sister paper, noted Wally Kroeker in *For Everything a Season* (Kindred Productions). *The Canadian Mennonite* had the benefit of a two-year head start, “plus a more aggressive editorial policy that appealed to a growing segment of young urban readers,” said Kroeker.

In 1961, the *Observer* folded. The next year saw the birth of *The Mennonite Brethren Herald* as the official periodical of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference. The *Herald* also began with a bold, young editor (age 28). His name was Rudy Wiebe and his editorship didn’t survive the fiery debut of his first novel that same year.

Frank Epp’s contribution to Mennonites in Canada can hardly be measured. He became a courageous journalist, record-keeper of our history and a visionary leader. But we shouldn’t forget the publishing company in Altona that took the risk of beginning a Mennonite newspaper in 1953.



“We are grateful to D.W. Friesen & Sons for the courageous way in which the venture was undertaken,” noted a statement from the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Company when it took over the paper from Friesens in 1962. “*The Canadian Mennonite* has not been a paying venture financially. It has been published more as a service to the Mennonite brotherhood, much in the spirit of D.W. Friesen, the original founder of the firm.”

That comment touches me personally—D. W. Friesen was my grandfather and it was my three uncles who began the publishing legacy which I became part of myself many years later. Check out the back cover for Friesen ads from early issues of *The Canadian Mennonite*.—Margaret Loewen Reimer

Mailing problems

Many people have been calling to ask why their *Canadian Mennonite* is arriving so late. The August 25 issue was especially troublesome. The best explanation we can get from Canada Post is that the power black-out in Ontario left them with a backlog of mail that took awhile to clear up.

Our September 22 issue ran into problems when the presses broke down, so that issue may have arrived a bit late as well. We’re sorry about delays, but we’re delighted that so many of you are impatient to receive your magazine. Don’t forget that you can get a preview of each issue on our web site the Thursday before the magazine date. Also, it doesn’t hurt to talk to your local post office occasionally to get them to hurry up with the second-class mail!—MLR

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Head office: 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: (519) 884-3810 **Toll-free:** 800-378-2524 **Fax:** (519) 884-3331
E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Interim Editor/Publisher: Margaret Loewen Reimer
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Staff: Betti Erb, associate editor; Natasha Krahn, admin. assistant; Tammy Sawatzky, art director; Barb Draper, editorial assistant.

Advertising: Barbara Burkholder **Phone:** 800-316-4052
Fax: (519) 884-3331 **E-mail:** advert@canadianmennonite.org

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National correspondent: Leona Dueck Penner, Winnipeg, Man. Phone: (204) 888-6781
E-mail: dueck-penner@mennonitechurch.ca

Regional correspondents:

Eastern Canada: Maurice Martin, Phone: (519) 662-1031
E-mail: mauricem@sympatico.ca

Manitoba: Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Phone: (204) 745-2208
E-mail: erpetkau@cici.mb.ca

Saskatchewan: Karin Fehderau, Phone: (306) 933-4209
E-mail: k.fehderau@sasktel.net

Alberta: Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Phone: (780) 436-3431
E-mail: timanddonita@attglobal.net

British Columbia: Angelika Dawson, Phone: (604) 870-0494
E-mail: ajdawson@telus.net

Board of directors: *British Columbia:* Henry Neufeld, Aiden S. Enns. *Alberta:* Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, Jan Wilhelm. *Saskatchewan:* Bernie Thiessen. *Manitoba:* Ron Loeppky, Bernie Wiebe, Paul Krahn. *Ontario:* Lloyd Koch, Mary Lymburner, Betty Dyck, Brice Balmer.
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This Issue

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Website 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 Oct 20 issue by Oct. 16.

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Winnipeg, Man.

Conference worker follows dream into voluntary service

Alice Pound is packing her “big boom box” and her bike but almost everything else has been dispensed with, even her car.

“I thought I could never survive without a car,” said Pound, who at 63 has resigned from her position with Mennonite Church Manitoba after 24 years and joined Mennonite Voluntary Service. She is realizing a dream to serve and live a simpler lifestyle.

It’s quite a step to take when you are two years away from collecting pension, and when your children, granddaughters and congregation must be left behind.



Pound

After many years with Faith and Life Communications and adapting to the changes that MC Manitoba has undergone over a quarter century, Pound is bravely stepping into the unfamiliar. She will be joining a household of young people and facing new work challenges.

But she is undaunted. She’s ready to provide some mothering when the need arises, although she hopes to learn as much as she can from her youthful housemates.

Pound’s placement is with the Lutheran Social Service Agency in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where she will be doing administrative as well as hands-on work with the refugee program. She looks forward to the challenges.

In her work with Faith and Life, she enjoyed most “the people part.” That interest propels her forward into this new adventure. She also receives confirmation from the North Kildonan Mennonite Church, her co-workers and friends.

“God has been with me the whole time in this process. So many things fell into place and confirmed my

decision.”

God was also there 24 years ago when Pound needed a job that would give her the flexibility she needed as a single parent. She was invited to join the office pool of the Manitoba conference.

“There were three of us...it was not so departmentalized then. We shared the 1483 Pembina Highway building with Mennonite Central Committee. I used to see all the people coming back from VS assignments with MCC and had a longing to do that myself.”

As the conference expanded, Pound’s hours increased. The highlight of her work has been working with Faith and Life Communications (FLC).

“I like projects and it gave me the opportunity to work at a project like

the annual FLC Choir Festivals. It gave me access to the churches and lots of people contact.”

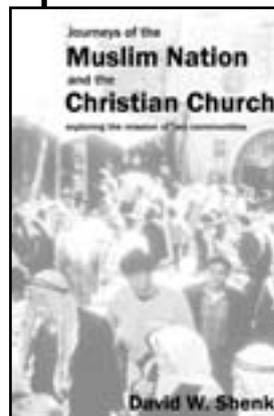
Initially Pound contacted people to assemble a choir every year which would rehearse and record in one intense weekend at Camp Moose Lake for radio programs for the year. In more recent years, Pound has been the mainstay behind the concerts, festivals and fundraisers of FLC as conference program, structure and staff changed.

“My job was to serve the people,” said Pound who viewed her work as a ministry. In January 2003, due to adjustments to Faith and Life and the conference, her position was cut to 75 percent.

Pound is leaving her long-time position and shedding many of her worldly possessions, but she is taking with her the blessing of her church and following a dream.—**Evelyn**

Rempel Petkau

Exploring the Mission of Two Communities



Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church

David W. Shenk

This invaluable resource examines Islam and Christianity at their deepest spiritual, cultural, and communal levels. It explores the similarities, and yet unavoidable differences found in Isaac and Ishmael, Jesus and Muhammad, the Bible and the Qur’an, Jerusalem and Medina, the Eucharist and the Hajj, the Church and the Ummah. Reflecting years of conversations and dialogue with Muslim friends, this is narrative theology, full of anecdote

and personal experience that bridges the poles and builds understanding. Appropriate for university and seminary classes, this guide also includes study questions for small groups or Sunday school classes.

Paper, 232 pages, 0-8361-9252-4: \$23.49



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Prince Albert, Sask.

Canadian family assists Ukrainian relatives

In 1974, Jacob Pauls from Osler, Saskatchewan, travelled to the Soviet Union to visit his sister Margareta whom he hadn't seen in 48 years. That trip has led to a partnership nearly 30 years later between the extended Pauls family (and Mennonite Church Canada Witness), and a pastoral ministry in Kherson, Ukraine.

Pauls was three when he and his siblings were orphaned. Margareta went to live with one set of grandparents; Jacob, Henry and Maria went to the other grandparents and eventually to Canada.

During the visit, one of Margareta's daughters said, "When our mother dies, you will forget about us."

The mournful comment became a challenge to the family. They continued to correspond, and since 1996 they have supported Margareta's grandchildren, Elena and Sergei Deynekin, who are full-time pastors.

When Elena and Sergei were married in the early 1980s, Sergei was a carpenter. They became Christians in the early 1990s and began attending a Baptist church. They helped Anatoli Baranov, the pastor, in his visits to prisons and the nearby village of Chernobaevka.

Canadian family members, who had met the couple at a family reunion in Canada, wanted to lend support once the couple was ready for their own ministry. Currently the family provides monthly financial support for the couple's ministry, their vehicle and expenses for the congregation.

An additional amount enabled the couple to attend a course in Prague on evangelism last February. The large extended family (Jacob had nine children, Henry eight and Maria seven) also prays regularly for the couple.

Family representatives, together with representatives from Witness, have formed the Kherson Ministries Reference Group to support the Deynekins. Saskatchewan family members are Edna and Art Zacharias and Otto and Florence Driedger. Manitoba members are John and

Mary Pauls and Joyce and Barry Suderman. A covenant between the Pauls family and Witness is being finalized.

Elena and her parents visited Canada at Christmas 2001. Here she was introduced to the idea of community pastors meeting regularly for fellowship. She and Sergei organized a ministerial meeting for the Kherson area.

Elena also returned with ideas for dramatic readings for Christmas and Easter, a change that is "cutting edge" for worship in Ukraine. The Deynekins also give support to Canadian Witness workers Cliff and Natasha Dueck in Ukraine.

The Deynekins anticipate that their church will be able to move from its present location—a converted garage—into a larger building in the next few years. They hope that Sergei will be able to continue his education and assume leadership in the broader church in Ukraine.

The Deynekins have been instrumental in mentoring Cliff and Natasha Dueck, Witness workers with an emerging Mennonite congregation in Mis, another village near Kherson, Ukraine.

The Deynekins and their church are not the only ones benefiting from this relationship. Edna Zacharias, daughter of Jacob Pauls, becomes emotional

Bible study and a workout

Between Chernobaevka and Kherson [Ukraine] is a village called Stepanovka. A family from this village attends our church.

Nickolai, the husband, is a sports coach. He built a training centre in the basement. Teenagers come to him for training and he tells them about Christ. Three teens have already begun coming to church. Our women's Bible study group is working on a program called "Building a partnership." We have decided to include a workout and invite non-believers to join us. Afterwards, Nickolai's wife, Masha, who also joins us for the workout, invites us for tea. We talk about God's work, and Christ.

Two women on our street attend our Bible studies and workouts. One of them has come to church several times.—**Elena and Sergei Deynekin**

when she remembers the impact of her parents "praying for their sister, that she would not lose her faith.... When the next generation became Christians, we were so happy."

Zacharias is happy that she is "part of the gospel being spread in the land where my father learned faith." Her family story is a reminder that the "Lord is faithful, if we are faithful, too."—**Kira Olfert**



Worshippers at an outdoor Easter service in Chernobaevka, Ukraine.

Photo by Kira Olfert

A Thanksgiving story

The following story comes from Africa where the writer served with Mennonite Central Committee.

That first morning, in the drought-stricken war zone in northern Mozambique, there was a hush in the air as we entered the once-elegant dining room of the Costa Del Sol.

An air of anticipation emanated from an assortment of guests: men in military fatigues, dark-suited businessmen, casually-clad European aid workers, and foreign correspondents with cameras and notebooks. All of them were ignoring their daily rations of weak tea and hard, unbuttered bread as they sat at white-draped tables, waiting.

The awe seemed to grow more intense as my husband and I, following the grey-haired, Portugese-speaking maitre d', made our way to a table in the centre of the room which he deemed suitable for the *Inglez*.

Awaiting our own breakfasts of tea and bread, we found ourselves speaking in whispers. First, about the strangeness of being referred to as *Inglez*, when as children in a German-speaking community on the Canadian prairies we'd grown up thinking of everybody else as *Englända*. Then about the personal treasures diners had brought along to enhance the hotel's meagre breakfast: a pot of marmalade, a jar of ovaltine, a tin of milk powder. But most of all, we talked about the strange reverence in that room.



Was a dignitary expected? I wondered.

Hardly, my husband muttered. The hotel was much too rundown and shabby.

Had there been some kind of an accident then? Or perhaps another "incident" involving a bloody massacre along the road to the capital. Remember that driver in a food convoy last week who had his hands cut off...

Very unlikely, murmured my husband. There's no sense of doom.

Just then, the kitchen door swung open and a white-gloved waiter emerged, carrying a tarnished silver tray high above his head. All eyes focused on him as he walked carefully towards the table where an East Indian businessman sat waiting self-consciously.

The waiter whisked imaginary crumbs from the table with one gloved hand. Then, lowering the tray with an air of solemnity, he transferred a single white egg in a dented silver eggcup onto a cracked blue plate.

For a moment, as the egg glowed quietly on its pedestal, there was complete silence in the room as the favoured recipient of this rare gift lifted a battered silver knife, tapped the alabaster shell till it cracked, carefully removed the small domed top, and picked up his small silver spoon to lift out the gold inside.

Slowly, he sprinkled the delicate morsel with salt and pepper, opened his mouth wide, took his first bite, and smiled....

As the whole room sighed!

—Leona Dueck Penner

Photo by Lynette Wiebe

Dismantling racism in Canada

Keith Regehr and Shadell Permanand are mediators in Ontario who also offer anti-racism training. They have developed a Canadian initiative called “Broken Circles: Working to dismantle racism.” The following is from a conversation they had with Ron Rempel last April.

Ron: Describe your training method. My understanding is that you were faced with the challenge of developing something that fits for Canada.

Shadell: Near the end of 1997, there weren't a lot of people of colour working for MCC Ontario—maybe three or four. Some staff said maybe MCC should start an internal anti-racism team. Tobin Miller Shearer from Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Damascus Road program recommended that such a team be one-third people of colour. We put together a team and training called “Under the banyan tree” for June 1998.

Keith: I was hired in summer 1998 as an MCC Ontario peace builder staff person. One item on my agenda was racism. In fall 1999 we did training with Crossroads from the U.S.

Shadell: This was an ecumenical training event at Hidden Acres Camp for MCC and other Mennonite institutions across the country. It involved about 10 denominations. Our team concluded: 1) There is a need for this kind of training, and 2) Because of the dynamics between Canadians and Americans, and the different histories/social realities, we need a Canadian curriculum. We were looking for faith-based training.

MCC sponsored a one-day pilot at First Mennonite Church in Kitchener in June 2000, again ecumenical. One comment was: Make sure there is more aboriginal content. So we involved Terry Sakoieta' Widrick. Then we did another session at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre. This was the beginning of “talking circles.” They have become an important part of our methodology.

Ron: What's distinctive about circles?

Shadell: It is the traditional aboriginal way that brings in everyone's voice. Every person has a chance to speak, or not speak. A talking piece is passed—a feather, stone or other symbol.

Keith: It's important that you speak from your own experience. If you say something I disagree with, I don't say you're wrong, I say what my experience is.

Ron: Would this be different from the “pedagogy of crisis” used by Damascus Road?

Shadell: Both Keith and I are in conflict resolution and take a dialogue-based approach. We're not trying to create crisis. It may happen but we're hoping that if a person is open to hearing someone's struggles it will open the door to dialogue and move things forward.

Ron: What about the name, “Broken Circles?”

Keith: Circles with solid boundaries can be a symbol of closedness. “Broken” carries the brokenness we carry, as well as the necessity of building circles that are porous.

Ron: What does a training session consist of?

Keith: The history of racism, and resistance to racism in Canada. The complex discussion around language—how to name people. The intersection racism has with other forms of oppression—gender, class, ethnicity.

Shadell: We talk about culture—education, class, geographic origin, family origin, how we experience barriers or privileges in those different cultures—before we focus on race.

Keith: Then we move to a definition which is similar to what Damascus Road folks use: “Racism is race prejudice plus the misuse of power.” We talk about ways in which that power of

Continued on page 8



**Shadell Permanand
and Keith Regehr.**

Racism *From page 7*

racism operates to harm people of colour.

Shadell: Much of the time society focuses on individual acts. Someone gets beat up in a parking lot—that’s obviously racism. Yet everyone participates in the system, even if you’re not telling racist jokes. A metaphor from one of our videos: racism is like a moving sidewalk. You get on it, you don’t have to exert much effort...it carries you along. The question for me is not “are you racist?” but “are you actively anti-racist?”

Keith: We talk about the power of racism to shape our identity—it tells white people that we are better and deserve the privileges we get. So we internalize superiority. And racism tells people of colour that they’re inferior and deserve the treatment they receive. So they internalize inferiority.

Shadell: We use stories. Some people feel that having participants tell stories is exploitative. So we set up guidelines.

Keith: There’s a danger that people of colour will feel put-upon to tell their stories: “Once again it’s our job to teach white folks stuff they should know about. Once again I put my pain on the table.”

Shadell: After we talk about the power to harm, we talk about the power to benefit. We started by having white people sharing their stories. But it didn’t work because talking about white privilege is re-framing racism. For many whites, it’s the first time they’ve heard of white privilege. So we have trainers tell stories about how we frame our experience in terms of benefit or harm you’ve experienced.

Shadell: Another methodology that’s important is the collaboration between trainers. We have a multi-cultural team. Because there is a tendency to think that a white, middle-aged man knows everything, participants may turn to Keith for validation. When I or another person of colour is speaking, Keith will focus his attention on that person and not engage with the group. We try to have fairly even air time. Keith is in charge of the white privilege piece. I talk about the power to harm. We try to model cross-cultural and gender sensitivity.

Ron: What else should people be aware of?

Shadell: If only people of colour are sharing their experiences and calling people to accountability, it can be overload for them. Think how you as a white person can be an advocate. It’s not to say that white people are the saviours...it requires white people and people of colour to work together even though it may be easier to work a different way.

Ron: How has this training affected you?

Shadell: Sometimes I’m more angry now after I have been telling my story for four years. I see that people are empathetic and at the same time I have a feeling of the slowness of change and almost the feeling of exploitation. So that’s part of my discomfort with story-telling.

Keith: My task is to look at white folks and say: let’s start working at this. The other thing is to get to where I’m not feeling sorry for people of colour, but rage at the system that harms white people, too. I’m struggling to move to anger about the harm racism does to all of us. The other piece to grasp is that people of colour don’t need me to save them. They need white people to work at the structures from within.

Shadell: Sometimes the training can be a confessional for white people. Mennonite communities are pretty much white. People of colour moved in as neighbours, and often moved out because it was difficult. Things are changing now.

Ron: I grew up with a consciousness of being in a minority not because of colour but because of Mennonite strictures. There were cautions from my parents about integrating into the social life of my school because I might be influenced in the wrong direction.

Shadell: Remembering how that exclusion felt can help you identify what people of colour feel like. In Canada, people are encouraged to maintain their culture and at the same time they are expected to assimilate into a mainstream standard of whiteness.

Ron: What would be a sign that your training is “bearing good fruit?”

Shadell: One simple thing is that people are talking. People are starting to look towards systemic change. What is it about the *Canadian Mennonite* or MCC that, based on policies and procedures, may exclude some and benefit others? If we can pinpoint some of those things, we start to create a more level playing field. Our final report will include ideas raised at each training—what we as individuals and institutions can do to dismantle racism.

Ron: So it’s an ongoing story.

Shadell: Yes, but I have a lot of hope. This is an important issue for me, raised in a bi-racial family with a German-Mennonite mother and an Indo-Caribbean father. I want people to start talking and for change to happen. It’s all in the spirit of community, for the greater good.

Racism is like a moving sidewalk. You get on it, you don’t have to exert much effort...it carries you along. The question is not ‘are you racist?’ but ‘are you actively anti-racist?’

Did the Mennonite mission in Sumatra fail?

Mennonite foreign mission work began in 1851, when Dutch Mennonites sent Pieter and Jacoba Jansz to Indonesia. The first Russian Mennonite effort began in Indonesia 20 years later, ending in 1928. This summer, Allen Harder and his family traced the legacy of that mission.

On August 11 our vehicle negotiated the cinnamon tree-fringed road hugging the Batangadis River in North Sumatra, Indonesia. We entered the lush Pakantan valley where in 1871 Mennonite missionaries from Russia established their first mission field.

This visit was a side-trip on the way to my wife Elsiana's ancestral homeland, a day's travel north. I was fulfilling a 15-year dream of visiting a mission field that my late uncle, Jacob Harder, told me about as he recounted stories of missionaries returning from Sumatra to his village in Russia. What was the legacy of those missionaries?

We travelled through a number of Muslim villages, and found the church. We stopped at the house of Ruminta Pohan Nasution, a 26-year-old new mother who was called 4 years ago to pastor this church of 14 families. She had just graduated from seminary.

I asked her how a female pastor survived in a traditional village. Her response exuded confidence. The elders gathering in her sitting room attested to the high regard in which she is held.

I told them I wanted to understand their desire to identify with Mennonites when for the past 25 years they had been members of the Lutheran synod. I made it clear that I was not here to fan a Mennonite identity flame—I just wanted to hear their story.

"What does it mean to be Mennonite?" I asked.

"We baptize adults by sprinkling, upon confession of their faith," they said, "and we sing Mennonite hymns." A meeting the night before with Firman Nasution, the "Mennonite historian" of the community, had confirmed this assessment.

"Pakantan Christians sing Mennonite songs whenever and wherever they gather," he said. "In addition, we believe in the primacy of

service through love." I recognized several of the songs he sang as having come from the Pietist revival tradition, not the German chorale tunes sung by the Lutherans.

The church he leads maintains a health clinic as an expression of love for their Muslim neighbours.

Heinrich Dirks left Russia in 1871 to establish a mission field in Muslim Pakantan under the umbrella of the Dutch Mennonite Mission. Although Dirks' arrival was met with hostility, his perseverance and love for the people eventually won their respect.

Most converts were the poor who came to settle land freed up for the growing Christian community.

Succeeding generations of missionaries—names such as Wiebe, Nikkel, Loewen, Nachtigal—spent their lives on this small mission field. Besides church building, they focused on schools, orphanages, clinics and agriculture.

Johannes Thiessen, in Indonesia from 1900-1912, introduced highland Arabica coffee, putting Pakantan on the map in Europe as a source of quality coffee. (You can find "Mandailing" coffee to this day.) Christians here attribute some of their "Mennonite hymns" to Thiessen.

The mission effort in Pakantan ended in 1928 with the death of Peter Nachtigal. By this time the Mennonite church in Russia had disintegrated, and no other Mennonite group was prepared to continue the mission.

From 1928 to 1976, links were maintained with the Mennonite synods in Java through training in the Mennonite seminary in Pati, student sponsorships and pastoral visits under the leadership of the Sumatra Commission, in which Mennonite Central Committee played an important role.

The small numbers and the remoteness, however, made a continuing relationship difficult and the church was seconded to the Angkola Lutheran

synod. Links are still maintained by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the early missionaries.

When the mission closed there were 470 Christians. By 1950 that number was down to 150. Many people returned to the Muslim faith; others left the area.

Standing in the graveyard of the church, I asked Ruminta if the mission effort had been a failure.

"Absolutely not!" she said. "Do you see Mamogar Hill over there? It used to be ridden with evil spirits. The local king gave it to Heinrich Dirks, hoping that the spirits would take care of his Christian mission. They were conquered, and the hill was turned into productive plantations. This won the lasting respect of the Muslims."

The elders told us that to this day neither Muslims nor Christians call on the malevolent powers of the spirit world—in contrast to the practices of surrounding communities. People also remember the high priority the missionaries placed on education, health and development. Those who left took the gospel with them and many respected intellectuals came from Pakantan.

Muslim-Christian relations in Pakantan remain respectful. The name "Mennonite" is still recognized in the broader community.

How does one gauge the success of a mission? Pakantan was a frontier buffer in the Dutch colonial system. The missionaries likely had little awareness that they were a part of this colonial project in Sumatra. Despite that, what I heard turned my scepticism into gratitude for the heritage of these missionaries, and for the continuing work of God.—**Allen Harder**

The writer, a 1976 graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, is currently a peace-building advisor for World Vision Indonesia. Before that he worked with Mennonite Central Committee in Cambodia, Uganda and Zaire.

Letters

Dismayed over Manitoba decision

We were surprised and disappointed to learn that Mennonite Church Manitoba has decided to opt out of the subscription agreement with *Canadian Mennonite*. As far as we know, Manitoba churches were not consulted about this move.

We believe that this periodical is one of the best ways of uniting our churches, which have minimal ways of communicating with one other. Perhaps we need to look at how our church leaders make decisions. Keep up the good work at *Canadian Mennonite*.—**Don and Mary Reimer, Winnipeg, Man.**

Why dismantle subscription plan?

The August 25 article on Mennonite Church Manitoba asks congregations to ratify three proposals. I ask: Why should they?

The Conference of Mennonites in Canada spent decades experimenting with various ways of communicating. Finally, together with the five western provinces, it agreed on a funding formula for *Canadian Mennonite*.

What does such an agreement mean when the board of MC Manitoba can arbitrarily decide to reduce by 50 percent the 2003 payments that were endorsed by the congregations? Why should congregational members drive to Plum Coulee on October 18 to ratify “reduction of the subscription agreement with *Canadian Mennonite* by 50 percent in subsequent years,” as requested? What will prevent the executive director or the board from

Letters express the opinion of the writer, not necessarily those of *Canadian Mennonite* or the church. We publish as many as space permits, unless they attack individuals or become too repetitious. Letters are edited for length and style. See page 2 for address information.

reducing it to 25 percent, or to zero percent, the following day?

Furthermore, what kind of thinking lies behind the recommendations? The first proposal asks congregations to ratify “MC Manitoba’s communications, promotion and community building.” The third proposal requests chopping off a limb of the very instrument designed to do those things.—**Jake Letkemann, Winnipeg, Man.**

Image of God fulfilled in marriage

Our understanding of who God is affects many areas of church life. I propose that our image of God is relevant to the current issue of same-sex marriage.

In Genesis 1, we encounter the first mention of the image of God as part of creation. God says, in verse 26: “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness,” and, in verse 27, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Every human being carries the stamp of God.

I find it untenable to argue that the male species exclusively represents the image of God, and I am reluctant to consider the female figure as the sole candidate for this honour. A dilemma exists that is sometimes spiritualized or explained away.

I find a surprising resolution in the second chapter of Genesis. In this parallel account of creation, God says (verse 24): “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” The two separate genders form one entity in the God-ordained institution of marriage!

The image of God therefore finds its fulfillment in the single entity resulting from the union of one man and one woman in marriage. Procreation and the family simply enhance this image. The great commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Any attempt to redefine God’s purpose for sex and society not only harms our country but

also places political and social pressure as a higher priority than following God’s ways.—**Walter E. Hiebert, Rosenfeld, Man.**

Appreciated editorial

We appreciated the editorial on the same-sex marriage debate by Margaret Loewen Reimer in the September 8 issue. We want to commend her for the intelligent questions she raised and for her attitude of openness and respect.

We saw this same intelligence and courage in the letters from Lisa Wenger, Bruce Hiebert, Victor Fast and Jake Nickel.

What a difference in attitude from what happened in one Mennonite church in Winnipeg. A church member did not invite the local MP to present a balanced view on homosexual issues, but chose instead a politician with extremist views. This politician circulated a petition opposing same-sex marriage which was sent to the government, even though 60 percent of the church members did not sign it.

To paraphrase Jim Coyle in the *Toronto Star*: “Oh God, forgive us more than anything the things done and said in your name: witches burned at stakes, sons and daughters shunned or stoned, wars fought for God, airplanes flown into skyscrapers for God, hate incited, bigotry licensed.”

How much longer can the Mennonite church insist that so many of God’s children are deviants to be written off, and take the untenable position that homosexuals are welcome and loveable, as long as they do not give expression to their love? How can some Mennonites believe that same-sex couples living within the stabilizing institution of marriage are threatening “straight” marriages?

We hope that as we discuss same-sex marriage, the September 8 issue of the *Canadian Mennonite* will be required reading. We believe the questions raised by the editorial and letter writers are worth restating:

What are we afraid of if the issue is not about forcing churches to marry

same-sex couples? Should our pastors ignore the Confession of Faith on same-sex marriage as they have with regard to re-marriage? What is a traditional, biblical marriage—are Solomon, Abraham, Isaac and others our role models?

How can relationships based on love threaten an institution which celebrates loving commitment? Should we encourage commitment and fidelity wherever they are found? Can we make blanket proclamations about homosexual relationships without knowing the people involved? Have we been over-zealous and self-serving in selecting primarily judgmental Bible verses? What if grace prevailed?

We conclude with Lisa Wenger's heartfelt words: "Thankfully God's love is much stronger than human statements."—**Renate and Bill Schulz Winnipeg, Man.**

Worship is more than 'doing theology'

I am responding to Maurice Martin's article on worship (June 16). Martin says "we 'do theology' each time we worship," but I suggest that worship is more than "doing theology" and that theology is often underrepresented in our services.

Theology is literally "the study of God"—our beliefs about who God is and how we relate to God. Over the past centuries, Mennonites have developed a theology that differs in some ways from that of other Christian groups. While different Mennonite groups may have differences in theology, there are some common elements.

Worship, on the other hand, is much more than cognitive reflection. It is what we experience of God (what

Martin calls primary theology). Worship includes all of who we are—thinking, praying, acting—and it can take place anywhere we go. When we sing hymns on Sunday morning we are worshipping but we are not necessarily doing theology.

When asked what Mennonite theology is, many churchgoers do not know how to answer. Mennonite theology is not often clearly described in our services. Sermons are often uplifting messages about how God loves us or discussions of a Bible story. They can also be used as a teaching tool.

I'm not suggesting that every sermon should be a lecture, but why should people have to go to Canadian Mennonite University or Conrad Grebel University College in order to understand what Mennonite theology is?—**Stephen Nighswander-Rempel, Winnipeg, Man.**

What if love prevailed in our families?

I'm a doer, with parents who were always active and accomplishing things, "rammy" one might even say, and grandparents who were the same—gardening, cooking, building, creating.

Why sit when you could be moving? Why rest when you could be talking? Why pause when you could be producing? So I missed the point about how love might be adequately expressed not through "productive" actions, but by attitude.

It took another counsellor (Ellen Bass in *The Courage to Heal*) to instruct me. One thing she offers her clients is a gift of love, not by doing something (imagine!) but just smiling at them with love-filled eyes during quiet moments in therapy.

I began practising this in my work, and found sacred ground at such times. I also found that I had plenty of love to give. As promised, God's compassion is infinite, and we can draw from it endlessly.

While pregnant with her first child, my friend Rachel wondered how she could love anyone as much as she did her husband. When the baby was born, Rachel found her heart stretching with an enormous capacity to love her new child. (That love increased with the four more children she and her husband added through birth and adoption.)

Once I sat with my spouse and parents-in-law at a restaurant, listening to their discussion about where mom and dad would live. My own dad had just died so I was feeling tender and weary, not up to participating as mother described her unhappiness in the care home where they were living, and her desire to return to their trailer—a risky plan, given the parents' frail health.

My father-in-law looked somewhat tired and tender himself, so I decided just to



Family Ties

Melissa Miller

beam love his way, silently, steadily. Perhaps it's just my imagination, but it seemed that the discussion grew softer and less edgy, and everyone mellowed a bit.

The eyes are key. Use your eyes to really see the other person; look especially into his or her eyes where I believe you will glimpse the divine spark. Too often we settle for superficial glances, and miss important information.

(Ever try looking honestly into another's eyes when you're fighting with her? If so, you will likely see that person's hurt, fear

or dejection which will wrench your heart away from its anger to a more compassionate response.)

What stops us from saying "I love you" to those with whom we share home and family? With some of my family members, it is natural to say "I love you" regularly and easily. We are strengthened and heartened by the affirmation.

With others, the words seem stuck somewhere deep inside and almost never venture into audible expression. (Hallmark cards don't count.) In the silence, we miss the chance to bond.

So I keep trying, and I urge you to try as well. Say "I love you" to your family members, daily or weekly. (While I was working on this column, my son hollered from the kitchen, "Whoever bought the peanut butter ice cream, I love you!" Not quite what I had in mind.)

Look into the eyes of your intimates. Watch the light that plays there when they feel loved and cherished. Pay attention when your hardness or silence dims the light. And, if nothing else, beam love to them through your smiling eyes.

Love will prevail in our families.

The writer, counsellor and author, operates Family Ties in Winnipeg. This is the third column on the Mennonite Church Canada assembly theme, "What if...grace, peace and love prevailed?"

Pittsburg, Pa.

Publishing partnerships creating new hope

The idea of developing collaborative partnerships is generating new hope for the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and USA.

About 55 participants from Canada and USA met here September 19-21 for a consultation planned by Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN). They sensed new energy and vision as MPN continues to address past debt and restructures its ministry.

As participants assessed current resources and dreamed about new ones, they expressed a desire to shape a relevant publishing ministry that is grounded in biblical and Anabaptist understandings, and that provides quality educational and theological materials for people of all ages, packaged for a media-savvy age.

Eleanor Snyder of Ontario, director of Faith and Life Resources (a division of MPN), said, "I feel we have a new window of opportunity but also feel that we must seize the moment now to open it. The image I have is when a butterfly is just ready to emerge from the cocoon. It's a miracle, but it's also a fragile place."

Participants included church agency personnel, pastors and Christian educators. This was the first in a series of consultations planned by



Justina Heese of Winnipeg, Cynthia Massanari Breeze of Illinois, and Linford King of Pennsylvania brainstorm at a table group about resources that Mennonite Publishing Network needs to provide.

MPN to network with and receive counsel from a cross-section of constituents.

The focus of this meeting was on resources—what is being produced, what needs to be created in areas such as worship and music, spirituality, missions and service. Participants asked that the church focus more on training Christian educators and

providing quality materials for participants of all ages.

"What struck me most about this consultation is that MPN invited a lot of front-line educators," said Don Rempel-Boschman, senior pastor at Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. "They are really passionate about Christian education. And that brought a lot of hope to me as lead pastor in a multi-staff church. I often don't have the time to focus on teacher training."

Participants encouraged MPN to revamp materials instead of reinventing them, to create flexible curriculum that can be cross-referenced in Sunday schools, Vacation Bible Schools, mid-week programs and for use at home.

Participants also encouraged MPN to develop a line of essential materials rather than a comprehensive array, to recommend helpful resources from other denominations, and to create a "one-stop shopping" web site with links to related materials. They also encouraged the creation of advocacy networks for distributing materials at

Fundraising campaign extended

The second phase of Mennonite Publishing Network's Barnraising Campaign has been extended to the end of December.

Congregations from Mennonite Church Canada and USA were asked initially to contribute by August 31, the due date for repayment of an MPN loan used to pay debenture note holders. So far, congregations have given approximately \$260,000.

Of the \$5 million debt, \$600,000 was repaid in the first fiscal year—

about half from donations, the other half from operations. Of the debt remaining, about \$1.7 million was the balance of the debenture repayment loan.

MPN's goal for the current fiscal year was to raise the \$1.7 million through the second phase of the Barnraising Campaign: \$300,000 from congregational donations, \$400,000 from operations, and \$1 million from major donors.

Ron Sawatsky, MPN board chair, said, "Retiring a \$5 million debt is a big burden to carry for an organization that has a \$13-14 million budget.... We've been enormously encouraged by the response of the church."—From MC Canada and USA

the local level.

"It's incredibly gratifying to see how the church in the United States and Canada has stood behind us," said Ron Rempel, MPN executive director. "So many people have said to us that they can't imagine having a healthy church without having a healthy publishing ministry."—From MC Canada and MC USA release

Corrections

Take note of the following corrections:

- In the story on the Kelowna fire (Sept. 22, page 16), the writer's e-mail and phone number were erroneously given as the contact for Mennonite Disaster Service. To contact MDS, call 866-261-1274.
- The article on changes in Mennonite Church Manitoba programs (Aug. 25) should have included the proposal to terminate the Abundant Life radio program.
- In the story on Gerald and Doreen Klassen (Sept. 22, page 5), Doreen is quoted as saying "My siblings and I are adopted..." That statement should have been attributed to Gerald.

Abbotsford, B.C.

B.C. pastors air concerns about MC Canada

Pastors from Mennonite Church British Columbia churches met on September 18 to discuss their conference's relationship to Mennonite Church Canada.

According to a statement from the B.C. executive, this meeting was "the first step of a several months process, discerning MC B.C. churches' relationship to MC Canada. Further listening/discernment meetings are scheduled for four areas around the province in October in preparation for a special MC B.C. delegate session on November 29."

While the meeting was intended to give pastors a "safe" place to discuss their concerns, pastors were encouraged to share the results with their congregations.

Henry Krause, B.C. pastor and moderator of MC Canada, felt that the meeting was very helpful.

"There were many frank conversa-

tions," he said. "It was good to be able to say something from the General Board perspective about what had happened in St. Catharines and to hear how that was perceived in BC."

The meeting was well attended with 50 of B.C.'s 57 pastors in attendance. The meeting opened with a devotional by conference minister Henry Kliever on Acts 15 in which the church was dealing with an issue that caused "no small dissention and debate" (Acts 15:2).

Pastors sat around small tables to discuss the issues that had brought MC British Columbia to this point and were invited to bring forward the main issues that need to be worked on. Four issues came out of this discussion: the centrality of Christ, unity, vision, and truth in relationships.

In a letter sent to churches this summer, MC British Columbia chair Doug Epp encouraged churches to hold congregational meetings to discuss the various options for B.C.'s relationship with MC Canada.

First Mennonite Church in Kelowna was one of the few congregations that had already met. The church passed a resolution urging that MC British Columbia "take no hurtful action(s) of separation from each other or our sister congregations across the nation. We commit to praying for each other and working together toward Christian unity in the mind and spirit of Christ."

Although the meeting was supposed to end with lunch, many pastors felt that they had not been given adequate time to share their concerns and so the meeting continued.

Support for MC Canada was varied—some churches are voicing a readiness to leave the conference, while others give it their full support. The meeting ended with a time of prayer and laying of hands on Doug Epp and Henry Krause.

"That was very affirming for me," Krause said, adding that it was an appropriate way to end a time of sincere discussion.—**Angelika Dawson**

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MCC family takes transitions in stride

Transitions are always difficult, especially when they happen in quick succession and in a cross-cultural setting devastated by war.

James and LeAnn Friesen, who returned to Winnipeg this summer after a three-year assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in the Middle East, have taken an unusual number of transitions in stride.

Perhaps this is because of their resilience of spirit and commitment to building bridges between East and West. Perhaps it has to do with their final assignment in Lebanon, where the beauty of the land and the hospitable people did much to heal the trauma of their abrupt departure from Gaza.

The Friesens went to Gaza City in summer 2000. James taught English at Islamic University and LeAnn did community development work. They had hardly begun their assignment

when an *intifada* (Palestinian resistance) broke out, and the city was devastated by retaliatory air strikes, bombings and street fights.

In mid-December they had two hours to pack their bags and leave (see Nov. 13 issue). Though reluctant, they recognize now that it was the right thing to do, especially since Alex, age 7, and Kate, 4 were showing signs of trauma. They were reassigned to Beirut, Lebanon, where James and LeAnn both taught grade 1 for four months.

Eventually, the right fit for their gifts was found at the J.L. Schneller Institute, a school for socially disadvantaged youth and orphans in Khirbet, Kanafar. James taught math and designed the school web site. He also organized a letter-writing exchange with students at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in

Kitchener. (See sidebar.)

LeAnn, a nurse, worked as a physical education instructor and in community health.

When asked what they appreciated most about Lebanon, LeAnn said, "The hospitality and kindness we received from both friends and strangers. It was just incredible!"

"You'd go to a person's home and you'd be welcomed—even if they had other commitments," said James. "Soon there'd be *ahwe* (coffee) on the table. Once when a Canadian friend was visiting, she said 'these glasses are really nice.' At the end of the evening, the glasses were given to her, with no possibility of return."

They also appreciated the way the community holds people together when a loved one dies.

"We attended a lot of funerals, including our closest friend, and noticed that the mourners aren't left alone," said LeAnn. "From the first hour to 40 days afterwards, people are always with them. Not talking. Just being there, supporting. And bitter coffee is served symbolically."

"These wonderful traditions are not shown in the media," said James. "Just the extremist, violent things."

The Friesens miss the breathtaking beauty of the Lebanese landscape—the mountains and cedars, winding roads, differing elevations, abundance of fruit trees and vineyards.

"We had 10 kinds of fruit growing in our garden," says James. "All we have here [in Winnipeg] is rhubarb."

And less security, it would seem. Although many buildings in Beirut are riddled with bullet holes and there was always talk of war (especially during the war in Iraq), the Friesens never felt safer.

We never worried about our children, said LeAnn, "because in Lebanon strangers and friends are there to help you. I worry way more about the kids here in Winnipeg. There's so much paranoia about strangers here."

LeAnn commented that one couldn't come out of such an experience without being changed.

Myth #8

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"I'm more emotional about things in the news now, because I don't know if our friends in Gaza are dead or alive."

James said, "Because we have a greater knowledge of the issues there, we see news reports in a different light." Now when they see bombs hitting targets, they also hear people screaming and crying. "I know it's not just buildings that are shattered, but shattered lives.... Also, I still have guilt feelings," he says. "We could just get out. They couldn't."

"The guilt is not just about Gaza," said LeAnn. "When we left Lebanon we weren't replaced due to MCC cutbacks. It's so expensive to live there. The fact that no one took over the community health work I was doing—that's hard."

They admit that it's good to be free of visa renewal hassles back in Canada and looking for health specialists. "And we drove all across the prairies this summer without military checkpoints," said James. Alex had asked,

"How do you say 'checkpoint' in English?" He thought it was an Arabic word since he never heard it used here.

James is again teaching math and Christian studies at Westgate, after a three-year leave of absence. He enjoys

teaching students whose first language is English and who laugh at his jokes. LeAnn is helping her family settle back into routine before she looks at the next step—possibly upgrading her nursing licence.—**Leona Dueck-Penner**



The Friesen family—LeAnn, James, Kate and Alex—have their portrait taken in a mighty cedar of Lebanon.

Pen pals from Lebanon

I open the door to the local Lebanese post office. My mission is to send a parcel of letters from my students to their pen pals in Canada. I put the parcel on the desk.

The postal worker looks it over and calls his co-worker. "Hmmm, it's going to Canada. You'll have to fill out a form." Filling out forms in Lebanon involves at least one coffee break and numerous searches for the correct form.

Just as I finish one form, the man hands me another. "Sorry, that one is only for parcels to Syria." I fill out the second form. Everything is ready, but I know it cannot be that easy.

"Sorry, we don't have enough stamps. Can you come back tomorrow?" I find myself saying, "Sure, no problem." At least the coffee was good.

That is the reality of sustaining a letter exchange between Lebanon and

Canada. My students in the village of Khirbet Qanafar communicated with students from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Ontario and Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Manitoba.

My students eagerly waited for their pen pals to write back. When the letters arrived, they spent the whole class reading and re-reading the contents, and passing around pictures. They found that people in Canada see the world quite differently than they do.

One girl here wrote that one of her favourite hobbies was travelling. That means she enjoys the one-and-a-half hour trip to Beirut, the hour-long trip to the beach, or the half-hour trip to the swimming pool. She was startled to discover that travel to a Canadian might mean day-long car trips or trips to other countries.

The similarities have been most

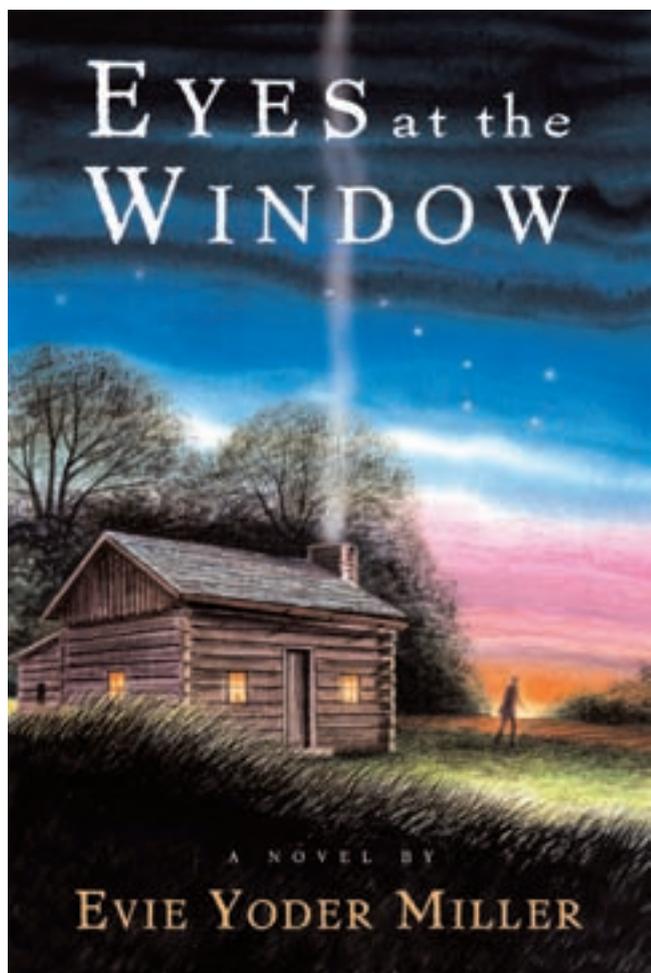
interesting. Many share hobbies such as swimming or playing basketball. Others have found that high school, in its oscillation between friendship and enmity, is the same in Canada and Lebanon.

It is this ridding of stereotypes that has made the project worthwhile. A Lebanese student isn't a terrorist, radical fundamentalist or a statistic in a foreign country. A Canadian student is no longer a rich capitalist or a movie star.

This letter exchange has given faces to people on opposite sides of the ocean. In these tiny spaces of friendship, I see God acting to build bridges instead of walls and to bring hope to our violent world.—**James Friesen**

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Good  Books

50 years of church news

First English-language paper for Canadian Mennonites

In 1953, *The Canadian Mennonite* was launched as “an English language weekly devoted to the affairs of Mennonites across Canada.” It was the vision of D.W. Friesen & Sons, a publishing and printing company in Altona, Manitoba.

A year’s subscription was \$2.00. The publisher admitted that “such a periodical will not be a financially profitable enterprise, but we pray that it will be a worthwhile service to our Mennonite brethren everywhere.”

Friesens found an editor in the 1953 graduating class of Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Frank H. Epp was just 24 years old when he took on the job. For a look at the beginnings, see Ted Friesen’s reflections on page 19.

Friesens published *The Canadian Mennonite* until October 1962, when it transferred ownership to the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Company Ltd. This company consisted of over 200 shareholders, from 8 Mennonite groups, who purchased shares at \$100 each. Friesens continued to print the paper.

The inter-Mennonite board of directors was chaired by David Schroeder (Conference of Mennonites in Canada), with P.J.B. Reimer (Evangelical Mennonite Conference) as vice-chair. Subscribers in October 1962 totalled 3,500, not enough to carry the costs. Plans included increased advertising and an every-home plan for churches. The company even offered commissions as an incentive to individuals to sell subscriptions.

In June 1963, the publishing company changed to a non-profit corporation, the Canadian Mennonite Association. Again, the problem was financing the paper.

“The financial reports have shown

consistently that *The Canadian Mennonite* is running at a deficit of approximately \$1,000 a month,” said a report from the association. The report assured readers, however, that according to other church supported papers, the deficit is “low by comparison.”

The association identified the difficulty of having “no single church body that it can turn to for budget support.”

In the June 14, 1963 issue, the editor repeated his dreams: “1) to introduce this newspaper to every Mennonite household in Canada to serve as a major educational and evangelistic tool for the benefit of the entire brotherhood, and 2) to place this newspaper in libraries, waiting rooms, offices, the desks of legislators, and on the desks of other publications where it will have a maximum witness value.”

Frank Epp left the the paper in 1967 and Larry Kehler took over as editor. In December 1969, Friesens printed their last issue and the paper moved to web offset printing.

In the fall of 1970, the paper announced that it would cease publication (see reflections by Larry Kehler). The last issue of *The Canadian Mennonite* was February 19, 1971.



Frank Epp in 1966.

New periodical launched

Immediately after the demise of *The Canadian Mennonite*, people began working to fill “the communication gap” with a new periodical. Among the first to take action was Aaron Klassen, chair of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, who found a group of 65 people ready to pledge funds to begin a new publication.

The group began discussions with conference officials in Ontario and Winnipeg. In Ontario, major impetus was given to the new venture when the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference agreed to suspend publication of the *Ontario Mennonite Evangel* in favour of a new national periodical.

The first issue of *Canadian Mennonite Reporter* was published in Waterloo, Ontario, on August 3, 1971. Editor of





From 1971-88, Mennonite Reporter was prepared by pasting up strips of copy prepared by a phototypesetter. In 1988, staff made the leap from typewriters to a desktop publishing system.

the bi-weekly paper was Frank H. Epp, released for one-third of his time by Conrad Grebel College where he was teaching. Dave Kroeker was hired as half-time managing editor.

Some cautioned that the two editors, who had both spent so many years with the former periodical, should not be re-hired. "After due consideration, however, the publishing group was of one mind on this matter," according to a statement in the first issue.

The Mennonite Publishing Service was formed in 1972. Founding chair was Milton Good; vice-chair was Aaron Klassen. The new publishing group raised \$3,500 to help *The Canadian Mennonite* liquidate its debt.

Like its predecessor, the *Mennonite Reporter* (the *Canadian* was dropped in 1972) had an inter-Mennonite focus. From the outset, it also encouraged conferences and churches to buy every-home plans for their members. In 1973, Dave Kroeker became editor, with assistant editor Margaret Loewen Reimer.

In 1976, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada began to promote every-home circulation of the *Mennonite Reporter*. Circulation was around 10,000.

Ron Rempel took over the editor's role in 1979. He oversaw the transition of the paper from being an independent, inter-Mennonite periodical to becoming more closely linked to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. This process culminated in 1997 with the beginning of a new magazine and a new circulation plan.

The first issue of *Canadian Mennonite* came out on September 15, 1997. It was in magazine format with colour added. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada and its area conferences agreed to buy subscriptions for all members. This added 9,000 new subscribers. Current circulation

High aims and high hopes

In a letter to prospective correspondents, the purpose of *The Canadian Mennonite* was outlined somewhat as follows: "This new weekly will be published in the interests of all Mennonite church groups in Canada. In its contents it will present articles of information, such as news items from the various Mennonite districts and correspondence from readers, and also articles of instruction and inspiration, such as book reviews, stories, sermons and devotional material, discussions, etc.

"In doing this it will seek to present the pure teachings of the Bible as interpreted and proclaimed by the Mennonite Church, reaching out to many Canadian Mennonite young people and others who do not, or cannot, read our German-language periodicals, and also presenting a united witness to our Canadian neighbours."

In a dominion-wide Mennonite community which is multiply divided, and in a Canadian community which has often not felt the gospel testimony and the unpromising peace position of a united Mennonite brotherhood, we believe that this new weekly has an important part to play.—From first editorial by **Frank H. Epp**

of the magazine is around 17,000.

"Amidst the stress of dealing with this time of significant change, we're also feeling the excitement and promise of a new beginning," wrote editor Ron Rempel in the first issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. "Let us know what you think."

Many readers have taken up that invitation. The conversation has been lively, informative and inspiring. May it continue for many years to come.

—**Margaret Loewen Reimer**

Canadian Mennonite chronology

October 16, 1953

First issue of *The Canadian Mennonite* published by D. W. Friesen & Sons of Altona, Manitoba, with editor Frank H. Epp.

February 19, 1971

Final issue of *The Canadian Mennonite*, under editor Larry Kehler.



August 3, 1971

First issue of *Canadian Mennonite Reporter* launched by Mennonite Publishing Service in Waterloo, Ontario, with editor Frank H. Epp.

January 10, 1972

Name changed to *Mennonite Reporter*.

August 20, 1973

Dave Kroeker becomes editor of *Mennonite Reporter*, with Margaret Loewen Reimer as assistant editor.



Birth of a Canadian Mennonite paper

It was K.H. Neufeld of Winkler, Manitoba, who came to D.W. Friesen & Sons in the early 1950s, asking whether we wouldn't consider publishing an English-language paper that would serve every branch of Mennonites in Canada.

K.H. had a print shop, but his real love was music. He travelled across western Canada conducting choirs and organizing workshops.

Perhaps it was his acquaintanceship with various Mennonites that sparked his vision for a paper that would be a link and an inspiration for the many branches of our people.

My father, D. W. Friesen, who died in 1951, also had a strong ecumenical outlook. My two brothers and I had, we hope, inherited some of his vision.

Having decided to go ahead with K.H.'s proposal, we scouted around for someone to translate this dream into reality. Someone suggested Frank Epp.

We thought Frank was a bit young, and had a dreamy look about him, not only due to the fact that he was about to get married. He didn't accept immediately. He later told us he had made extensive inquiries locally, and sought counsel from local leaders.

Friesens provided the material, financial and technical base, but the rest was left to Frank. Very soon it became evident that Frank's enormous energy, great capabilities and organizational skills contributed to his complete dedication to the paper.

We became aware of the immensity of the task before us. The church was changing. It was a period of flux, with the old trying to maintain the status quo and the new looking for change to meet the needs of the times. That was the situation facing the birth of this new paper.

Frank began by communicating with all conferences, leaders and

others, to sell the idea of an inter-Mennonite paper serving the interests of all groups, for the purpose of bringing them closer to each other so that their respective contributions might complement each other.

To speak to the young people, to speak prophetically to the issues of the day, was urgent. Most conferences were somewhat defensive, seeing the paper as a threat to their control. It is not surprising that many of the older generation were less than enthusiastic. But there were also many of that generation who saw the need and supported the paper. Frank used various ways of trying to convince the Mennonite people that the paper would benefit church and society. He went to conferences, the first in Drake, Saskatchewan, in 1953, where the first issues were distributed gratis. He visited leaders and persons in authority with an attempt at persuasion. His editorials were forthright and articulate in stating the mission of the paper. He recruited influential men from various conferences to serve on the board.

I remember one early board meeting attended by Peter F. Bargaen, Orland Gingerich and David Schroeder. Progress was slow. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada was the most receptive of all the conferences. The struggle for recognition and support was a constant one during the whole history of *The Canadian Mennonite*.

Friesens would have been happy if the paper had broken even financially. That did not happen. Every year saw a substantial deficit.

In 1962, Frank took a year off to complete his doctorate at the University of Minnesota. Aaron Klassen and Dave Kroeker took over in the interim.

There were many heartaches but also joys during those years. Frank and Helen made a great contribution locally, including the formation of the Altona Mennonite Church in 1962. That same time saw the creation of MCC Canada (1963), and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada (1967), projects that Frank was active in.

Frank's editorials challenged the Mennonite people of Canada to come to terms with being either separate, or being light and salt in Canadian society. The 1950s and 60s were exciting years, with the old being challenged and the new structured. The demise of the paper may have looked like a failure, and the end of a project.

In a sense it was, but the fact that another paper was started in the 1970s confirms that it was too good an idea to let die.—**Ted Friesen**

From a talk given at the Canadian Mennonite annual meeting in Altona, Manitoba, February 6, 1999.



October 2003
Celebrating 50 years
of *Canadian*
Mennonite publishing.

Reporter

September 17, 1979

Ron Rempel becomes editor of *Mennonite Reporter*, with managing editor Margaret Loewen Reimer.



September 1, 1997

Last issue of *Mennonite Reporter*.

Canadian Mennonite

September 15, 1997

First issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, with editor Ron Rempel. Conference of Mennonites in Canada and area conferences agree to buy subscriptions for all members.

An end and a new beginning

I received an invitation from *The Canadian Mennonite* in early 1967 to become the editor and general manager of the paper. Little did I realize that in less than four years we would need to put this precious paper to rest.

I had two earlier experiences as associate editor when Frank Epp was doing graduate studies, in 1955-56 and in the summer of 1961.

The Canadian Mennonite, an inter-Mennonite publication, received little financial support from any Mennonite organization. Keeping the paper afloat was a major challenge. In the mid-1960s, the circulation went up to about 6,000 as a result of price-reduced subscription drives, but by 1969 it had slipped to 4,300 again.

Annual banquets in various parts of Canada were both fundraising events and occasions to focus on important themes.

Among the speakers were: Peter J. Dyck, well-known Mennonite Central Committee administrator, who spoke on "When is service Christian?" in 14 communities from the Fraser Valley to St. Catharines in 1968; J. Lawrence Burkholder, president of Goshen College, who spoke in Winnipeg, Kitchener and Toronto in 1969 on "Nonresistance and nonviolence;" Millard Fuller, who later started Habitat for Humanity, spoke on "Radical discipleship" in Winnipeg, Kitchener and New Hamburg in 1970; and Roy Bonisteel, CBC personality, spoke on "Mass media and the church" in Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Kitchener in 1971.

We also arranged two tours by the Medical Mission Sisters, a popular singing group from the United States led

by Sister Miriam Therese Winter (who wrote such songs as "Joy is like the rain"). Winter and I happened to be seat-mates on the plane home from an Association of Christian Publications convention and I had the audacity to ask if her group might be willing to tour Canada under our sponsorship.

One tour was in the fall of 1969 and the other in spring 1970. Attendance totalled 15,000. Without the income from those tours, the paper would have ended with a much larger deficit.

The board and staff had to take a careful look at the paper's financial viability in 1970. At the annual meeting in November, the 60 members in attendance decided to close down the paper in March 1971.

The November 13, 1970 issue carried the "obituary."

"The Canadian Mennonite, 17, still mentally vigorous but suffering from a decided shortness of breath, has been given only four months to live.... The 60 members and friends of the association who gathered at The CM's bedside last Saturday to take its pulse and to ponder its prognosis, decided that its ailment was terminal...."

"It is not an easy matter to judge when an institution has completed its mission, but...the trends in The CM's operation were sufficiently clear...."

Among the difficulties cited was that "both religious and secular periodicals which cater to general audiences are losing readers, and also advertisers." Readers "prefer something which is slanted specifically to their age group, vocation, or hobby interests, etc." The financial woes grew more acute with each passing year.

With the motion to close came a commitment to cover the entire indebtedness.

The closing of *The Canadian Mennonite* was painful for the staff and board, and for its readers. Many sent notes of thanks and condolence. We offered to refund unused portions of subscriptions, but few accepted this offer.

It was a healing experience for me when within the space of a few months of *The Canadian Mennonite's* death another national paper, the *Mennonite Reporter*, came on the scene to serve Canadian Mennonites.—Larry Kehler

Annual banquets were both fundraising events and occasions to focus on important themes.



Board members and staff mark the transition from *Mennonite Reporter* to *Canadian Mennonite* in 1997. Staff, back row from left: Ferne Burkhardt, Margaret Loewen Reimer, Ron Rempel, Aiden Schlichting Enns. Mennonite Publishing Service Executive Committee (seated): Sam Steiner, Ted Regehr, Ken Reddig, Lloyd Koch, Anne Neufeld.

A sample of Epp editorials

Face the facts

A reader's reaction to the divorce item in the December 15 issue was not unexpected. The item was a trial balloon built from the following reasons:

- A responsible newspaper has an obligation to publish the unpleasant as well as the pleasant facts. This is good journalism, good history and good biblicism.
- Unpleasant news about individuals speaks not only of their failure, but of the failures of families, churches, communities and a brotherhood. A divorce item is not a pointing of the finger but a looking in the mirror.
- By considering only pleasant facts, we build up the image of Mennonites as saints and our communities as utopias. This is a false image.
- There is a common Mennonite notion that problems are solved by ignoring them or denying them. This idea does not make good psychological sense nor is it supported by sociological data or biblical insights.
- We cannot be helped or healed without facing the facts. When a doctor wants to save a body, he begins by defining the disease. When an evangelist wants to save a soul he cannot bypass sin. When a newspaper wants to redeem a society, it cannot avoid an examination of her ills.—Dec. 29, 1961

A victim of her times

Marilyn Monroe, the "love goddess of America," is dead.

The easiest thing to do now would be to join the chorus of accusers who use badness in other people to put up their own front of goodness. This might even seem to be the Christian thing to do, if not the Lord himself, in a similar situation, had side-stepped judgment by saying, "He that is without sin among you, cast the first stone."

Now that the books are closing on the movie queen's life, it is well to turn the spotlight on the civilization that produced her.

In Marilyn Monroe we see reflected a civilization's way of life, which appears so full and yet is so empty, which promises so much and produces so little, which is filled with so much stimulation but so little satisfaction,

which knows so much sex but so little love, which thinks itself so rich when in fact it is so miserably poor....— Aug. 10, 1962

The lost war

The war in Vietnam is a lost cause. We say lost because the big defending nation is in that war losing her soul, and the little defending nation is in that war losing her body.

We say lost because the defenders of freedom have in that defence sacrificed all the principles they were defending.

Defeat began when they supported governments which were not according to the will of the people and subverted governments which were not according to their own will, all in the name of freedom in South Vietnam.

Defeat continued when they assumed that a strong military position could be substituted for a weak moral position. We question the motives of the defenders.... The victories of this latter day must be achieved in another way.—March 30, 1965

Speaking to government

Whether or not the churches should speak to government on national and international affairs is a question which continues to crop up in Mennonite circles. "Don't mix church and politics;" "We have no business talking to government," is heard again and again.

What is usually forgotten is that there are all kinds of precedents for such a witness. Our fathers and grandfathers have gone to the government real often to say things that were on their heart. A study of history reveals, however, that we have usually gone only when requesting certain rights and privileges for ourselves.

But when some in our midst have tried to speak to government on behalf of the rights of others and with respect to international questions, then these have been disputed: "We have no right, no business, no duty, no mandate to speak to government."—Nov. 9, 1965

Touche, Mr. Trudeau

Prime Minister Trudeau seems to be more impressed with John and Yoko Lennon's ventures for peace than with the Mennonite's efforts.

This was the impression left by his granting of an audience to Beatle Lennon and his wife only a few days after he had turned down a request for a meeting from representatives of Canada's largest "peace" church.

Perhaps Mr. Trudeau was right. Did he have any reason to suspect that this time the Mennonites would not be coming with mainly requests for special privileges? How could he have guessed that this time they wanted to talk to him about China, Taiwan, NATO, the U.S. draft resisters, and other vexing problems of today?

Has the "peace" mantle which the Mennonites have worn so timidly, and often so selfishly, finally been stripped from their shoulders and thrown to others such as the Lennons, who are less concerned about their own welfare and image?—Dec. 31, 1969



First issue of Mennonite Reporter in 1971.



First issue of Canadian Mennonite in 1997.

Winnipeg, Man.

Cultivating beauty is gift to the church

I work as a hair stylist. How am I a steward of God's grace in my workplace and in my church?

Given the hair styles and colours that you see on the streets these days, you might wonder what God's grace has to do with a beauty salon and the fashion industry.

I believe that God has given me a gift of vision to see my clients in a different light. I am able to visualize what style would suit them best, depending on the texture of their hair, the shape of their face, and the angle of their hair line. I need to consider all those things before I decide on a style.

Being visually-oriented is also the way I see myself contributing at Bethel Mennonite Church. Christmas is the easiest to describe—we are all used to seeing an Advent wreath, the manger, the lights. Then there's Easter. The scriptures are very descriptive of the passion of Christ and need only a little visual assistance.

The rest of the church year is a little harder to work with.

Creating worship with visual appeal has many challenges. What I see, others may not. For example, the way I drape a cloth on a table may look crooked...but actually, draping a cloth at a particular angle can give depth and texture.

Some might think the branches I use look like dried-up twigs. However, if you can visualize branches being

like arms stretched out to embrace, or branches budding into new life, you are able to see past the twig.

When I am asked to do a visual display for worship, I like to use what I find on walks in the forest or along the beach: interesting stones, ferns, reeds, birch bark, driftwood. All of these things from God's nature can enhance a table display.

For the communion table at a recent service, I used stones and candles. The stones were rough on one side and smooth on the other—just like life. Some days are easygoing; other days

are rough and bumpy.

For me, candles represent light, warmth, comfort and hope. They enhance worship. The candles are an encouragement for everyone to use his or her gifts, however great or small we may think they are.

Creating visual displays helps me to feel involved in worship. I hope that the visuals have enlightened and enhanced your worship.— **Lorraine Petkau**

The writer presented this reflection at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg last April during a series on using one's gifts to serve God.



Petkau

Hague, Sask.

Hague congregation celebrates 100 years

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations," was the theme of the 100th anniversary celebration of Hague Mennonite Church on August 9-10. Over 300 people came from across Canada and the United States to worship and celebrate.

Displays included historical photographs, the old clock and pulpit top, birthday bank and pump organ. A near-capacity crowd filled the church

basement for the Saturday evening banquet. Lynn Friesen chaired the evening program, "Music and memories." A women's trio that had sung together for a number of years sang "Living stones." Helen Fehr played a piece on the piano, assisted by Bertha Thiessen and Margaret Buhler on autoharp.

The Siemens sisters, who now live in British Columbia, provided some

unusual entertainment: Sarah on piano, Katherine and her husband playing three trumpets. Genevieve Ens presented a reading, "What is a church?" Tony Funk shared the history of the Hague church.

John Bergen, pastor from 1967-72 and in 1987, brought the evening message, visualizing the church 50 years from now. The evening ended with a solo by Shelley Heinrichs.

The church was full for the celebration on Sunday morning. Highlights of the morning: a mass choir and meditations by two former pastors. Verner Friesen (1963-67) encouraged everyone to repeat the



Former pastors at the Hague church anniversary. Back row, from left: Duane Neudorf, Edwin Epp, John Bergen. Front row: Gail Wilson, Martha Bergen, Ruth Epp, Verna Noll, Jake Mierau, Anne Friesen, Verner Friesen. Seated: Dave and Joanne Feick.

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Abbotsford, B.C.

'Hair show' witnesses for peace

Mennonites from Vancouver and the Fraser Valley added some colour to the second annual Abbotsford International Hair Show on August 9.

They distributed hair dye and 700 free colouring books (and crayons) as a peaceful alternative to the military aircrafts on display at the Abbotsford Air Show. They also offered free hair styling and face painting from a professional.

The colouring book told the story of a refugee family that had come to Abbotsford from Laos through the sponsorship of a local church. When family members first heard the roar of military planes from the air show, they panicked and ran for cover.

stories of the past so not to forget what God has done. Edwin Epp (1972-88) spoke of the many changes that have taken place. He challenged the church to stay tuned to the larger church and the community in a time of change, and to remain faithful to God's call.

A new organ, played by Alma Neudorf, was dedicated during the service. It had been donated by Harve and Joan Hildebrandt of Saskatoon as an anniversary gift.

At the end of the morning, the congregation went outside for the unveiling of a memorial cairn. Lunch consisted of traditional *pluma mousse*, *shinkin fleisch* and potato salad.

The Sunday afternoon celebration included a prelude with piano, electric organ and old pump organ. Eric Dueck, congregational chair, led an afternoon of reminiscing. Jake Mierau from Goshen, Indiana, pastor from 1959-62, shared memories from his time as teacher and pastor.

The congregation heard the final report from the Senior Ladies' Aid (2001) as they were thanked for their years of dedication. Martha Lesser read a history of the Mission Helpers, a group that has existed since 1956. Former pastors were presented with commemorative plates.—From report by **Alice Funk**

The point of the colouring book was that military aircraft are more than neat technology—they are the cause of much human suffering.

"We're inviting parents to think of innocent children around the world who live in fear of aerial bombardments, landmines and gunfire," said Elsie Wiebe Klingler, peace coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee B.C.

Roland Balzer, pastor of Highland Community Church, sported purple hair. "The colouring book and the hair show served as a questioning presence, hopefully twiggling something in people's minds that all is not well," he said.

Bruce Guenther, pastoral intern at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, thinks that it is important to educate people. "What looks like entertaining technology to us...represents fear, violence and domination to others," said Guenther, a former MCC worker and student at Canadian Mennonite University. "Countries should spend

resources on alleviating poverty rather than on machines made for war."

The hair show competition was a highlight of the afternoon. Angela Neufeld won hands down with her "shock and awe" hairstyle—a foot-high flame supported by wire. Other hairstyles included a "cluster bomb" and a "radioactive deplete uranium site."

The hair show was covered by local newspapers and sparked a discussion about peace at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church by passersby on their way to the air show.

Next year, the coordinating committee hopes to involve more Mennonite churches in the area in a larger event—perhaps a "Sing for peace." The hair show was sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee B.C., Project Ploughshares, Langley Mennonite Fellowship and West Abbotsford Mennonite Church.

To see the colouring book, look at MCC B.C.'s website at www.mcc.org/bc/peace.—From MCC B.C. release

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Waterloo, Ont.

Congregation helps unite Muslim family

A Muslim family originally from Afghanistan has found a church home at Waterloo North Mennonite. With the church's help, family members were reunited this summer with other members they had not seen for 18 years.

Gada and Raisa Faez, with eight children and their families, came to Canada in 1997. Almost immediately, Gada began the process of getting his oldest daughter, Sabera, her husband and five children, to join them.

Gada had not seen Sabera since 1985, when she left Afghanistan for a better life in Iran. Since then, war and political unrest have kept them apart.

This summer, after many delays, the long-anticipated reunion took place. Gada appreciates the church community that supported him through the long process.

Gada was a professor in Kabul. In 1993, as unrest increased, Gada sent his family, in separate groups to avoid detection, to his sister's house in a

nearby village. Eventually they fled through the mountains to Pakistan. They took nothing, imagining they would return to Afghanistan one day.

Life was difficult in Pakistan. Gada was required to accompany his wife and daughters outside the home and found the treatment of women difficult to accept. He eventually found work as a translator and tutor.

Now he uses his tutoring skills in Canada. Some of his first connections in Canada were with members of Waterloo North. Although Gada continues to go to the mosque on Fridays, he views Waterloo North as his church.

At Waterloo North, he is involved in an English class for immigrants and assists in the library. He works at the reception centre for new immigrants and as an outreach worker at the local multicultural centre. Church members are assisting the new family to get settled.—From a report by **Shirley Grove**

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People & Events

Leamington, Ont.—Erna Toews Dyck, who died on August 7 at the age of 92, was the first female settler in the Mennonite settlement of Reesor, in northern Ontario. Dyck was born in 1911 in Ukraine. When she was six, her family fled their home, enduring persecution and near starvation until they came to Canada in 1924. In 1925, Erna's father, Jacob Toews, arrived in the wilderness of Mile 103 (Reesor) and began building a log home. Erna, age 14, soon followed. Erna married Peter Dyck in 1930 and later moved to Leamington. She is survived by daughter Helga Harder and her family.—From report by **Rudy Wiens**

San Pedro Sula, Honduras—A march for peace by Mennonite and Catholic youth, from what was once considered the country's most dangerous

neighbourhood, more than doubled in size as local residents joined the march on August 31. The efforts of the Peace and Justice project of the Honduran Mennonite Church has reduced violence by helping youth leave gangs. The march, which was the idea of a former gang member, ended with a meeting led by the local Mennonite pastor and Catholic priest. The youth of the two churches wrote a joint prayer for the event.—From MCC release

Winnipeg, Man.—Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's eighth annual cyclathon, "Bike the Whiteshell," was held June 21-22. On the first day of the 160-kilometre ride, 90 cyclists pushed hard against winds of up to 70 km. On the second day, another 7 cyclists joined the group to cycle the final 50 km. The cyclists raised nearly \$51,000 for AIDS orphans, in support of MCC's "Generations at Risk" project.—From MCC release



Harrow Mennonite Church sponsored a Ten Thousand Villages booth at the 149th Harrow Fair, August 27-31. The Harrow Fair is one of the oldest fall fairs in Canada. Hundreds of people stopped by the Villages booth to see the variety of handcrafted items by artisans in third-world countries. Greg Yantzi, local Mennonite pastor, was kept busy driving between the church and the fairgrounds to replenish stock. Ten Thousand Villages, in addition to its permanent stores, helps coordinate approximately 100 such sales each year.

Transitions

Births

Akers—to Rachel and Lonny, Grace Mennonite, Prince Albert, Sask., a daughter, Faith Leah, July 23.

Conaghan—to Candace and Mitch, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, a son, Dylan Zachary Seamus, Aug. 21.

Day—to Bonnie and Kevin, Ottawa Mennonite, a daughter, Anthea Rebecca, July 21.

Gibb—to Karen and Cory, Grace Mennonite, Prince Albert, Sask., a daughter, Rachel Angela, July 31.

Ginther—to Bonnie (Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.) and Corey of Ottawa, a son, Carson Zachary, June 28.

Jantzi—to Patti and Keith, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Maxwell Keith, Sept. 15.

Payne—to Janine and Kevin, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, a son, Jacob Duncan, Aug. 17.

Simpson—to Denise and Kevin, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a son, Hudson Lee Zachary, Aug. 3.

Shrimpton—to Miriam and Ryan, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., a son, Max Ryan, Sept. 12.

Tiessen—to Jennifer and Dean, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Rachele Elise, Aug. 22.

Voogt—to Wendy and Jason, Carman Mennonite, Man., a son, Nathan Jacob, Aug. 26.

Wieler—to Heidi and Richard, Ottawa Mennonite, twins, Benjamin John and Rebecca Justine, July 23.

Marriages

Enns-Hamm—Michael and Darlene, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., Sept. 13.

Enns-Wiens—Chris and Lori, Glenlea Mennonite, Man., Sept. 6.

Goodwin-Dueck—Rich and Lynne, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Nov. 2.

Guenther-Ginther—David (College Drive Community, Lethbridge, Alta.) and Carmen, Cornerstone Church Mennonite, Saskatoon, Aug. 9.

Janzen-Tsiapalis—Henry and Gina, at the University of Guelph, Aug. 30.

Johnston-Dueck—Derwin and Cheri, in Vineland, Ont., Aug. 1.

Martin-Pauls—Ryan and Lora, Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 6.

Modolo-Enns—Mark and Jennifer, Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite, Ont., May 24.

Neufeld-Steckler—Sheldon (Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite, Ont.) and Christy (United Church, Vancouver) in Squamish, B.C., Aug. 23.

Schumm-Deering—Ross and Michelle, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Sept. 13.

Voll-Fisher—Tomas and Rebecca, St. John's Lutheran, Clifford, Ont., Aug. 23.

Weinstein-Trewin—Jeff and Allison, Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite, Ont., June 14.

Willms-Brubacher—Paul and Rachel, in St. Jacobs, Ont., Aug. 16.

Deaths

Braun—Agatha, 88, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Aug. 17.

Dyck—Erna, 92, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 6.

Dyck—Helen (Hamm), 90, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Aug. 27.

Dyck—Justina, 97, Coaldale Mennonite, Alta., Sept. 3.

Epp—Elizabeth (Nickel), 83, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 15.

Fehr—Cornie, 95, Morden Berghaler Mennonite, Man., Sept. 10.

Gerber—Emma, 92, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 18.

Giesbrecht—Marie, 91, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Aug. 26.

Neufeld—Jacob, 78, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 26.

Schellenberg—Gerhard, 101, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sept. 18.

Wiebe—Rose, 75, Altona Mennonite, Man., Sept. 5.

Zacharias—David, 74, Carman Mennonite, Man., Sept. 1

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

Mennonite Church Canada

Report from Germany

Henriette and James Schellenberg are finishing their MC Canada Witness term in Niedergörsdorf, Germany, this fall. The following is from their August report.

The haunting strains of Armenien funeral music float over the small cemetery in the village of Altes Lager, close to where we live. Tatjana was only 49 when she died. Emotions are expressed openly and loudly.

In the reluctant silence that prevails when I stand to open the service, we hear the ancient words of Psalm 121: 'I lift up my eyes to the hills....' We had accompanied this family on their painful journey. Only the mother attended our church regularly, and there were serious language barriers.

There have been too many funerals in the past few months. But the past months

also offered three weddings. Julia, a colleague in our church's community program, wanted something more than the civil ceremony required in Germany. It was her idea to add a Christian service at city hall. With some reluctance, officials agreed, and I had the opportunity of officiating.

For six weeks, we had Lilia Dyck from Bechterdissen doing a *Praktikum* with us. Lilia is studying at the Mennonite Bible school in Bienenberg, Switzerland. Her main project, along with two young adults from our congregation, was to lead a sort of day camp for kids. This had never been tried—the pattern has been to run a program for kids during the Easter holidays.

We were grateful to God for the 25 to 30 kids who eagerly participated, leading the service on the following Sunday. We've also kept up our weekly children's club.

Another new project for this summer was a Sunday afternoon outdoor service with the Lutheran congregation. The site was a lovely clearing in a forest—a site which until

1989 was a retreat centre for the *Stasi*, the secret police in East Germany. That this could be the location for worship, where local people who were Stasi victims rubbed shoulders with informers and people from the former Soviet Union which occupied this region, is a miracle of God's power.

Recently, I had a wonderful moment at the living quarters of the most recent arrivals from the former Soviet Union. I was picking up kids for the weekly children's club and looking for someone who spoke enough German to understand what I wanted.

At the end of the hall, two women in their 60s came to the door, speaking fluent German. I introduced myself as the pastor. When I mentioned that the church was Mennonite, their faces lit up. They were from the Zaporozhye congregation, and when they learned that not only was the Mennonite church right here, but that Jake and Dorothy Unrau from Zaporozhye would be working here in fall, they said, "That's it. God has led us here. We're home!"

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Communications audit presented to board

At the May meeting of the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) Executive Board, Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel reported on the work of the Communications Audit Group to analyze communication within the conference.

The report established principles for communication and offered recommendations. Principles for communication included:

- MCEC values, mission and vision must be foundational to communication.
- MCEC's communication strategy should foster participation, dialogue and accessibility.
- Special attention must be paid to the variety of languages spoken within MCEC congregations.
- Ensure by means of ongoing evaluation that communication is effective.

Continued on page 28

Toward a theology of leadership

There are observable leadership values and styles, but is there a "theology of leadership?" When you survey the great leaders in the biblical narrative, the thing you notice most is their diversity. God cannot be faulted for having a cookie-cutter approach to choosing leaders.

In Hebrews 11 there is a handy list of biblical heroes who "did it right." The author calls them a "great cloud of witnesses" to whom the reader is to look for inspiration.

This list includes Abel, Noah, Sarah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Gideon. Their feats include "conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness...." Although the word "leadership" is not mentioned,

it is described.

What is present in the unfolding of true kingdom leadership? Are there ingredients without which kingdom leadership cannot be found?

First, faith—believing what God has said. This is first base in theology. It may have been believing first by doubting, or by asking a question, as Sarah did at the promise that she would have a child. Or faith as in Moses believing the stories of Yahweh as they had passed down to him more than believing in the power of the Pharaoh with whom he had grown up.

Second, obedience. Every one of these hero-leaders in Hebrews 11 did something beyond the "normal." They took risks; they did audacious things that were out of sync with prevailing values and political correctness.

Finally, they had a vision that went beyond their own understanding, and well

From our leaders

beyond their life experience. They were not now-oriented.

Their vision for the future was so compelling that they were able to suffer and die for it.

As leaders we feel the pressures—economic, political and spiritual—of the prevailing empire. We are ever vulnerable to that which is politically correct.

Courses on leadership tend to focus on personality strengths and skill-sets. The biblical narrative focuses on faith, obedience and vision. The effectiveness of a leader depends on these qualities. Without them, kingdom leadership is not found.—**Sven Eriksson**

Sven Eriksson, Mennonite Church Canada denominational minister



Recommendations for the executive board:

- Develop clear statements about identity (who we are); values (what is important to us) and purpose (what we are to do).
- Invite dialogue with congregations that speak other languages to understand their perspectives on sound communication practices.
- Encourage congregational networking and sharing of stories.
- Identify one MCEC staff person to take responsibility for MCEC's overall communication strategy.
- Develop appropriate technologies to improve communication from a paper-based approach to electronic. This could include various online interest groups or "talk-about's."
- Assess the need for an ongoing communications reference committee.

A question resulting from the conversation was: What is the source of MCEC's identity? There is a tension in the "ownership" diagram—is identity formed at the "centre" of the organization or within congregations? The executive noted at its June meeting that a communication review needs to be connected to the vision and strategy process.—From report to executive

Days of quiet prayer

Mennonite spiritual directors are offering Days of Quiet Prayer on five dates during the next months: October 29, November 26, January 14, February 18, May 5. Participants can choose one or more time slot: 9:00 a.m. to noon, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. or 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Each day includes a time of worship and ample time for silent prayer and reflection. Spiritual directors will be available for conversation. For further details contact Lisa at MC Eastern Canada, phone (519) 650-3806. To make arrangements for a congregation or group to host on a different day, call Miriam Frey at (519) 880-9684, e-mail: miriamfrey@online.net.

Transition

Tara Gingerich began as pastor for youth and children's ministries at Breslau Mennonite Church on September 23. She is a recent graduate of Canadian Mennonite University.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Delegate session on October 18

An important meeting of MC Manitoba delegates will take place October 18 at the Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite Church from 1:00 - 4:30 p.m. Each congregation is entitled to send one delegate for every thirty members or fraction thereof.

At the meeting, the MC Manitoba board will seek ratification of proposals to redefine some of MC Manitoba ministries, and approval for the proposed budget for 2004. The board will also report on recent decisions made in response to current financial realities, including the impact of Mennonite Church Canada's decision to end its half of the Evangelism and Service partnership.

A summary of these decisions and proposed directions was reported in the August 25 issue, page 15. One omission from that summary was the proposal to end the Abundant Life radio program on January 31.

The board will also be presenting a 2004-2006 proposed budget for discussion by delegates. The agenda with background material and the budget proposal has been circulated to churches.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Location changed for Bible conference

There has been a change in location for the Bible conference in November. The November 14-15 event was to take place at Grace Mennonite

Church in Regina. Instead, the conference will be moved to the Riverside Community School in Prince Albert.

The agenda for the conference has also changed. Rather than planning only a Bible conference for pastors and church leadership, there will now be sessions for those involved in education. Combining the two events reflects the reality of considerable distance between the most northern and southern parts of the province.

"The hope is that more people will be able to attend by sharing rides," said Ed Olfert of the Pastoral Leadership Commission. Rather than drive twice to separate events, it makes more sense to piggyback one event upon another.

Mennonite Church Alberta

More pastoral transitions

After completing a "year of discernment" on the associate pastor position at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, a collective decision was made not to pursue tenure for Ryan Siemens. His contract ended at the end of July. Ryan and his wife Sandra have since answered a call become leaders of the Service Adventure unit supported by the Lethbridge Mennonite church.

Perry Bartel completed a four-month interim ministry at the Lethbridge Mennonite church in August. He filled in for pastor Ruth Preston Schilk while she was on sabbatical.

Perry and Pam have moved to Ontario where Perry has accepted a call to pastoral ministry at Hawkesville Mennonite Church. A farewell dessert was held for the family on August 16.

Disappointing news for Trinity church

After much work and prayer, Trinity Mennonite Church received disappointing news on August 28. The Municipal

District of Foothills has denied their second attempt to gain a site specific amendment on the land they have purchased just south of Calgary city limits.

The denial prevents the congregation from building a church on the property. The district cited reasons such as inappropriate land use and road useage concerns. However, it is likely that some neighbours resisted the application.

Currently, Trinity worships on Saturday evenings at the Covenant Christian Reformed Church. While this location has served them well, space and availability are constant challenges. The congregation is now exploring other options and continuing to fundraise, firm in their conviction that God is leading them toward a church building of their own. They ask for prayers.

Trinity pastors Hugo and Doreen Neufeld have announced their retirement effective April 30. They will have served two three-year terms with the congregation.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Youth retreat

The annual IMPACT Youth retreat is scheduled for November 14-16 at Camp Squeah. The theme this year is worship. While the details of the retreat are still being planned, youth pastors are sure it will be an inspirational weekend.

For more information contact Rob Brown, phone (604) 792 6013, e-mail: edenchurch@telus.net or Allen Wiebe, phone (604) 856 8454, e-mail: bethelchurch@telus.net.

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

Employment opportunities



Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is recruiting for the position of

* MCC LIAISON TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position based in New York City. MCC's U.N. Liaison monitors relevant U.N. policies and advocates on behalf of MCC; conveys and interprets MCC priorities to U.N. agencies, diplomats and non-governmental organizations; hosts MCC staff, fieldworkers and Mennonite delegations by preparing briefings and arranging contacts at the U.N.; edits/writes "News and Views;" and supervises an intern. Initiative and cross-cultural communication skills are crucial as well as a talent for building information and action coalitions.

Fax resume to (717) 859-2171

E-mail: psd@mcc.org

Phone: Prem Dick or Anna Reimer at (717) 859-1151

BUSINESS FINANCE

Bluffton College invites applications for a tenure track position beginning Fall 2004 in the fields of finance, economics, or related disciplines.

Ph.D. or functional equivalent required for tenure. Candidate must have a strong background in quantitative analysis and have demonstrated ability or potential to teach effectively at undergraduate and graduate levels. We anticipate the position will be filled at the assistant professor level. Compensation commensurate with education and experience within the college pay scale. Review of applications begins November 14 and continues until an appointment has been made.

For more information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee), and official transcripts to

Elaine Suderman
Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs
Bluffton College, 280 West College Avenue
Bluffton, OH 45817-1196

EOE. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.



CHAPLAIN

Menno Hospital, a 150 bed extended care facility in beautiful British Columbia, is looking for a chaplain with a heart to serve the elderly. Applicants must be ordained and should hold a degree in theology/divinity, or behavioural sciences/CPE. A working knowledge of German, along with counselling and music skills, are definite assets. We are trusting God to guide a person of His choosing to meet this need by the end of November 2003.

Deadline for applications is October 31, 2003.

For more information, please contact:

Administrator, Menno Hospital
32945 Marshall Road
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1K1
Phone: (604) 859-7631, local 222
E-mail: g.neufeld@mennohospital.org



Canadian Mennonite University

CMU invites applications and nominations for the position of

Vice President and Academic Dean

for the CMU Main Campus, effective summer, 2004. The successful candidate will provide overall leadership for all academic activities, projects and programs at the CMU Main Campus, and be a key member of the CMU leadership team.

Expectations for the position include:

- Experience in developing and administering academic programs
- Ability to be innovative and entrepreneurial in leading CMU to meet the academic challenges of the future
- A personal commitment to the church, and the mission of CMU

Canadian Mennonite University is a dynamic, new Christian University with three program centres: the CMU Main Campus, Menno Simons College affiliated with the University of Winnipeg, and Outtatown. For further information about CMU or the position check the CMU web page (www.cmu.ca) or contact the President (ggerbrandt@cmu.ca).

Processing of applications and nominations will begin immediately, and continue until the position is filled. Please reply via mail or e-mail to: **Canadian Mennonite University, Susan Warkentin, Director of Human Resources, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 2N2, or swarkentin@cmu.ca.**

For sale

Order "Sharing Boundaries: Learning the Wisdom of Africa" from publications@paulinesafrica.org

The Mennonite Encyclopedia 4 volumes like new \$200.00 call (204) 275-1706 or E-mail jasdyck@mts.net

Announcement



Prairie Performances
 (Winnipeg)
 presents:

OPERA and OPERETTA ARIAS

With
KURT LEHMANN
TENOR

Shannon Hiebert, Piano

Guest Artists
Heidi Klassen, Soprano
and Frederik Robert, Tenor

Muriel Richardson Auditorium
 The Winnipeg Art Gallery
 300 Memorial Blvd.

Thursday & Friday
 October 16th & 17th 2003
 7:30 P.M.

Ticket Info: 204-488-7733

CANADIAN
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Advertising Information
1-800-316-4052

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Tastes of Africa and Latin America

Winnipeg, Man.—On October 25, an African theme dinner will be hosted by Floradale Mennonite Church in Ontario, with Sharon and Rudy Dirks, former Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Botswana. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. Call Jim Loepp-Thiessen at (519) 634-8712 for tickets.

A Latin American theme dinner will be hosted by First Mennonite Church in Calgary on November 1 at 6:00 p.m. Speaker will be Janet Plenert, MC Canada Witness director for international ministries, and a former mission worker in Brazil. Call Betty Wiehler at (403) 249-8784 for tickets.—MC Canada release

Fundraisers in Calgary

Calgary, Alta.—A new CD, *The Light Shines*, featuring Calgary vocalist Kim Thiessen and musicians Darryl Neustaedter Barg, John Guenter and Ben Regier, will be launched on October 23 at Foothills Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. The CD features contemporary, traditional, country and German Christmas songs, and follows *To Such as These*, a CD released in 2002 for MCC's Generations at Risk (AIDS) program.

PDQ (pretty downright quirky) Variety and Musical Revue will take place on October 26 at First Mennonite Church here. The event, which begins at 6:30 p.m., includes PDQ Bach, a men's choir, photo-acoustic show and several musical surprises. It features Gerald, Tim, Sheldon and Jonathan Neufeld, plus guests.

As planners put it, the event will take you "to the musical brink and Bach again." An offering will go to the Trinity Mennonite Church building

fund. Call (403) 256-7157 for more information.—From reports by **Doris Daley**

Workshop on missions for church leaders

Cambridge, Ont.—Church leaders, from council members to Christian education directors, are invited to a workshop on the "Implications of being a missional church," to be held on October 18 at Wanner Mennonite Church. Robert (Jack) Suderman, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, will be the resource person.

The workshop is part of Wanner's "Missionfest 2003" to help leaders consider the practical implications of being the church in the world. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at noon. To register, contact Cindy at Wanner church, phone (519) 658-4902, or e-mail: admin@wannerchurch.org.—Wanner release

Winnipeg concert series begins

Winnipeg, Man.—Prairie Performances' 17th season offers three concerts at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The first concert on October 16 and 17 presents favourite opera and German operetta arias with tenor Kurt Lehmann and pianist Shannon Hiebert. Guest artists are soprano Heidi Klassen and tenor Frédéric Robert.

The second concert on February 26 and 27 features traditional and contemporary music by Prairie Voices, a choir under the direction of Elroy Friesen. On May 6 and 7, Ron and Ruth Moir, duo-pianists, present music and dialogue in a concert entitled "Classics with humour." All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.—From Prairie Performances release

Calendar

British Columbia

October 18: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. banquet with speaker John B. Toews. Call (604) 853-6177, e-mail: archives@mhsbc.com.
October 18, 19: Thanksgiving Vespers with Abendmusik Vesper Choir at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (18) and Knox United, Vancouver (19), 8:00 p.m. Offering for Menno Simons Centre.
November 1: MCC B.C. annual meeting at South Langley MB Church.
November 6-8: Mennonite Disaster Service informational evenings: Vernon Mennonite (6), Greendale MB (7), Peace Mennonite, Richmond (8), 7:00 p.m. Reports from MDS volunteers.
November 7-9: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Squeah. Contact Christa Lynn Nikkel, e-mail: nikkel@telus.net.
November 29: Mennonite Church British Columbia delegate meeting at Bethel Mennonite, Aldergrove, 8:30 a.m. to noon.
December 6, 7: Abendmusik Advent Vespers at Evangelical Free Church, Abbotsford (6) and Knox United, Vancouver (7), 8:00 p.m. Offering for Menno Simons Centre.

Alberta

October 18: Workday at Camp Valaqua. Call (403) 637-2510 for details.
October 23: CD release at Foothills Mennonite Church by Kim Thiessen. Fundraiser for MCC Africa AIDS project.
October 24-25: MCC Alberta annual meeting at Coaldale Mennonite Church. Speakers from Uganda.
October 26: PDQ (Pretty Downright Quirky) variety and musical revue at First Mennonite, Calgary, 6:30 p.m.

Benefit for Trinity Mennonite Church building fund. Call (403) 256-7157.

October 29, 30, November 1, 2, 5: MCC Community Justice Ministries celebrations at LaCrete (29), Edmonton (30), Tofield 8:30 a.m. breakfast (Nov. 1), Calgary (1), Gem (2), Didsbury (5).

October 31-November 1: MC Alberta General Council meetings.

November 1: Latin American theme dinner with Janet Plenert at First Mennonite Church, Calgary, 6:00 p.m. Call Betty Wiehler at (403) 249-8784.

November 4: Canadian Foodgrains Bank 20th anniversary celebration in Red Deer. Call Mary Thompson at (403) 248-0205.

November 15: MC Alberta Pastors Council meeting at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury on "hospitality."

Saskatchewan

October 17, 18, 19: MCC Saskatchewan Support Circle workshops at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina (17), 7:00 p.m.; Rosthern Mennonite (18), 10:00 a.m.; Massey Place Community, Saskatoon (19), 2:00 p.m.

October 17-18: Women in Mission retreat at Shekinah.

October 25: Alumni Volleyball Tournament at Rosthern Junior College.

October 31-November 1: MCC Saskatchewan annual meeting at Laird Mennonite Church.

November 5: MEDA breakfast at Smiley's Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

November 14-15: MC Saskatchewan Bible Conference with Harry Huebner at Riverside Community School, Prince Albert.

December 3: MEDA breakfast at Smiley's Restaurant, Saskatoon, 7:30 a.m.

Manitoba

October 16, 23, 24: Eden Foundation fundraising banquets with David Schroeder and House of Doc at Altona EMMC Church (16), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg (23), Steinbach Mennonite (24). Call (204) 325-5355 or 866-493-6202, e-mail: edenfdn@valleycable.com.

October 17-18: Women in Mission fall retreat at Camp Assiniboia. Speaker: Kathy Giesbrecht.

October 18: MC Manitoba special delegate meeting at Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite, 1:00 p.m.

October 21-22: J. J. Thiessen Lectures at Canadian Mennonite University with Paul Hiebert.

October 23-25: Youth ministry course and conference at Canadian Mennonite University with Rick Bartlett.

October 25: Preaching workshop at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

October 27: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual meeting, 7:30 p.m.

October 30-November 2: MEDA 50th anniversary convention at Fairmont Hotel, Winnipeg. Call 800-665-7026.

October 31-November 2: Quilting retreat with Val Pankratz at Camp Moose Lake.

November 1, 2, 8: Camps with Meaning banquets at Camp Koinonia (1), 6:00 p.m.; Douglas Mennonite Church (2), 5:00 p.m.; Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite (8), 6:00 p.m.

November 1, 8: Preaching workshops at Grace Mennonite Church, Brandon (1) and Plum Coulee Bergthaler Mennonite Church (8).

November 7-9: Quilting retreat with Meg Suderman at Camp Moose Lake.

November 14-15: MCC Manitoba annual meeting at Richmond Park MB Church, Brandon.

November 19: Evening with the Arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 7:30 p.m.

November 21-22: MCC Canada annual meeting.

November 27-29: MCC pork canning in Winkler.

December 11, 18: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas concerts: Agassiz at Bethel Mennonite (11); Bedson at Immanuel Pentecostal (18), 7:00 p.m.

December 8: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7:00 p.m.

Ontario

October 11-12: 50th anniversary celebrations at Harrow Mennonite Church. Call (519) 738-2148, e-mail: harrowmennonite.on.ca.

October 16: MEDA breakfast meeting at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Laverne Brubacher.

October 18: Missional church workshop for leaders at Wannan Mennonite, Cambridge, with Jack Suderman, 8:30 a.m. to noon.

October 18: Farewell dinner for Ron Rempel (*Canadian Mennonite*) at Elmira Mennonite Church.

October 18: Women of MCEC Fall Workshop at North Leamington United Mennonite, 9:45 a.m. Call (519) 356-2387.

October 18-19: Open house at Hanover Mennonite Church, Saturday, 1:00-5:00 p.m. Dedication Sunday, 2:30 p.m.

October 19: Thanksgiving music at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, 7:30 p.m. Offering for Agape Fellowship, London.

October 20, 21, 27, 28: Regional meetings for Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, 7:30 p.m. Elmira Mennonite (20), Wellesley Mennonite (21), MSCU head office, Kitchener (27), UMEI, Leamington (28).

October 25: MC Eastern Canada delegate session at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church. Speaker: Michael Banks from New York.

October 25: African theme dinner with Sharon and Rudy Dirks at Floradale Mennonite,

6:30 p.m. Call Jim Loepp-Thiessen at (519) 634-8712.

October 25: Marriage Encounter banquet and auction at Kitchener MB Church. Call (519) 896-7877.

October 26: Five-on-the-Floor and Peach Pickers concert at Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite Church, 3:00 p.m. Fundraiser for Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre and Mennonite Centre Ukraine.

November 1: Silver Lake Camp annual meeting at Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite Church, 4:30 p.m. Fish fry and sausage dinner, 5:00-8:00 p.m.

November 2: Menno Singers performs "Requiem for the Victims of Chernobyl" with two Ukrainian choirs at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church,

Kitchener, 3:00 p.m.

November 7: BenjaminEby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College featuring John E. Toews, "Toward a biblical theology of leadership affirmation: Rethinking ordination," 7:00 p.m.

November 9: Atrium dedication at Conrad Grebel, 3:00 p.m.

November 14-15: MCC Ontario annual meeting at Brother Andre Catholic High School, Markham.

November 20: MEDA breakfast meeting at Stone Crock, St. Jacobs, 7:30 a.m. Speaker: Monica Vandenberg.

November 29: Peace seminar for Christian police officers at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Call Wendy Shoreman at (519) 745-8458.

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