

CANADIAN Mennonite

December 20, 2004
Volume 8, Number 24



Care for God's good creation

As the days begin to turn away from darkness towards light, it seems a good time to revisit the story of the first ever such light. Here a part of how black American poet James Weldon Johnson saw it happen:

*And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world.*

*And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.*

*Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: That's good!*

*Then God reached out and took the light in His hands,
And God rolled the light around in His hands
Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered up in a shining ball
And flung against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars....*

Then God himself stepped down—

Seven times in the first creation story God sees that the creation was good. After we humans are made, God steps down, wipes off his hands, rubs the sweat out of each eye, looks over all that he has made and can't contain himself: "indeed, it was *very* good."

In Job 38, God tells Job that when God laid down the cornerstone of the earth, the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy. It was double plus good. It was a creation worthy of having God step down, stroll through it and enjoy the walk.

That's an identity we need to claim. We were created good. Not 99 and 44/100th percent good but every bit of one hundred percent good. We often choose sin, true, but there's still a blessing that's in us deep down, in our every cell, that sin can't erase. It's a blessing in every grain of sand, every drop of water, and in every wriggly, creepy, swimming, flying, just plain living thing there is.

We were made to be good. As God's people, this means we were also made to care for the things God declared good. From acid rain to clear-cutting forests leading to catastrophic flooding (as just happened in the Philippines) to greenhouse gasses to the piles of trash that line our sidewalks after Christmas: We've often done pretty poorly at keeping creation good.

At this time of year, we stop to reflect on what we have been given and on ways to do better in the year to come. There are many good resources available, such as Joanne Moyer's new book *Earth trek* from Herald Press, David Suzuki's list of ten things you can do to protect nature at www.davidsuzuki.org/WOL/Challenge/ or the Government of Canada's new Energy Innovators Initiative which refunds part of the money spent on retrofits to create more energy efficient churches.

James Weldon Johnson's poem describes two blessings: the blessings of a good creation and the blessing of God stepping down to be with us. We've just celebrated the latter at Christmas. Let's now remember the former.

Which blessings of creation do we erode through our daily lives? Which could we build up? Let's seek to live in ways that bring light to God's creation.—**Timothy Dyck**

Mission statement: Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, *Canadian Mennonite* serves primarily the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five area conferences. *Canadian Mennonite* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, news and analysis of issues facing the church.

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

Editor/Publisher: Timothy Dyck
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Staff: Margaret Loewen Reimer, managing 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

Postmaster: Send returns to head office.

PAP Registration No. 09613. Agreement No. 40063104. We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward mailing costs. Contact head office for subscriptions and address changes. Order form on inside back cover. ISSN 1480-042X

CANADIAN
Mennonite

National correspondent: Leona Dueck Penner, Winnipeg. Phone: (204) 888-6781, x178
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/Fax: (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, John W. Goossen
Alberta: Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, Jan Wilhelm. **Saskatchewan:** Bernie Thiessen. **Manitoba:** Aiden S. Enns, Bernie Wiebe, Paul Krahn.
Ontario: Mary Lymburner, Brice Balmer, Ester Neufeldt, Larry Cornies.

Website: www.canadianmennonite.org

December 20, 2004
Volume 8, Number 24



Page 5

Web site preview

Get a preview of the next *Canadian Mennonite* before it comes in the mail. Selections are posted at www.canadianmennonite.org on the Thursday before the issue date. So you can check the Jan. 10 issue by Jan. 6.

Cover: *The Wisemen*, watercolour by James Paterson. See artist's reflections on page 10.

4 UpClose
Adoption story **4**
Rod Sawatsky **5**

6 Faith&Life
Menno Simons speaks **6**
Waiting in the darkness **8**

9 Arts&Culture
Advent in China **9**
Christian artists **10**

11 InConversation
2004 in review **11**
Letters **11**

13 WiderChurch
'Peace' officers **14**
Risky business **16**
Baptism in Burkina Faso **21**

24 LocalChurch
Peace Pole **24**
Nithview Home **25**
Funeral in Colombia **26**
Transitions **31**

34 TheChurches

38 ToMorrow



Page 16



Page 24

Delta, B.C.

Adoptive family celebrates God's leading

This Christmas will be different for the Friesen family in Delta. They will celebrate a family that they feel is finally complete.

Art and Mary Friesen (names have been changed) met and married in South America in 1986. Their first child, born in 1988, died within a year due to a genetically-based immune deficiency, and they were advised not to have biological children.

Then, in 1999, "our son, Fred, walked into our life," said Mary. The circumstances which brought Fred to this family are amazing. Fred's birth mother, a Canadian treaty Indian, was adopted in Canada, but moved to South America with her parents shortly thereafter. As a teenager, she gave birth to Fred. Because she was too young to care for him, Fred lived with his grandparents.

Mary's parents met Fred's grandparents in South America. They suggested that Art and Mary adopt Fred and Fred's mother agreed.

The Friesens moved to British Columbia. At church, Mary was asked to talk about Fred becoming part of their family. She described her family as complete; they did not plan to have more children.

"Shortly after that, while volunteering at Fred's school, I met Jennifer and her foster mother," explained Mary. The foster mother jokingly suggested that Mary needed a girl like Jennifer, who is aboriginal.

"At supper I told Art and Fred about meeting Jennifer—there was dead silence. Fred was beaming; Art was crying." Fred had been praying for a sibling....

"Jennifer's foster mother and I became friends and Jennifer began spending weekends with us," said Mary. Child welfare authorities wanted Jennifer placed with another family—a family that was caring for Jennifer's sibling.

Mary accompanied Jennifer and her foster mother to visit the family. The

adoptive mother noticed quickly that Jennifer was emotionally bonded to Mary and told the social worker that the Friesens should adopt Jennifer.

Adoption is always an involved process; adopting aboriginal children is more complex. B.C.'s Adoption Act requires the involvement of the child's band in planning adoption.

Jennifer's relatives visited the Friesens and the Friesens visited Jennifer's relatives on the reserve. A "cultural plan" was developed to ensure that Jennifer would grow up with an appreciation of her heritage. Jennifer's relatives and the band officials signed letters supporting the Friesens' plan to adopt Jennifer.

The Friesens' request to adopt Jennifer was sent to the provincial Adoption Exception Committee. Jennifer continued to spend weekends with the Friesens and begged to stay there. The decision-making process dragged on.

The Friesens contacted their government representatives, consulted a lawyer and considered going to the news media. Their lawyer sought an order preventing Jennifer from being moved.

"It was a real roller coaster ride," said Art. "When one of us was ready to give up, the other wasn't. I had the strong feeling from God this should go on."

Mary finally decided to leave it totally to God. "I was at peace about what would happen to her," she said.

The Friesens realized they could not afford a lawyer, especially if the case went to court, so they sold their home to meet some of the expected expenses. When the real estate agent learned why they were selling their home he donated a portion of his commission to them.

The church prayed, sent e-mails, and helped with fundraising. "People always asked how things were going without prying or demanding details," said Art.

After months of anxious waiting, the Friesens met with an official of the Adoption Exception Committee last July. They were told that no aboriginal

adoption home was available so the Friesens could adopt Jennifer. Mary was speechless. Their lawyer said, "It's okay, you can start crying now," and she did.

A happy, contented, three-year-old, Jennifer was one of the children dedicated at church on Thanksgiving Day. It was the same date that Fred had been dedicated a few years earlier. There were many tears as the congregation gave thanks for this and other families.

"God took care of every single step, every piece of the puzzle," said Mary, "These kids keep us up on our toes and down on our knees." The Friesens feel blessed.—**Henry Neufeld**

Winkler, Man.

Enns was visionary and entrepreneur

Peter W. Enns, visionary, inventor and entrepreneur, died here November 28 at the age of 92.

His funeral was at the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, where he had been baptized in 1931.

Although his formal education was limited, Enns was an extraordinarily gifted individual. He was a self-taught plumber, electrician, builder, musician and inventor, among other things. He got his pilot's licence at age 60.

Enns designed a powered snow caboose used by the local doctor, C.W. Wiebe, for his rural house calls, and built an elevator that served the local hospital for decades. He constructed a self-propelled swather for his farm and hydraulic truck lifts for other farmers with parts from World War II airplanes.

He partnered with his brother, John, in a farm implement and petroleum company, and later an auto dealership.



Enns

Waterloo, Ont.

Mennonite educator dies at age 60

Rodney J. Sawatsky, educator and church historian, died at his home here of brain cancer on November 27. He was 60 years old.

Born in Altona, Manitoba, Sawatsky graduated from Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) in Winnipeg and Bethel College in Kansas before earning graduate degrees from the University of Minnesota (MA in History) and Princeton University (MA and PhD in Religion).

His lifelong passion was education within the Christian college environment. Sawatsky taught briefly at a Bible school in Didsbury, Alberta, and at CMBC before being appointed professor and academic dean at Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo, in 1974. In 1989, he became

president of Conrad Grebel College, a position he held for five years.

Under his leadership, the college initiated new programs and hired several outstanding scholars, solidifying the college's role as a valued centre of learning for the Mennonite community and for the university. He is remembered by students for his stimulating courses in Mennonite history and new religions.

In 1994, Sawatsky was appointed president of Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, a school with roots in the Brethren in Christ Church. According to his colleagues there, Sawatsky helped articulate a new vision for Messiah which included international study, diversity and a spirit of service and engagement in society. He also oversaw the expansion of programs and campus facilities.



Sawatsky

Sawatsky's scholarship focused on issues of Mennonite identity, including the influence of Fundamentalism (his master's thesis), historical self-understanding (doctoral thesis), and leadership and authority in the church. He also wrote on education in a Christian environment. In the last months of his life, he completed a book together with a colleague called *Gracious Christianity*.

Rodney Sawatsky is survived by his wife Lorna (Ewert) and three daughters, Tanya, Lisa and Katherine, as well as one sister and three brothers. His funeral on December 1 was officiated by Gary Harder and Waldemar Regier, and included music by a Messiah College choir.

Sawatsky was buried at the historic Detweiler Mennonite Meetinghouse near Waterloo in a cemetery dating back to the early 1800s.—Compiled by **Margaret Loewen Reimer**

In 1956, he established Enns Plumbing and Heating. Then, inspired by travel trailers he saw on a trip to Elkhart, Indiana, he built a prototype in a neighbour's garage.

At age 53, Enns established a recreational vehicle manufacturing company with his two sons-in-law, Pete Elias and Philipp Ens. Today, Triple E Canada is still a family-run business, headed by grandson Terry Elias.

Enns viewed his business as an extension of his church life, directing profits into many projects. The P.W. Enns Family Foundation helped build the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. (Enns' woodworking skills are evident in the handcrafted doors.) He volunteered his skills to build the chapel at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana, and helped reconstruct the Mennonite Hospital in Taiwan. A lover of music, he donated the pipe organ to Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

Enns also served his local community on many levels, and was a member of MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates).

Enns married Helena Buhler in 1931 and they had five children. Helena died in 1993 and daughter Katy in 2000. (An infant son died in 1935.) Surviving are daughters Erna Elias and Jane Peters, and son Willie Enns.—From *Winnipeg Free Press*

Fair Trade 'crowns' create stir

Needing a "king's crown" for a prop in my Sunday School class, I thought of the Fair Trade golden foil coffee bag that had been too good to throw out. Once my scissors started on the bag, they didn't want to stop, and I was soon tucking three golden crowns into my bag.

A few hours later, my husband and I picked up our granddaughters, ages four and two, and took them to a neighbourhood restaurant. While we were waiting for our food, I pulled out the two extra crowns for the girls. They were thrilled.

The waitress was also impressed with the crowns and wondered how she could make some for her daughters. I told her about the coffee bags and offered to bring her one from my cupboard at home. My husband suggested that we leave the crowns the girls were wearing, and I could make them some new ones. But our four-year-old granddaughter's head shook a definite "no" and tears started rolling down her cheeks. These were precious crowns indeed.

So, I will return to the restaurant with another precious Fair Trade coffee bag so that another mother can crown her children. I wonder what other joys these lovely ziploc bags could provide.—**Elsie Rempel**

The writer is Christian Education and Nurture director for Mennonite Church Canada.



Photo by Peter Rempel

A recycled coffee bag makes a great crown for Sophia Nast-Kolb.

Worthy of God's call: A meditation by Menno Simons

For his October 31 sermon at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, Doug Klassen took on the persona of Menno Simons, based on his writings and other sources. Following is Menno's meditation entitled, "That God may make us worthy of his call" (2 Thessalonians 1).



I thought the matter was closed. I thought that by publishing the booklet, *A Clear Account of Excommunication*, the issue would be laid to rest.

Some had been imposing doctrines to a greater degree than they should have, especially in the case of excommunication. In some cases, everyone was banning everyone else from the church—sometimes over minor differences. And so in 1550, I sat down and wrote, hoping to close the matter.

"Fellow believers, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ," I wrote. "I discover that for some time now much strife has been occasioned among some by the ban, and that so vehemently and recklessly so, that brotherly love, I fear, is among many destroyed rather than advanced, and Christian peace and unity is decreased rather than increased."

From there I went on to plead with those who were practising the ban in far too many instances. Unfortunately, my booklet, printed in secret, did not lay the matter to rest. The controversy grew until in 1555 some of the brethren proposed that the ban could be imposed without the three warnings given in Matthew 18. I was against this.

I was also against being more strict in enforcing avoidance of excommunicated members, particularly when family members were involved. I received letter after letter begging me to take sides. I was in hiding, but I would need to intervene. As I prepared for the trip I wondered: How could we have become so entangled in the application of our doctrine? Wasn't ours a movement that was to liberate? What would my parents think?

This sculpture of Menno Simons was created by Esther K. Augsburg in 1987. Fashioned from bonded copper, it is about 12 inches high. A photograph of the sculpture appears in the book, *Menno Simons: Places, Portraits and Progeny*, by Piet Visser and Mary Sprunger (Friesens, 1996).

Early life

I was born in 1496 to a Dutch family in the village of Witmarsum in the province of Friesland. Early in my life my parents decided to consecrate me to the service of the church, and entrusted me to the care of a monastery near our home.

For years I devoted myself to the spiritual exercises and theological studies required of a Roman Catholic priest. I learned Latin and Greek, and became acquainted with the writings of the early church fathers. As for the Bible, I never opened its pages.

At the age of 28, I was ordained to the priesthood. My first charge was the parish at Pingjum, next to my home village, where I was second in the rank of three priests. I had achieved the dream of my family. I was now able to live in a class much higher than my humble origins. It was an easy, carefree life, for those of us in the service of Rome were well-treated.

But outward appearances did not tell the full story of my life during the next 12 years. I began to have doubts, not from my own ministry, but because of what I was hearing. During a visit to my brothers at the monastery, I came across the writings of Martin Luther, which they weren't supposed to have. What I read was to change me forever.

One day, when I was handling the bread and the wine during the mass, the thought flashed through my mind that this bit of bread could not possibly be the actual flesh of Christ as I had been taught. At first I reasoned that it was the devil trying to lure me

away from my faith. I prayed and confessed, but the conviction grew.

In a search for help, I opened the New Testament. What I read there convinced me that the bread was not the actual body of Christ, but a symbol taken in remembrance of him. I was relieved and yet troubled—I was doubting one of the church's cardinal doctrines.

Not long after this, I heard that a tailor in Leeuwarden had been beheaded because of re-baptism. Why would someone seek a re-baptism? Again I searched the Scriptures. And I consulted the writings of Luther, Ulrich Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger. I asked my superior in Pingjum if there was a scriptural foundation for infant baptism. No one could give me a satisfying answer.

Meanwhile, I kept on with my duties. In fact, I was promoted to a more lucrative position at Witmarsum.

Anabaptists appear

About this time Anabaptists of various types began to appear in the vicinity, including disciples of Jan Matthys, a popular preacher who was spreading radical thoughts. I vigorously attacked him, but the more I preached against Anabaptism, the more I was drawn to it.

I could not embrace what Matthys was promoting—he seemed to be more concerned with overthrowing the ruling class than with Christian doctrine. When Matthys heard that peasants had overthrown the rulers in Muenster, Germany, he decided to make this city his base for forceably establishing the kingdom of God on earth. By 1534, he had control of the city.

That same year, some of his disciples came to Witmarsum and established a sect there that included my own brother, Peter. I preached against the Muensterites and tried to win back those who had been deceived.

And then the authorities reached the end of their tolerance. They closed in on the radicals in Witmarsum who had taken refuge in an old cloister and attacked them. My brother Peter died by the sword. Not long after, a slaughter took place in Muenster as well.

When I heard of this violence and destruction, I knew I could not adopt their doctrine. But I knew that I had to adopt their courage.

So in January of 1536, I resigned my priestly office, renounced the Catholic church, and shut the door on my career, my salary, and my life of ease. I chose instead a life of uncertainty, poverty and persecution. But I found a life of true service, and I had peace with God.

I spent my next years serving the very people I had criticized. I accepted a re-baptism from Obbe Philips who led a peaceful Anabaptist movement. I married and soon had three children. Because of my training and knowledge, I quickly became recognized as a leader, though I had great doubts in my own abilities.

The next years I moved my family from place to place in search of safety. On more than one occasion, those who hosted us paid for their hospitality with their lives. Together with Obbe and Dirk Philips,

I began to preach, baptize, write, and ordain leaders in our growing church. In 1542, an imperial edict forbade anyone to associate with us. A reward was put on my head.

My faith was nearly shattered when Obbe Philips defected from the Anabaptist cause. We can only assume that living under constant threat took its toll. His brother Dirk and I carried on, though the righteous everywhere were being crushed with fire and sword.

Many of us moved to East Friesland because it was giving asylum to so-called heretics. There I consented to engage in debates with other religious leaders under the condition that they would not be publicized. But time after time our words were published for all to read.

I fled with my family to the free city of Wismar on the Baltic Sea, already under Lutheran governance. Here we had a debate that lasted 10 days, with neither side moving from its position. Because of the publicity, we were all driven from the city. But even on the move, I kept writing, teaching and defending our group from our enemies.

Bannings begin

As tolerance began to grow across Europe, however, tolerance became scarce inside our precious church. First an elder, Adam Pastor, renounced the Trinity, the pre-existence of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. And then Frans de Cyper rejected several doctrines and signalled a return to Catholicism. We banned them both.

Next Antonius Van Koeln, a survivor of Muenster, left the movement. Gillis von Aachen, a man who had baptized more martyrs than any of us, had a moral lapse and I had no choice but to place him under the ban. It seemed that every co-labourer I had was departing from me.

Because of the price on my head, I could not return to Friesland. Leonard Bouwens and Dirk Philips ministered there, but their doctrine became more rigid than it should

We had become a people of God's peace in relation to our enemies, but inside the church we mistreated each other in the name of the gospel.

Continued on page 8

Menno *From page 7*

have. When I heard that Bouwens threatened to impose the ban on a married woman because she refused to shun her husband, I could stay silent no longer.

On November 12, 1556 I wrote a letter vigorously protesting these harsh practices. I travelled to Friesland in the hope of promoting unity. But I was not prepared for what was to come.

In my booklet, *A Clear Account of Excommunication*, I had outlined my understanding of discipline according to Matthew 18. But Bouwens cited 1 Corinthians 5:11 as saying that the faithful “should not eat” with the unfaithful. He pushed it so far as to say that converted family members should end their relationship with their Catholic family members.

I couldn’t believe they would take it this far. But after three days of debate, I wavered. I could see that unless I agreed, they would impose the ban on me, so I half-heartedly consented to their position.

I returned home, grieving over the sad state of affairs in the church that I loved. We had become a people of God’s peace in relation to our enemies, but inside the church we mistreated each other in the name of the gospel.

I continued to travel extensively in the interests of harmony, but to no avail. We were expelled from Wismar, but by the grace of God we found refuge with a nobleman in Wuestenfeld (waste-field). He invited us because of our

ability to till this poor land, but he became our shield from the authorities. I was even allowed to set up a printing press.

Now in my sixth decade, I give thanks for the grace of God in my life, but I have regrets. I regret the strict interpretation of the ban. I regret that I was not able to save my brother from a violent death. I regret that I did not convert more to the Anabaptist way.

Yet I thank God that I was made worthy of his call. I thank God that he showed me that we are to love, and not kill, our enemies; that true evangelical faith cannot lie dormant—it must clothe the naked and feed the hungry; that new birth consists not in water nor words, but the quickening power of God in our hearts.

“No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Beloved, do not depart from the doctrine and the life of Christ.

—**Doug Klassen**

Waiting in the darkness

People of faith go through this annual cycle of waiting, remembering and anticipation. With child-like anticipation, we hear the story unfold. We anticipate God’s blessing, just as ancient Israel did, though we know that there will be blood and pain woven into the mix.

Having lit our Advent candles, we wait for the birth: darkness pregnant with hope, a Word waiting to be spoken.

This year I have been sheltered from the busyness and commercialism of North American Christmas. In my little house in Burkina Faso, it is dark and quiet with an extraordinary aura of peace—no lights, no decorations, no music, no snow. I am not with the angel choirs; I am not with Santa in the malls; I am not even with Handel’s *Messiah*. I am left with the written word, the Incarnate Word, and (like Mary) the ponderings of my heart.

But I have not been sheltered from others’ suffering. Burkina Faso is a terribly poor country. In villages I see babies with big malnourished bellies and glazed-over eyes, their mothers with the same glaze of hopelessness. When we finish a meal of fish and rice at a roadside stand, three street

children descend on the remaining bones and strip them clean. This is in contrast to the copious wealth gained by violence and corruption one is exposed to in the cities.

And so, as I prepare my heart this year, I skip the birth story and go directly to the murdered babies—Rachel and the mothers in Bethlehem who had to sacrifice their sons. The bloody afterbirth.

Author Annie Dillard scorns the way we try to make the Christmas story into “a pretty and sensible picture, like something on a Christmas card.” There is nothing pretty about having your first baby in a barn, or fleeing terrified into the night to start your life as a refugee, or hearing the screams of mothers who have had their baby sons ripped out of their arms.

It is as if our doorways in North America have become marked with a big ‘S’ for Santa, and the angel of the whole truth passes us by.

The truth is that Emmanuel, who came to ransom captive Israel, must first be given asylum from Israel. The Word incarnate came as a refugee into this world he spoke into being. And in a lovely redemptive reversal, it is Egypt—the country from which the Israelites fled as slaves—that provides a safe haven for the Holy Family.

In West Africa this Christmas, I find the Word incarnate in the eyes of urban refugee children. Their families can be found in obscure corners all over Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso’s capital city, having fled from terrors in Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic and, more recently, Darfur, Sudan. As I visit one home I see three children lying on a plastic mat on the cold concrete floor—not so different from a feed bin in a barn.

Even in the face of this daily suffering, I see such strength of spirit. I see warmth and generosity. I see smiles that shine like the rays of a star. I see Jesus. My African friends teach me about waiting. The birth we celebrate at Advent is much closer to their families than to mine.

“What came into existence was life, and the life was the light to live by. The Life-light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness could not put it out” (John 1:4,5, The Message).—**Laurel Borisenko**

The writer is a member of Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton. She is part of the MCC West Africa leadership team.

Chongqing, China

What will these drawings lead to?

This is my second Christmas here, where I'm an oral English teacher. This year, I decided to set up some Advent candles as a way to prepare for Christ's coming.

As I was debating where I could find some readings to go with the candles (you have to think a little extra about where you will find things when you are in China) I remembered seeing something about a family resource for Advent on the Mennonite Church Canada web site. Sure enough, there it was and I went down to the office to print it off.

I browsed through the little booklet, and some ideas started coming to me: What if my students came over to help me set up? We could light candles or do readings during their visits for open house. Maybe students could add to the pictures each week...?

I called my friend Angela (a student from last year) and asked if she would like to help me decorate my apartment. We decided to get together for supper. Actually "we" included me, Angela (Zeng Yangping), her best friend Jackeynee (Ye Jing), and their classmate Daisy (Wang Xue). Most of my students have English names.

I couldn't wait until evening to decorate. I had draped a few garlands around the room, set out my Christmas cards from last year, and put the tiny Christmas tree on the shelf. I had brought a few ornaments with me from Canada, but the tree was too small to hold more than a few, so Jackeynee and I attached the rest to a string that we tied across the bookshelf. My crèche will be set up on the coffee table later.

Come! Walk in the light of day! is a neat little booklet. It suggested creating a window frame poster with different panels. We ended up with a winking star, a Chinese-looking town as Bethlehem, some shepherds drawn in Japanese animation-style, and wise men looking like Chinese nobility (male and female) from two different dynas-

ties about 1000 years apart.

They are currently on my door, and will be added to as the weeks continue.

After supper I led my guests through some of the first week of readings and activities. I never realized how much "olde" English is in the song, "Come, thou long expected Jesus" until Angela remembered "thee" from a song last year. I explained the song and sang it for them.

The discussion from there went on to other things, and before I knew it, we were trying to figure out why bad things happen to good people, and where God is in all of it. These kinds of discussions certainly force me to clarify my own beliefs, when I have to explain things in simple English for students who have little or no knowledge of God.

Some of my current students are coming over tomorrow night. If they

are interested, we will light the first candle together and learn an Advent song. I wonder what will happen then?—MC Canada release by **Cari Friesen**



Daisy, Angela, Jackeynee, and Cari Friesen prepare for Advent in China using the MC Canada family resource *Come! Walk in the light of day!* Cari is from Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon.



Change a life today. . . and forever!

Sponsor children in one of 39 countries, for \$25 Cdn./\$20 U.S. a month. *Join today!*



Global Family is an MCC program of education and sponsorship.

In Canada, please call toll free (888) 622-6337 or in the U.S. (888) 563-4676. www.mcc.org/globalfamily

Vancouver, B.C.

Christian artists celebrate 'heart language'

As star differs from star: the splendour of creative diversity. This was the theme of Manifest 2004, a weekend festival here that celebrated the variety of art produced by Christians from many denominations.

Visitors to the festival could hear all types of music from rock to classical to jazz, see art and photography exhibits, hear lectures and poetry readings, participate in workshops and cooking classes, see films and interact with artists.

The event was hosted by the Vancouver Arts Network, a group of Christian artists, founded by Rob des Cotes, who is also pastor of a Mennonite Brethren church plant called Imago Dei.

"As a pastor and an artist, I recognized how isolated you can feel as an artist in the church," des Cotes says. "The goal of Manifest is to explore what artists see spiritually, and many artists have a sense of being called by God to use their gifts."

One of the artists was Gareth Brandt, a poet who teaches in the youth ministries department at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford and attends Emmanuel Mennonite

Church. Brandt's poetry reading/workshop called "Lost boy" was an opportunity to explore transitions in life and how poetry helped him express the trauma of childhood abuse.

"All art is autobiographical; we cannot separate life from art," he said. Brandt wrote most of his poetry during adolescence and "post-35," explaining that in his 20s when he was getting married, starting a family, working on education and establishing a ministry, his life was lived more in the exterior than the interior.

But reaching "midlife," he realized that he had as much to look back on as he had to look forward to. One poem begins "I like this place, I can see both ways." Much of Brandt's poetry uses biblical imagery or reflects the geography of places he has lived. Brandt reads his poems with great emotion and his reading drew appreciative murmurs.

"If we only appreciate God intellectually, we miss something," says des Cotes. "But when we watch a dance or see a painting [or hear a poem], there's an opportunity for an emotional response. So much of faith is in the realm of mystery; we can only reach

God so far with our understanding."

Brandt agrees. "People have profound spiritual experiences but are often unable to articulate them." Poetry, and other artistic expression, "is heart language," he says.

Manifest happens annually in the fall. For more information visit: www.manifestarts.com.—**Angelika Dawson**

Available at the Resource Centre

The following resources are available at the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg:

- *Reading the Anabaptist Bible*, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Galen A. Peters. Meditative readings for each day of the year, each including a Bible passage and an Anabaptist testimony.

- *Adventures With the Anabaptists* by Jeanne Grieser and Carol Duerksen. Ten interactive lessons for youth that link Anabaptist history and stories of faith with Bible study and contemporary discipleship.

- *The Radicals*, a 2004 DVD of the movie about Michael and Margaretha Sattler and the origins of the Anabaptist movement in Europe. The DVD also includes a condensed version of the story for young children.

- *From Anabaptist Seed* by C. Arnold Snyder. A congregational study guide outlining historic Anabaptist teachings and practices.

- *Menno Simons: Places, Portraits and Progeny* by Piet Visser and Mary Sprunger. This book traces Menno Simons' life through image and text, and portrays the changing image of his Dutch spiritual descendents until 1740.

Loans of books include free shipping (both ways) for all Mennonite Church Canada constituents. Shipping charges apply to non-book items. Phone toll-free: 1-866-888-6785 or visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre.

The Wisemen

The Wisemen," a watercolour by James Paterson, is featured on the cover of this issue, leading us into the season of Epiphany.

Paterson, an Ontario artist and alumnus of Conrad Grebel College, describes his work as "a whimsical look at three colourful characters who journeyed a long way to pay homage to a king from another culture and religion."

Paterson continues, "It is ironic that while

Gentiles came a great distance in a single-minded search to worship Him, those in Jerusalem, the city of God, were troubled (Matthew 2:3).

They, like us, should have been overjoyed at the birth of the promised Messiah, rather than pre-occupied with their own power and prestige.

"I've included many little aspects of modern life in this scene to bring the Magi of long ago into context with us today. I want to make clear the importance of being diligent, even urgent, about our search for redemption and the desire to carry out God's will in our lives."

Samples of Paterson's art can be found at www.jdpaterson.com.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East..." (Matthew 2).



2004 in review

The worldwide church

January—Ricardo Esquivia, a leader in the Colombia Mennonite Church, was accused of supporting a guerrilla group. Many faxes and letters from North America Mennonites helped prevent his arrest.

April—Janet Plenert visited the rapidly-growing evangelical church in Cuba and found great interest in Anabaptist teaching material.

May—Four Mennonite congregations in Ukraine formed a conference, the Christian Union of Mennonite Churches. The Mennonite Church in Indonesia celebrated its 150th anniversary.

June—Mission leaders agreed to a new partnership for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, with main office in Africa. Nguyen Hong Quang, general secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, was arrested. Bicentennial celebrations of the Molochna Colony in Ukraine began with an international academic conference. Anabaptists and Reformed Church representatives met in Zurich, Switzerland, in a gesture of reconciliation.

October—The Korea Anabaptist Center dedicated its new office in Seoul, after moving six times since 2001.

November—Vietnam Mennonite Church leaders sentenced to prison.

The North American church

February—Eight Mennonites from North America participated in a Muslim-Mennonite academic dialogue in Iran. Diane Kroeker and Walter Goertz drowned in Guatemala while on a Canadian Mennonite University tour.

March—Mennonite Church Canada signed a partnership agreement with the Conferencia Menonita de Mexico, formed in 1991. MCC Canada celebrated the 25th anniversary of the refugee sponsorship

agreement with the Canadian government.

April—Mennonite lawyers met at Conrad Grebel University College to discuss the intersection of law and faith. The new children's Sunday School curriculum was given the name "Gather 'Round." *Saturday Night* magazine's cover story, entitled "The Mennonite Mob," outlined drug trafficking between Mexico and Canada.

May—Mennonite Foundation of Canada decided to open an office in Calgary and a satellite office in Saskatoon. "The Sound in the Land" music conference at Conrad Grebel University College brought together 100 academics and musicians from across North America.

July—Mennonite Church Canada

delegates met in Winkler, Manitoba, for their annual assembly.

August—Timothy Dyck began as editor/publisher of *Canadian Mennonite*.

September—A reunion brought together former students of the Ontario Mennonite Bible School. An appreciation evening for Neill and Edith von Gunten honoured their 35 years of work in Native Ministries in Manitoba.

October—Historians gathered in Winnipeg for a "State of the art of North American history" conference, in preparation for a volume in the Global Mennonite History series. Colombia Bible College dedicated its new student centre.

November—Saskatchewan church leaders discuss aboriginal treaties. Peace Pole dedicated at Lethbridge Mennonite Church.

(Compiled by Barb Draper)

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

Letters

Widespread support for MCC a myth

Mennonites in Canada generally have a good reputation, in large part due to the excellent programs administered by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and its provincial partners. Frequently the Canadian media feature positive stories and interviews with MCC personnel.

MCC has also spun off many credible programs, including the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates), and Mennonite Disaster Service. God has blessed these efforts.

Too many in our midst have been getting a free ride on MCC's positive reputation. I say "free" since many more Mennonites could volunteer and give financial support. At the MCC B.C. annual meeting on November 6, I wondered again about the health of MCC within the psyche of the B.C. Mennonites.

The meeting was informative and varied—truly a great missionary conference. Unfortunately, the attendance was relatively low with only 200 persons, less than 1 percent of a constituency of 21,903 (17,753 Mennonite Brethren and 4,105 Mennonite Church B.C.). Only a few pastors were present. This does not

Continued on page 12

Letters

augur well for the future of MCC.

The financial report had its usual disturbing story. The thrift stores are the second major source of funding (\$1,393,836). While \$1,955,446 in contributions came from various sources, the 64 congregations contributed only \$303,386 (41 MB congregations gave \$160,926 and 23 MC B.C. \$125,026). Isn't it revealing that nine thrift stores (with just under 1,000 volunteers) out-perform the 64 B.C. churches?

It is a myth that we are a corporate constituency dedicated to ministering to human need. These ministries are happening, but there is so much more that could be done. We would do well to read Amos or Micah, or James' scary sermon (James 5) as operation manuals.

The thrift stores are a double blessing. We can turn in still-usable clothing, buy a new wardrobe, and still do a wonderful mission with the dollars raised. It brings an incredible reputation to Mennonites for so little sacrifice. MCC is truly a mix of blessing and myth.—**George H. Epp, Chilliwack, B.C.**

Pray for those seeking CO status

Thank you for Tim Shenk's article about the Mennonite Central Committee network helping those who have struggles of conscience about war and yet find themselves in uniform (Nov. 15, page 14).

As someone who went through this when the U.S. invaded Vietnam, who applied for CO (conscientious objector) status, was refused out of hand and finally came to Canada, I could not read the article without feeling overflowing compassion for these young people. They are barely old enough to understand the responsibility of making adult decisions and have the weight of the world placed on their shoulders by their elders.

If you pray for world peace, I plead that you will pray for peace in the hearts of these children called upon by their society to go to war. I know the

conflict that is in their hearts; they want only to do what is right. How could you imagine killing someone unless those who send you said it was the right thing to do? But it would be me who has to pull the trigger.

Pray for these boys and girls. Pray for the God of peace to give deep wisdom and compassion to those who counsel them. Pray that our Lord will bring more people in uniform to the network. And may he give special comfort and consolation to those who seek conscientious objector status but are refused by the authorities.—**Max Kirk, Abbotsford, B.C.**

U.S. should tolerate conscience

I appreciated the article, "Network aids conscientious objectors in uniform" (Nov. 15, page 14). Killing people is an ugly business, whether in the army or out of it, and I'm not surprised to read that some U.S. soldiers are trying to get conscientious objector status.

It's good to hear that the Military Counseling Network is offering information on conscientious objection to soldiers. I find it disappointing that out of a dozen military personnel who have applied for conscientious objector status, only one person has obtained a discharge so far.

It is also disappointing to read that a commanding officer demanded that a soldier never contact his senator again. I hope that commanding officers will become more lenient, and that senators and other government officials will step in to help such soldiers.

One wants to think that the American government, representing the American people, would want to be an example to the rest of the world in showing tolerance for those who for conscience' sake simply don't want to kill.—**Stan Penner, Landmark, Man.**

Pray for justice and peace in Ukraine

Recent events in Ukraine are a matter of concern to Mennonite Church Canada members for several reasons. First, of course, is that we deplore

injustice and violence and we long for peace in every part of the world.

Ukraine was the home for many of our members or their forebears. Those who share that experience feel an affinity for the land and its people, and may be re-living some of the pain and anxiety of experiences there in the current climate of chaos and the threat of violence.

MC Canada is currently involved in Ukraine by supporting Cliff and Natasha Dueck and Sergei and Elena Deynikin who minister in Kherson, and by supporting the Mennonite church in Zaporozhye, as well as the new Christian Union of Mennonite Churches in Ukraine. Some of our members support other church planting and social development work there as well.

Please pray for peace, justice and equity in Ukraine. Pray for our workers and for the churches to which we relate. And pray also for those who seek to follow Christ in other Christian traditions.

I have written to Archbishop Yuriy, the representative of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada to the Canadian Council of Churches, offering our prayers for his people both in Canada and Ukraine. This is a good time for us to connect with our Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic neighbours, and to pray that peaceful and just government will prevail.—**Dan Nighswander, general secretary, MC Canada**

Don't forget to 'reuse'

Many people forget that before "recycling," there are two others commands: "Reduce" and "reuse." Most Bibles (and other books) can be repaired (reused) to a new condition if there are no pages missing. The one pictured on the back cover of the November 1 issue looked quite salvageable. I've fixed much worse!—**Timothy Dyck, Durham, Ont.**

Schedule note:

The dates of the next two issues are **January 10** and **January 24**

Saskatoon, Sask.

Conversation with aboriginals begins in Saskatchewan

About 40 church leaders met in the conference room of the renovated MCC Centre here in early November to hear presentations on aboriginal treaties. It was the Pastors and Church Leaders Conference, held just before the annual meeting of Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan.

The gathering, arranged by MCC's Aboriginal Neighbours Program, was a chance for church leaders to "understand relationships with the First Nations."

"Conversations with churches and individuals have led to this day," said MCC Saskatchewan director Bruno Baerg. Misunderstandings between the aboriginal and other cultures are common in Saskatchewan. "We want to be intentional over the next few years to do something about it."

The sessions opened with David Arnot, the Saskatchewan Treaty Commissioner, explaining the importance of the treaties, legally binding documents that affect the future of everyone in this province. In just over 10 years, almost half of all kindergarten children in this province will be aboriginal.

"The treaties are an agreement to do things for each other; they are here to benefit everyone," he pointed out.

As a commissioner and judge, Arnot strives to advance the treaty process and build harmony in Saskatchewan via public education.

"Ninety percent of people have no knowledge of the treaties, but everyone has opinion on them," he said. The role of the Treaty Commissioner was created through a joint effort between the federal government and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in 1989. A five-year mandate was given to provide "recommendations in the area of the treaty lands entitlement and education."

Other presenters were Elder Alma Kytwayhat from Loon Lake and Stan McKay, native pastor and former

moderator of the United Church.

MCC Canada first began addressing concerns of First Nations people 20 years ago. However, in Saskatchewan, a full-time worker has only been in place since 1996. The goal of the program, according to staff person Leonard Doell, is to "respond to requests for assistance from First Nations communities and to work at building bridges between both Mennonite and aboriginal people."

MCC has made contact with several reserves around the province. Requests for help are many and varied. One request involves mending fences between police and First Nations people. The RCMP has asked MCC to help in bringing the RCMP Musical Ride to provincial reserves.

The Mennonite Church Saskatch-

ewan Ministries Commission is beginning talks with individuals on the Beardy's First Nation Reserve. A door to that community was opened through MCC's gardening program. Students from Rosthern Junior College have also benefited from this relationship. A reserve member has spoken to grade 11 students several times on their annual retreat at Camp Shekinah.

Several years ago, a South African delegation touring MCC programs in Saskatchewan compared the aboriginal situation in Canada to apartheid. They commented that Mennonites need to clean up their own backyard before ministering to the rest of the world. We have made a start.—**Karin Fehderau**



Cindy and Tim Buhler (centre), Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Macau, have found a new space for their ministry, just a block from the previous location. Renovations are largely complete although the team is still seeking funds for appropriate front doors. The ministry offers English teaching, after-school tutoring and youth activities. The Macau church, with its core of 15-20 mostly young, single people, held a service of dedication on November 21. The Buhlers, from Abbotsford, B.C., recently moved to Macau from Hong Kong.—MC Canada

MC Canada photo

Floradale, Ont.

Who should keep the peace?

What do you say when your youth group president wants to become a police officer? This question was asked in the annual pastors' luncheon seminar held November 12 at Floradale Mennonite Church. The question was also framed as "Peace: who has to keep it?"

Tim Schmucker, MCC Ontario Peace Ministries coordinator, led the seminar, assisted by Rick Cober Bauman.

Schmucker set the stage by sharing his experience of growing up in a "historic peace church" in Ohio. His Mennonite ancestor was sentenced to death in the United States for refusing to participate in war. In sharp contrast, Schmucker's son recently decided to enter police college.

"He would have to carry a gun. How would I reconcile that with Jesus' core teaching 'Love your enemies,' and the picture which I saw early in life of Dirk Willems turning around to rescue the jailor who had...fallen into the river?" Schmucker reflected.

"We have inherited a vision of a pure, separated church. Yet today, we are in general no longer convinced of that sense of being 'a city set apart.' We have become very much part of the world. And it is a different kind of world than our 16th century Anabaptist forebears experienced.... We have not experienced persecution. We benefit from our political and economic system."

Although he knew he could never be a police officer, he thought of the police as friends, as someone he could call upon. "And recently I met a committed Anabaptist, Steve Brnjas, with 20 years experience as a police officer who said 'I am a peace officer.' Thus began a new conversation."

The pastors discussed questions concerning biblical, Anabaptist and current notions of peacekeeping. How do we understand Jeremiah's charge to "seek the peace of the city?" Is there a tension between loving one's enemy and the pursuit of public order? What is our role in society and in helping to protect others?

One person said: "I have been pondering the possibility of supporting non-

lethal force, to disable but not to kill." Another replied: "What would nonviolent coercion look like? Is power a part of creation or is it part of the fall?"

The group had no clear answer to the leading question about the youth group president wanting to become a police officer. They did suggest that the church may need to form a resource group prepared to meet with those who are considering policing as a career.

One participant quipped: "If the

Roman Catholic Church can have Vatican II, could the Mennonite Church not also have "Scheitheim II?" This seminar was another of several in recent years which have re-examined



Steve Brnjas (left) speaks with Tim Schmucker at the pastors' seminar on keeping the peace.

how the Mennonite church lives with Jesus' "counsels of perfection" in an imperfect world.—**Maurice Martin**

From policeman to pastor

Steve Brnjas spent 18 years as a police officer. Now he is pastor of the Bethel Mennonite Church, near Elora Ontario, a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregation.

When Brnjas became a police officer he belonged to the Catholic Church. He felt a profound sense of God's calling to that role.

"The issues concerning peace began when I became a member of the Brethren in Christ church in Kitchener," he said. "Suddenly, nonviolence and pacifism became words with which I needed to become familiar." He added: "My pastor at the time was very supportive of my membership in his church and in my role as a police officer."

Brnjas links his study of peace theology to the Criminal Code's definition of police as "peace officers."

"Throughout my policing career, I realized that is what I did...bring peace to some very dangerous and violent situations. In 18 years of service, I had never fired my gun. I did use force to restrain individuals from harming themselves or others. I also sometimes used force to place individuals under arrest for a crime they had committed."

Noting that many people focus on the issue of carrying a gun, Brnjas said, "I caution people from taking a 'holier

than thou' attitude about this...even a closed fist can cause enough damage to kill someone." We don't know definitively what we would do until we are placed in a situation of being attacked. "Another issue in this argument is what I call 'the condition of the heart.' All the times I was forced to restrain someone or someone was trying to hurt me, I never hated the person," said Brnjas. He sees a big difference between force and violence. Force is applied to control a situation. Excessive force is violence.

He concedes that some will continue to have a purist view on the matter. "I know there are individuals who believe no force should ever be applied to another human being regardless of the harm that may befall themselves, their family, or someone else. If they are able to live their lives in that way when the situation arises, then may God bless them and safely carry them through."

But, he asks, what about "the issue of justice for those innocents who are harmed because we failed to do anything to protect them?" Do we have a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us, and can this sometimes involve the use of force?

Brnjas sensed God's care over him in his career as a police officer. "I see

Winnipeg, Man.

Roundtable results from Winkler assembly

Discussions from the roundtable discussions at Winkler 2004 have been recorded, analyzed and interpreted.

Delegates at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly gathered around tables for an hour and a half each day to discuss a total of five questions. Each group—50 tables of delegates and some of non-delegates—submitted summary statements on each topic.

Leaders caution that delegate responses only suggest what the wider church may be thinking, and are not scientific indicators.

“The information we gleaned is helpful,” said Dan Nighswander, MC Canada general secretary. “We have a good reading on what leaders in the churches are thinking and how their reading of scripture and of their congregational life speaks to some of the ‘big

God’s hand in protecting me in situations which could have turned deadly. I am confident that, as far as I was able, I was a ‘peace’ officer to those with whom I came in contact.

“I believe I was following Jesus’ example in the way I treated individuals.... They were treated with the respect that all persons created in God’s image deserve. I have often commented that sin is a great equalizer and my sins were viewed by God to be no less or greater than that of those persons I was dealing with. The only difference was I knew Jesus and had given him my heart.”

In the last few years, he has gotten to know a number of current and former police officers of Anabaptist faith. “In my discussion with them, my understanding of ‘peace’ continued to grow. I began to understand that I lived out my theology of peace every time I went out into the world wearing a police uniform and driving a police car.”

When Brnjas accepted the pastoral position at Bethel Mennonite, he made it clear that his “season” as a police officer was over. He feels, however, that his experience has given him tools for ministry, such as dealing with death and families and seeking the truth of situations.—**Maurice Martin**

questions’ that we face together.”

Delegates had a preference for one of three statements on the purpose of the national church body, but they called for substantial revision. This has been done by a group which reported to the General Board at its November meeting. A final statement of purpose will be presented at the next assembly.

What is the role of the national church in determining questions of theology, ethics, polity and practice? About 55% of table groups said the national church should be more

pro-active in giving direction; 49% that it provide resources; 36% that it facilitate conversation on these matters; 24% that it should not mandate or dictate; 18% that it listen to area conferences and congregations; and 14% said it should provide a strong voice, including authority to close discussion and settle disputes. (With all questions, groups could choose several options, not just one, and so totals are over 100%.) The General Board is preparing a recommendation for next year’s assembly that will implement the delegates’ counsel in this area.

Asked how homosexuality is being addressed by congregations, 46% of table groups said their churches are addressing the issue but have no formal policy on the subject, while 26% said their congregations were doing “nothing obvious” on the topic. Of responses, 25% said addressing the issue was causing pain in their congregations; 18% indicated that their churches were “leaning toward condemnation of homosexual practice,” and 7% indicated a desire to walk with homosexual people.

When asked how MC Canada could be helpful to their congregations on homosexuality, 37% were in favour of the national church providing resources and teaching, and 31% were in favour of

the denomination facilitating dialogue. On the other hand, 16% wanted MC Canada to “take decisive action,” with many of those calling for an end to what they perceive as unfruitful dialogue.

There was a strong preference for annual assemblies instead of biennial ones. Reports included 237 comments about the disadvantages of biennial

‘We have a good reading on what leaders in the churches are thinking and how their reading of scripture and of their congregational life speaks to some of the ‘big questions’ that we face together.’

assemblies, and 121 about the advantages of annual assemblies. On the other side, there were 110 comments about the advantages of biennial meetings and 66 about the disadvantages of annual assemblies.

Based on this response, the Support Services Council has recommended to the General Board that MC Canada continue with annual assemblies.

While the delegates passed a resolution to join both the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), the feedback from table groups identifies concerns people have. These are being brought forward in conversations with CCC and EFC leaders.

Henry Krause, MC Canada moderator, suggests that the way delegates grappled with the issues at Winkler 2004 is encouraging.

“I am grateful for the way we are able to continue dealing with difficult issues, despite the fact that we grow weary. Stronger churches with depth of character often grow out of sustained struggle,” he said.

A more detailed summary listing all responses is at www.mennonitechurch.ca/news/releases/2004/11/18-round_table.htm.
—From MC Canada release

Pittsburgh, Pa.

MEDA convention focuses on 'risky business'

About 485 business people, professionals, church leaders and students gathered here to learn, network and worship around the theme of "Risky business" at the MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) convention here November 4-7.

John Stahl-Wert, president of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation and former Mennonite pastor, opened the convention with a presentation on "Entrepreneurship and grace—the risky business of faith." He reminded the MEDA faithful that "God is not about mediocrity. God is about greatness." Stahl-Wert's love of the city and his passionate belief that God loves her even more was an unusual notion for the largely Mennonite audience.

Sarah Smith, a Southern Baptist pastor, inspired all those who have been asked by God to do something in an area in which they have no knowledge or experience. She told the miraculous story of how God asked her to take on the risky business of building a house even though she knew nothing about being a contractor.

"Dreams do not always unfold immediately," she said. Nevertheless, "if God is calling you, step forward."

Perhaps the highest energy event of the four days was the fundraiser auction on Saturday evening. The good will and laughter was a joy to behold. Even one of the students boldly did some bidding as \$30,000 dollars was raised for MEDA's work.

It was good to see some business folk made certain their pastor was in attendance. Steve Drudge was hosted by the business people of his congregation, Steinmann Mennonite Church in Ontario. He commented on how much he enjoyed the convention and that it was vital for him to have some understanding of the risks that his parishioners in business take on a daily basis. He always reads *The Marketplace*, MEDA's bi-monthly magazine.

Allan Sauder, MEDA president, noted at Saturday's business session that there are currently 160 staff worldwide. ASSETS, a teaching tool



Friday night speaker Sarah Smith (left) visits with Charlotte and Henry Rosenberger of Blooming Glen, Pennsylvania.

MEDA photo

for small business owners in North America, is undergoing an upgrade to ASSETS Plus. One of the changes will be to house new ASSETS programs within an existing organization to provide more follow-up for the graduates of the program and to ensure sufficient financing.

Wally Kroeker, editor of *The Marketplace*, summed up the purpose of MEDA rather well. "Faith has to do with those things that are not visible, yet we believe. Faith is a risky business.... Jesus took risks in choosing his disciples; they were a motley crew. Development in another culture is risky business. Some will see this as foolish, some as courageous."

The people I met, both young and old, male and female, students as well as business people and pastors, were choosing to see the risky business MEDA engages in as an act of courage.—**Brian Bauman**

The writer is Minister of Missions for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

Church leader finds model in MEDA

Throughout the MEDA convention, different people were invited to share what MEDA meant to them. On Sunday morning David Brubacher, Minister to Conference for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, shared his thoughts.

Confessing that he went into ministry in the late 1970s with a "sceptical view of business," Brubacher soon realized that "business folks were my strongest source of encouragement and with whom I worked most easily in congregational leadership."

By the early 1990s, he said, "I was convinced that the church could do some retooling in order to remain a relevant expression of Jesus Christ. It also seemed to me that leadership was a critical piece in the retooling process. Not finding leadership resources in church literature, I found myself drawn to the literature of business. I was particularly inter-

God is an entrepreneur

God is an entrepreneur, a risk taker,” opening speaker John Stahl-Wert told the MEDA convention-goers in November.

When God looks at the world, said Stahl-Wert, he doesn't see it as “bankrupt and suffering under a lousy provisional administration.” Instead, like an entrepreneur, “God sees what it can be, and makes an investment in it.”

Stahl-Wert, president of the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, went on to say that Christians are “more than clock-punchers in the enterprise of God—we are co-owners. We can make investments in God's business because we grasp why it matters.”

If entrepreneurs want to achieve greatness in business, he said, they “have to be willing to fail.” But, he added, God is not “hung up on our failures. God is not a punitive boss. The only pathway to growth is through risk, failure and forgiveness.”

Simon Bailey, author of *Simon Says Dream: Live a Passionate Life*, praised MEDA for taking chances on poor people around the world. “The people

ested in what business leaders were doing to lead companies to thrive in the recession of the 1990s.”

Brubacher didn't know how to bring together the world of faith and the business principles he was coming to appreciate. “Then I learned about MEDA,” he said. “In it I found people and an organization that expressed the leadership principles I had come to appreciate within the context of my Anabaptist faith convictions.”

Since then he has not missed a MEDA convention. “I come for inspiration. But, perhaps more importantly, by my presence as a church leader I want to say to our constituents that I support them as business people.

“Two years ago Mennonite Church Eastern Canada began a process of re-visioning by asking congregations what resources they need over the next five to ten years. One thing we heard was the need to empower people to make their faith relevant in the marketplace. As far as I am concerned, no organization models that better than MEDA.”—From MEDA release

MEDA helps are diamonds in the rough,” he said. “You help them crystallize their dreams.”

Participants also took in seminars and tours and late-night music. A session on Globalization and Christianity was held for 50 students from the U.S. and Canada.

MEDA president Allan Sauder reported that MEDA had a good year, despite economic uncertainty and political instability in many countries. “We don't always know where the rocks are, or how deep the water is, but we always have faith that we are on the right river,” he said.

Sauder noted that 335,000 entrepreneurs and their families were helped by MEDA in the past year, with women comprising over 50 percent of beneficiaries.

Highlights of the past year included:

- Launch of a new microcredit bank for rural people in Nicaragua, and a program in Peru that will develop rural lending programs and help farmers sell their produce.
- A contract with the Canadian government to boost fruit and vegetable production in Tajikistan, one of the poorest of the former Soviet Republics.
- Naming of MEDA as coordinator for Tanzania's National Voucher Scheme for distributing insecticide-treated

nets to protect people from malaria-carrying mosquitoes. At \$6.7 million, it is the largest contract ever managed by MEDA.

- Extended support from the Canadian government for a sesame seed project in Nicaragua that involves 600 farm families. The additional \$2 million will permit the program to serve another 400 families.

- Renewal of a \$1 million contract with the U.S. government's Compassion Capital Fund to help 36 faith-based and community organizations improve their fiscal management, planning and fundraising.

- An agreement with Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia to strengthen ties with business students through internships and other means.

- Publication of *A High Price for Abundant Living* by Winnipeg economist Henry Rempel. The book examines North America's economic system and suggests ways it could become more responsive to changing social and environmental realities.

- Record contributions of \$1.9 million, resulting in \$10.2 million worth of services to low income people around the world when matching funds from government and other sources are added in.

Next year's MEDA convention is November 3-6 in Whistler, B.C.—From MEDA release

Aid work can be risky business

The November 16 murder of Margaret Hassan, who directed CARE International's operations in Iraq, shocked the staff of MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates). Hassan had worked in Iraq for more than 25 years.

Her kidnapping on October 19 sparked an outpouring of sympathy from Iraqi civilians, who called for her release and held a rally on her behalf in Baghdad.

Ed Epp, MEDA's vice-president for Resource Development, was hit hard by news of her death. “I had met Margaret several times in Baghdad in the 1990s,” he said. “She had dedicated her life to helping the Iraqi people. When others left the country, she and her family stayed.”

MEDA's convention theme this year was “Risky business.” MEDA works “in two of the world's riskiest countries—Afghanistan, and Pakistan,” noted Epp. “A few years ago, a local staff member in Nicaragua was shot while working in the rural areas.”

One report indicates that, since 1997, over 200 aid workers have been killed doing their jobs.

Kim Pityn, MEDA's vice-president for International Operations, pointed out at the MEDA convention that the risks of aid workers pale in comparison with their clients. People living in poverty are at risk every day of their lives. They are at increased risk to contract diseases. They have less security in their homes. They do not know if they can feed, educate, or house their families.

“I pray for the family of Margaret,” concluded Epp. “I pray for MEDA workers all around the world.... I pray for people living every day in the risk of poverty. May God give them strength and wisdom....”—From MEDA release

Abbotsford, B.C.

Lecture traces models of Mennonite leadership

Several years ago, Harry Loewen asked two leaders of a Mennonite congregation in Germany (made up of recent immigrants from Russia) how they saw their future in regard to television, dress codes and the role of women in the church.

“That will depend on the authority of our leading brethren,” said the younger of the two. If women demand a greater role, they will be excommunicated. “We simply seek to conduct our church life according to the Bible,” both insisted.

Loewen told this story in an October lecture on Mennonite leadership sponsored by the B.C. Mennonite Historical Society. Loewen, who held the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg for many years, drew from his 2003 collection of biographies entitled, *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership Among the Russian Mennonites (1880-1960)*.

“Mennonites have prided themselves in not having any popes,” said Loewen. “But this does not mean they have not had strong leaders.”

Johann Cornies, called the “Mennonite tsar,” had “almost unlimited power in the Mennonite colonies of the nineteenth century,” said Loewen. Appointed by the Russian government to develop agriculture in the colonies, he ruled like “an enlightened despot.” Church leaders who opposed him were forced to resign and even leave the colonies.

Strong spiritual leaders in Russia included Claas Epp who led his followers to Asia to await the Second Coming of Christ. With the failure of that mission, Epp was excommunicated from his church.

Three types of leadership emerged in Russia, said Loewen. 1) The elders and ministers (*Prediger* or *Lehrer*) looked after the spiritual needs of members. 2) Secular leaders looked after the practical affairs of the colonies. The real power in this area lay not in the hands of the *Oberschulz* (chief administrator of a colony) but with the colony secretary who was

skilled in Russian language and law.

3) The intellectual leaders developed education. Sometimes teachers were also ministers in the congregation. As Russian language and values entered the schools in the late 1800s, and Mennonites began to study at univer-



Loewen

sities in Russia and abroad, “Mennonite society was in need of effective leadership as never before,” said Loewen. This new group of Mennonite intellectuals sought to bring about changes in education and thinking. They were not “angry young men” but considered themselves “servant-leaders” among their people, said Loewen.

He cited the examples of teacher and writer Jacob H. Janzen and artist Johann Klassen who became leaders in the church in North America (Janzen as bishop in Ontario and Klassen as professor at Bluffton College). Benjamin H. Unruh returned from studies in Switzerland to become a leader during the transition from the tsarist regime to the difficult Soviet period.

Loewen also mentioned “false teachers” such as David Penner who condemned Mennonites in his 1930 book, *Anti-Menno*, and David Schellenberg who became a communist writer and ridiculed his people. (Ironically, Schellenberg was also sent to Siberia where he died. His son, Arkadi, became a Christian in Germany and joined a Mennonite church.) Other leaders were seduced by Nazi ideology and anti-semitism.

“The absence of women leaders in this book caused me much anxiety,” admitted Loewen, but their kind of leadership did not fit the “thematic parameters” of his book. “The important work of those women awaits another collection,” he said.

He emphasized that during the Stalinist period, when most of the men

were arrested, it was women who provided the leadership and spiritual care.

Loewen closed with two concerns about Mennonite leadership today. Some leaders “don’t care much about their historic faith heritage,” lured away by the “siren songs” of other evangelical traditions. Second, there is a trend to run churches and conferences like businesses, with a few people on top making decisions.

“This is both un-Mennonite and un-biblical,” declared Loewen. Our model should be the conference in Acts 15 “where issues were thoroughly, even hotly, discussed, upon which consensus was reached.”

He concluded, “It is not more ‘authority’ and power that we need, but community and especially servanthood....” We need “spirit-filled shepherd-leaders who lead by example and sound teaching.”—**Henry Neufeld and Margaret Loewen**

Abbotsford, B.C.

Fire destroys Olivet sanctuary

During the evening of December 11, a fire destroyed the sanctuary of Olivet Mennonite Church here. The offices, fortunately, did not suffer fire damage and no one was in the building at the time. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Please pray for the congregation as they mourn the loss of their church building. Pray also for leaders as they work with the insurance company in assessing damage and process the needs of the future. Pray for Jim Ratzlaff and Stacey O’Neill as they minister to the needs of their church members.—From Mennonite Church B.C. release

Winnipeg, Man.

Themes from cross-country funding conversation

There is much to give thanks for, and we want to ensure the stability of our ministry. These were the messages that congregational leaders heard from Mennonite Church Canada representatives in meetings across the country in November.

A projected shortfall of \$120,000 in donation revenue prompted the listening tour (see Nov. 1, page 19). While the projected shortfall is an item for concern, it is important not to lose sight of the many gifts shared and the joy of being able to join in what God is doing through our work together, reported Dan Nighswander, general secretary, and Al Rempel, director of resource development.

Over 150 pastors and congregational leaders turned out for the seven meetings held in five provinces. They heard a financial update, received information about new ministry achievements and prayed together for guidance.

As congregations spend more money on internal expenses, how can MC Canada best help its area conferences and congregations to move forward in a shared vision of healing and hope?

Four major themes emerged from the conversations.

1) *Vision.* Participants encouraged MC Canada to find new ways to create and communicate its vision for ministry. "For people to get passionate they need to know more and understand how they can make a difference. Being able to name the need is very important in drawing people out," said one participant in Ontario.

2) *Ownership.* Help congregations take more ownership in the financial commitments we make together,

participants said. For some this extended to helping congregations prepare their delegates for annual assemblies, and creating more channels of communication that help local congregations share their financial plans with the wider church.

"Can we encourage congregations to weigh the consequences of finance decisions?" asked a Saskatchewan participant. An Ontario representative was concerned about area and national conference overlap: "The avoidance of duplication needs to be clear."

3) *Trends.* "What are the economic and sociological shifts that must be addressed in how we do and fund ministry?" asked participants in Manitoba. "I find it curious that giving is seen as permanently down. What kind of analysis is being conducted on the trends? Are assemblies structured in some ways that are creating distance as opposed to ownership of our programs?"

4) *Communication.* Improving communication to congregations and individuals was a fourth theme. Packaging stories and needs with which people can identify, strengthening relationships

with pastors, and developing the partnership concept to connect more congregations to ministries were examples of how this could be done.



MC Canada photo

In November, Mennonite Church Canada held seven meetings across Canada to seek feedback on funding the national church.

"There were a number of very good ideas shared that will shape our next steps," said Al Rempel. "Much of the advice heard fits with plans already in various stages of development. For example, we're working very intentionally at growing congregational partnerships with various ministries to help churches own what they've said is important to us as a denomination."

He cited a developing partnership with Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil, Ontario, and the ministry of Glyn and Susan Alison Jones working in Botswana. "This is just one of many examples we're working on."

The need for accountability is also essential for a new and growing organization. "We want to keep our administration and overhead costs low, and spend dollars on ministries that help others," said Nighswander. "But MC Canada is a relatively new organization with all the growing pains that young organizations encounter."

"God has a mission for us. We want to participate fully in it," he concluded.—From MC Canada release

Shortfall projection adjusted

Donors are responding to news of a projected donation shortfall for Mennonite Church Canada. As of November 30, MC Canada is projecting a \$98,000 shortfall, rather than the \$120,000 projected earlier.

It's encouraging news, says Al Rempel, director of resource development. "Thank you to generous givers," he said. "These early indications suggest that the conversations we're having with leaders across the country are already making a difference. We hope the trend will continue to improve."

Expenses for this fiscal year remain on target. A request to increase overall donation income by 3 percent for the next fiscal year has already gone out to all MC Canada congregations.—MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

What does 58 cents buy?

The following story comes from Mennonite Central Committee workers in Uganda.

There is a women's group in Soroti, Uganda, called Two Coin Treasure. It was formed by Mothers' Union, a women's organization of the local Anglican church, for newcomers to their town.

These newcomers are women who in 2003 fled their homes and are now in an Internally Displaced Persons Camp not far from the church. Thousands are crowded together in that camp, which we visited in September, and they fight poverty and despair.

This women's group meets weekly to sing and pray and encourage each other not to give up hope. About 40 women come, and every week each woman tries her best to bring 1000 shillings (about 58 US cents). Each week, the pooled money is given to two of the women on a rotating basis. Once every 20 weeks each woman will receive 20,000 shillings (about \$11.60 US).

The women in Two Coin Treasure do not have any income, really. If they have any land to use, they raise food for their family. When they are able to sell a few of the vegetables they grow, or a little firewood, or a little extra water their daughter brought from the borehole, then they use those few coins to buy a packet of salt, a half bar of soap, or a cup of cooking oil.

And then they share those items with a relative or neighbour who is ill (with AIDS or malaria or tuberculosis) and is unable to farm, or fetch water, or collect firewood. Of course, there are the expenses of sending children to school (paper, pens and uniforms). If one does not have the money, the child does not go to school.

Many non-governmental organizations in Uganda have "income generation" projects that are often targeted toward women. Recently we were at meetings where people talked about such programs. Our western ears were set to hear about tailoring or bicycle repair shops, but instead we heard about providing a woman with a chicken—yes, one chicken.

From that chicken, she can collect a

daily egg and sell it for about 6 cents. Perhaps she can raise chicks and eventually have more eggs to sell. After some time, her family might be able to save enough shillings to buy a goat which would produce kids to sell so that perhaps some of the children could go to school.

Maybe, if this woman were part of a group, she could set aside 58 cents each week and when it was her turn to receive the money, she would have enough to buy a pair of used shoes for her child, and a dress for herself, and seeds to grow more food, and she could pay back a neighbour who had loaned her money when she had to take her sister to the clinic. Being able to do these small things dispels hopelessness.

The idea of being able to sustain ourselves in North America with one

chicken is beyond our imagining. Then we remember the Jewish widow who put her two coins in the offering at the temple. Jesus noticed and commented to his friends that she had given more than any of the others because she had given everything that she had.

She probably had no prospect for getting more coins. She was destitute. No, that's not true. She was rich in faith and in love for her God. And that is also true for the Two Coin women of Soroti, who meet each week to praise God for life and friendship, and to share their 58 cents.

Remember in your prayers the women in Uganda who struggle to provide for their children and to build peace in their communities. They are our sisters in the eyes of God, who sees into the hearts of us all.—**Gann and Dale Herman, MCC Uganda**

New Year's Prayer

God of all time and space:

We come before You,

fully embedded in our contradictory, paradoxical and often chaotic lives.

We acknowledge the confusion:

the loneliness that invades our most intimate relationships;

our astonishing solidarity with the stranger.

The moments we can neither recognize nor own our very own selves,

and those moments, disconcerting though they may be,

when others show us truly who we are.

Grant us your mercies Lord,

for the days and nights of this new year,

this new adventure in community,

this journey of learning

who we are in you and in our world.

In the name of the one who wandered this human wilderness before us,

for our sakes,

showing us how to trust you,

and how to live for your kingdom,

Amen.

By Mary H. Schertz

Kotoura, Burkina Faso

Joyful baptism in Burkina Faso

People in Burkina Faso's savannahs welcome rain on a picnic day as a great blessing. So joy abounded when 25 baptismal candidates at the Kotoura Mennonite Church witnessed a heavy down-pour—drowned out by the rhythms of a drum, marimba, gourd shakers, tambourines and homemade metal gongs that accompanied the dancing congregation's songs of praise.

More than 20 years ago, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers anticipated that building a church among the traditional Sicité-speaking people would be a slow process. God had other plans. Within two weeks, God's word took root in the heart of the chief's son, Tiéba Traoré (see Oct. 18, page 22). Over the years, the Kotoura congregation gave birth to two other congregations in neighbouring villages.

These three congregations gathered around a baptismal pool in the Kotoura church courtyard as the September 12 rain abated.

Abdias Coulibaly, national president of Burkina Faso's Mennonite church, assisted the Kotoura pastor, Ezekiel Maadou Traoré, in immersing each candidate.

Before being lowered beneath the water, the candidate announced, 'I want to be baptized and become a worker for the Lord.'

Before being lowered beneath the water, the candidate announced, "I want to be baptized and become a worker for the Lord." Because the church is located in the middle of the village, non-Christian spectators joined the crowd to witness the baptisms.

"Seeing elderly mamas entering into the water to be baptized was a great testimony," said Daniel Kompaoré, a church leader in this country. He is the husband of mission worker Anne Garber Kompaoré, one of the founders of the Kotoura church.

Although 32 candidates from four villages desired baptism, only 25 passed the oral test to determine



Photo by Daniel Kompaoré

Pastor Ezekiel Maadou Traoré (left), and Abdias Coulibaly, national president, baptize Aminata Traoré at a joyful service in September.

Christian knowledge. Mennonite tradition here requires that church leaders are certain each candidate understands the implications of baptism.

Daniel Kompaoré read a letter of blessing from Listowel Mennonite Church, which partners with Mennonite

Church Canada to support Garber Kompaoré's translation work, and the two congregations exchanged gifts. Garber Kompaoré was moved by the baptism of many wizened, wise women, some of them mothers of the

first Christian converts.

"I was under the control of water spirits," said Bintou Traoré, an older widow. "I worshipped them and offered sacrifices to them each year so they would protect me."

"When the way of the Lord was introduced in our villages, my children gave their lives to the Lord. Through their behaviour, I understood God's love. So I, too, have decided to give my life to God. Through God, I not only have protection, but also eternal salvation for my soul."

At the end of the ceremony, worshippers gathered around big enamel basins of *toh* (corn porridge) and meat sauce to continue conversation about the day's events.—From MC Canada report by **Lynda Hollinger-Janzen** and **Dan Dyck**

Canadian Mennonite provides a vehicle for CMU to say what we need to say directly to the people of Mennonite Church Canada. —Kevin Heinrichs, Communications Director, CMU

Canadian Mennonite

**Contact Barbara Burkholder, Advertising representative
1.800.316.4052
advert@canadianmennonite.org**

Edmonton, Alta.

Need to challenge our culture of violence

In our world, violence is the dominant spirituality. The invariable response to violence, terror and hatred is more of the same.

But the Gospel challenges us to risk our lives and set ourselves free from systems of injustice that make offenders' lives worse and victims' lives more painful, systems that rub salt in our communities' wounds instead of healing them. According to Wayne Northey, those systems perpetuate "the very state violence that put Jesus on the cross."

Northey, the director of M2/W2, a prison visitation ministry in British Columbia, spoke at the annual celebrations of Community Justice Ministries (CJM), a program of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta.

Northey spoke in Edmonton, Tofield, Calgary, Rosemary and Didsbury in October. He congratulated CJM's staff, its over 200 volunteers and its hundreds of supporters, for their engagement in justice work. They are the living fulfillment of the suffering

servant prophecy in Isaiah because they are helping to "bring justice to the nations," said Northey.

One of the bitter ironies of western civilization is that our legal system imitates the church's treatment of heretics, he said. Instead of recognizing the needs of victims and communities for healing, the impersonal machinery of the state names itself as the victim and metes out punishment.

One victim of rape, reacting to the fact that the Queen is cited as the victim on court dockets in criminal cases, reported her fantasy of phoning the Queen on the anniversaries of her rape to ask how she is doing.

As a simple example of restorative justice, Northey told the story of what happened when he and a friend as young boys kicked out a neighbour's basement window. His mother made him empty his piggy bank and give all his money to the neighbour, with an apology.

"Years later, I discovered the truth about the deeper restorative justice at



Marilyn Fleger is a mentor for inmates at the Edmonton Institution for Women.

work that day," he said. "Mrs. Robinson quietly returned every cent."

As Christians, forgiveness does not mean to forget but to "remember, let go, and be free."

Community Justice Ministries includes prison visitation, support for released sex offenders and other prisoners, and ongoing support for lifers, both while they are in prison and on parole.—**Gary Garrison**

Publishing notes

Commentary editors recognized

Elmer A. Martens and Willard M. Swartley, editors of the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series, were honoured for service spanning three decades during an Editorial Council meeting here on November 19.

Swartley's association with the project goes back to the late 1970s when he served on the Mennonite Publication Board. He helped shape the direction of the project which now has 19 volumes in print. Swartley of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary served as New Testament editor from 1989 to 2001, editing nine volumes.

Photo by Robert Ives



Mary and Willard Swartley (left) and Elmer and Phyllis Martens were honoured at the annual meetings of the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series.

Martens' work with the project spans 25 years, both as Old Testament editor of eight volumes and writer of *Jeremiah*, the first volume. Martens is from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in California.

The successors for the editors were also at the meeting: Gordon Zerbe of Canadian Mennonite University is New Testament editor, and Douglas

Miller of Tabor College in Kansas is Old Testament editor.

The latest volume in the series is *Proverbs* by John W. Miller of Kitchener, Ontario. The series is published by Herald Press, in cooperation with six Believers Church denominations.—From Herald Press release

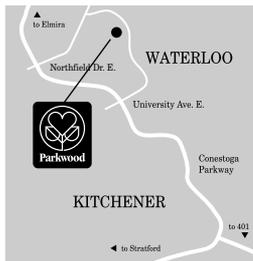
Poetry award

Oracle of the Heart, a collection of poems by Muriel T. Stackley, illustrated by Lynette Schroeder Wiebe, was awarded the Raymond & Margaret Nelson Poetry Book Award for 2004 by the Kansas Authors' Club in October. Stackley is a Mennonite pastor in Kansas (and former editor of *The Mennonite*); Wiebe works in communications for Mennonite Church Canada in Winnipeg. An expanded edition of the book was published by Wordsworth in 2003.

Introducing Retirement Living Condo-style Townhouse Bungalows at Parkwood



Now you can make the move from empty nest to adult community living and protect your nest egg at the same time.



Parkwood Mennonite Home is located at 726 New Hampshire Street (corner of University Avenue) in Waterloo, Ontario

If you are 60 years of age or older and are ready to move out of the family home, you owe it to yourself to check out the condo-style townhouse bungalows at Parkwood in Waterloo. A limited number of units are still available and prices start at just \$165,000*. Options include dens, basements and garages.

For your added peace of mind, Parkwood's unique "right-to-occupy"[†] arrangement means that you retain the equity in your home – unlike some other housing options where your investment dwindles over time.

Parkwood is a community designed especially for seniors who want to be with people who share their faith and values. As well, they want to experience the peace of mind that living close to family and friends provides – and still be just minutes away from shopping, recreation and church.

For more information or to discuss your next move with no obligation, please contact Edmund Pries, Broker, by phone at 519-578-0003 or email: epries@citycorp.ca



***Important Note:** Prices are guaranteed only until the end of 2004. Due to rising building and carrying costs, prices will increase in early 2005.
[†]Ask for more details about Parkwood's "right-to-occupy" arrangement.

Lethbridge, Alta.

Peace Pole dedicated in Lethbridge

On Peace Sunday, November 14, children and adults at Lethbridge Mennonite Church dedicated their new Peace Pole. The rough-hewn, six-foot cedar pole displays the prayer, “May Peace Prevail Upon Earth” in nine languages: English, French, German, Low German, Spanish, Blackfoot, Russian, Arabic and Japanese.

During the church’s 25th anniversary last year, Sunday school students made stepping stones to commemorate

the event. The congregation used these stones to make a path from the front door of the church to the Peace Pole.

Ruth Preston Schilk, pastor of the congregation, led the dedication service. Holding lighted candles, all spoke in one voice, “This is our calling: To know Christ’s way of peace, and so to make peace, in our family and community, our nation and world.” Then the Peace Prayer was spoken in each of the languages displayed.

The monument is “now in view for all of Lethbridge to see,” noted the *Lethbridge Herald* in a November 15 story on the event. “Preston Schilk said it’s important for the church to be public in its commitment to peace in the city and around the world.”

The article noted that during a sabbatical last year, Preston Schilk saw a Peace Pole in Scotland.

“It wasn’t unusual,” she was quoted as saying, “but it got me thinking this is beyond me, this is beyond Mennonitism and Canada, so I came back thinking this would be a good thing for our congregation.”

The pole was constructed by Fred Unruh. Most of the languages of the prayer on the pole are spoken by members. Blackfoot

was picked to pay homage to the role of First Nations people in Lethbridge, while Arabic was included since many countries where it is spoken are experiencing turmoil.

A Peace Pole offers a public message for peace. More than 200,000 of them are found around the world.

—From reports by **Fred Unruh** and *Lethbridge Herald*

Winkler, Man.

A conscientious objector tells his story

A conscientious objector (CO) in World War II told his story to 250 people at a banquet of the Winkler Heritage Society on November 4.

David Schroeder, now retired from teaching New Testament at Canadian Mennonite

University, was a farm boy in Altona, Manitoba, when he was drafted at age 18. Two of his brothers tried to enlist in the

armed forces but were

rejected for medical reasons, while David and his older brother, Jacob, applied for alternative service.

Schroeder described the experience of appearing before a judge to seek an exemption from military service on religious grounds. He was granted a postponement from military duty so he could work at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, employment he had secured beforehand.

Schroeder worked 12 hours a day, six days a week as an orderly for \$25 a month plus room and board. Every month, the hospital paid the Red Cross another \$15 on behalf of each worker. COs like Schroeder were



Schroeder



Photo from *Lethbridge Herald*

This Peace Pole was erected at Lethbridge Mennonite Church on Peace Sunday.

New Hamburg, Ont.

Nithview Home adds more care for seniors

Throw open the doors," said Bob Thaler to the 700 people who attended the dedication service for the new facilities at Nithview Home on October 24. Thaler, pastor at Zion United Church here, has many parishioners at Nithview.

"The danger is to think this building is for us to use, for purposes we think God has intended. Rather, our job is to step back, to see what God is doing, and let God do it," he said.

The heart of the building project is a five-storey complex dubbed "The Tower."

required to continue their alternative service for a year after the war ended to prevent them from taking jobs from returning soldiers.

"It was a great learning experience," said Schroeder. "Exposed to the world, Mennonite COs learned much about non-Mennonites. We were forced to consider our pacifist position, and the experience proved a great training and we became very service minded."

COs were valuable to Canada as well, said Schroeder. Many served the country by building roads and trails, planting trees, fighting fires and clearing timber in national parks. Some 3,000 worked in Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba.

Still deeply committed to the principles that motivated him as a teenager, the 80-year-old Schroeder is passing down his story to a generation that may face similar tough choices in a world still at war.

CO service influenced the church as well as society, said Schroeder. "CO service brought changes to how the handicapped were treated. And we were never the same again. We became responsible to the world, and voluntary service became an institution. After World War II, Mennonites became involved in mission work in a big way."

Noting how war today has changed, Schroeder said, "We don't see the enemy, the dead; we should not be surprised at terrorism. We need one ethic for the world grounded in Jesus Christ."

He hopes that the new web site on Canada's COs during World War II will "help to keep our faith alive." The site is at www.alternativeservice.ca.

—From report by **Elmer Heinrichs**

It has three floors of assisted-living suites and two floors of supported-living apartments. Apartment owners can have one meal a day at Nithview.

The current project involved major renovations to existing buildings,

Mennonites.

The total cost of the project is \$13.5 million. Of this amount, \$10.2 million is in a mortgage with Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, which will be paid by fees from the assisted living



This new "tower" at Nithview Home includes two floors of apartments and three of assisted living, bringing the full continuum of care to Nithview.

including a new kitchen, an auditorium with seating for 300, new recreation and community space, and redeveloped long-term care facilities.

Now Nithview Home, a program of Tri-County Mennonite Homes, offers the full continuum of care, from independent living (seniors village and garden homes) to long-term care.

The auditorium now "gathers people who used to gather in church," stated Thaler. "God also wanders the hallways...in the staff and volunteers the voice of Jesus echoes down the halls. This is more than a group of scattered shut-ins...it is a community of faith."

He concluded: "This is a great untapped resource of wisdom, courage, care and patience. Let's bring young people here to learn the wisdom of the elderly."

Rae Nafziger, executive director of Tri-County Homes for almost 33 years, led the worship service. In an interview, Nafziger said that the population of Nithview will be 250 when the buildings are fully occupied; about 50 percent of those are

residents. There is no government money in the project. The Tri-County board, chaired by Lynn Yantzi, decided not to access Ontario's Trillium Funds because they are generated by lotteries.

The Nithview choir, directed by Norma Iutzi, sang two songs at the dedication service. Brent Martin, Nithview administrator, presented keys to Hilda Puddicombe, representing the assisted-living residents, and to Martha and Gerald Schwartzentruber, representing supported-living apartments.

The Schwartzentrubers helped compile the book *A Legacy of Life*, describing the first 25 years at Nithview Home. Gerald was pastoral care coordinator at Nithview before his retirement. The current pastor is Nancy Mann.

Nafziger concludes: "Tri-County Homes is part of the Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly. People across Canada will be interested in what we have done here in this building project, offering the full continuum of residence and care for our seniors."—**Maurice Martin**

Bogotá, Colombia

A stirring funeral in Colombia

A single rose lay among the broken glass and debris. As often is the case here, they coexist, contrasting and challenging one another in a dance of power to see which will dominate the day.

The beauty of roses could not erase the sadness of the occasion. Javier Segura Gonzales, a Mennonite pastor here, was being bid farewell. He was the only fatality in a bomb that exploded on the first day of Advent. He is the first Mennonite pastor to lose his life due to the violence in Colombia.

The large church building had standing room only for the service. At just 31 years old, Javier had experience church planting in Quito, Ecuador, as a pastoral associate in his home church, and now as the pastor in a new church plant in Bogotá. His fiancée read the eulogy, then wiped her tears and launched into a powerful testimony of encouragement.

“Javier didn’t like to leave things half done, and it may feel to you like he has done that. But the church in not Javier’s church. It is God’s church and God will carry it forth.”

After the service the coffin was carried, followed by hundreds of mourners with placards and white balloons, down the streets to the location where Javier had died. There flower arrangements were set up and placards taped to the building.

Peter Stucky, president of the national church, gave a stirring testimony. This was an act of violence against a child of God, he said. The church stands for life and for peace. He clarified that Javier was a man of peace and had not, as the media suggested, set off the bomb. The false allegation was like salt thrown into the wounded heart of the church.

White balloons of peace were released into the air. “I ask peace for my city. Lord I ask you to forgive my city.” Again, the church had taken the opportunity to use this tragic situation as a testimony of life and a call for peace.

Blood was still visible on the wall. A hole in the sidewalk indicated where



Photo by Janet Plenert.

Friends of Javier Segura Gonzales march to the site where he was killed by a bomb while waiting for a bus.

the bomb had detonated. And the rose lay in its midst, a reminder that, in the end, peace will overcome evil, and Jesus will come again.

Pray for the Colombian Mennonite churches, for Javier’s family, and that peace would come to this land.—From MC Canada report by **Janet Plenert**

Water Valley, Alta.

Camp highlights from last summer

Last summer at Camp Valaqua was full of excitement! There were great new activities, lots of rain and sometimes wet overnights, and fun themes each week. The summer also had an amazing impact on staff and campers.

I remember the weeks at camp that I enjoyed as a child, and the changes I went through spiritually. Our staff hoped to make the same mark on the

children we met as our counsellors had made on us.



Campers enjoy the view at Camp Valaqua.

Elmira, Ont.

Women of Botswana and Canada

The fall workshop of the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on October 23 brought approximately 150 women to Elmira Mennonite Church. Sharon Andres Dirks spoke about her experiences as a mission worker in Botswana for seven years, and compared the lives of Canadian women to those of women in Botswana.

The Sharon and her husband, Rudy, worked with African Indigenous Churches. Sharon taught English and religious education at a school for disadvantaged children. As time went on, her work focused more on HIV/AIDS counselling, training local counsellors and teaching the Bible to women's groups.

Sharon described a day in the life of a woman in Botswana. Our daily activities are very similar—we see our children off to school, make meals, clean the house, hold down a job, make supper, go off to another meeting (possibly a Bible study), or visit a

neighbour, or maybe just sit around a fire and visit.

Satan wants nothing more than to keep us feeling too busy, stated Sharon. Busyness is not only in the African church, it is here as well.

In the afternoon session, Sharon talked about taking time to wait on God. African women have more patience than we in Canada. She gave the example of a bride in Botswana who waited all day for her future husband to show up; he did finally show up in the late afternoon. She also told the story of a guest speaker who did not show up until the next day to give his speech. We have a lot to learn when it comes to patience.

The women at the workshop had a wonderful day together.—**Wilma Good**



Sharon Dirks spoke at the women's fall workshop in Elmira.

The theme, "What if love ruled?" explored a world filled with Jesus and his love. The chaplains used puppets, clowns, play dough, and personal stories. We discussed stories like, "The Good Samaritan" and "The parable of the lost son." Each chaplain's excellent way of telling the stories led the campers to ask many questions.

We were all enriched by these discussions—we counsellors found ourselves getting more out of the old favourites than we ever had before. The out-trippers also made comments about these great spiritual moments in the beauty of God's creation.

Last summer left us with many other great memories, including talent shows, singing at campfires, hiking in the mountains, amazing food, and just enjoying each other's company.

Hopefully our churches and communities can continue to support Camp Valaqua so that children can return for years to come. One thing we can say for sure is that we know God was present there.—**Amber Walde**



In June, the Mennonite Young Women's Association of Tofield Mennonite Church in Alberta celebrated 50 years as an organization. Front row, from left: Helen Burtis, Helen Baergen, Kate Backschat (charter member), Betty Koop (charter member), Katie Schroeder. Back row: Anne Ewert, Mary Regehr, Margaret Boese, Margaret Koop, Katie Baergen, Mary Schmidt, Anne Friesen (not pictured is Helena Thiessen). Over the years, the group has raised money for the church, made quilts and kits, and visited the elderly and ill. The group continues its work for the church.—Tofield church release

Waterloo, Ont.

Lawyers talk about law and the Bible

Does “law” in the Bible mean the same as when it is used by lawyers today? This question was at the centre of a conversation between lawyers and New Testament teacher Tom Yoder Neufeld this fall at Conrad Grebel University College. The conversation, entitled *Lawyers II*, was a follow-up to a spring event.

“In a similar gathering held in April, it appeared that two different languages were being spoken, though many of the same words were being used,” said Lowell Ewert, director of Peace and Conflict Studies at the college. “*Lawyers II* was a second attempt to dialogue with Mennonite lawyers who are seeking to be faithful Christians in their work.”

“Law is a poor substitute for relationships,” said one lawyer at the fall event. Another person added, “Law is a floor, not a ceiling.” Yoder Neufeld responded: “Torah says, ‘You shall love the Lord your God.’ The command to love is the floor.”

And so lawyers and the theologian tested the meaning of words in biblical and social-legal contexts. Is law (Torah) the opposite of love (Gospel)? Or can they participate in the same goals?

Yoder Neufeld raised two key questions: 1) Is biblical law universal law, or a specific covenantal contract? 2) Is biblical law seen as a blessing or a problem?

Biblical law (Torah) is a gift of God to a specific community, he said in answer to the first question. It is a contract in which obedience to God’s will is the people’s response to God’s grace (liberation from slavery). Thus law is never abstract; it is never understood in isolation from relationship; it is always linked with God.

“Torah is concerned with our walk with God and each other in a covenant relationship,” said Yoder Neufeld. “We are always going somewhere.... The way to life is narrow, partially because it is bounded by rules, but also because there are few people on that way.”

Does this law have any claim on persons outside the covenant of faith? Yoder Neufeld suggested that the Torah represents wisdom for life. The

prophetic word to “other nations” was simply, “Our God is actually your God.” In Romans 1, Paul suggests that “there is no excuse, all are under the law of God.” The hope is that the law revealed through Moses would be disseminated throughout the world.

Answering his second question, Yoder Neufeld suggested that by citing II Corinthians 3:6, “the letter kills, but the spirit gives life,” we may be making a distinction which Paul did not intend. There is much that is life-giving in Torah. Note Jesus’ response to the lawyer who asked, “What is the essence of the law?” Jesus cited Deuteronomic and Levitical law: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

The question, “Who is my neighbour?” kicks the story into high gear. Was the “Good Samaritan,” presumably outside the covenant, more of a neighbour than those within? Jesus subverts a legalism that limits the

practice of love.

“But then,” Yoder Neufeld added, “Torah did that too. It encouraged sloppy farm practices so that there would be ample grain to glean for the poor.” This illustrates the element of “love” in “law.”

The lawyers wondered whether Torah can be a measuring stick against which to weigh fundamental human rights and international law. Are modern human rights laws actually an expression of Torah?

“Torah speaks to covenant relationships. What about the more recent focus on the individual?” someone asked. The group noted that the concept of individual responsibility seems to be an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformation.

“And is there a difference between what is legal and what is moral?” Already in the 11th century, a pope differentiated between spiritual authority and legal authority.

There was some discussion about the Anabaptist assumption that we

Continued on page 29

Waterloo, Ont.

Mennonite lawyer has passion for refugees and human rights

For Tim Wichert, his legal profession is closely related to the vision of Mennonite Central Committee.

“My interests in law and my interests in MCC were interconnected—they fed each other. I was interested in social policy and believed that organizations like MCC are well-placed to do that. I went to law school because I saw law as a means of achieving social justice, through social policy.”

Wichert grew up in Virgil, Ontario, where he attended a Mennonite Brethren church. Following university, he married Deb Simpson, a classmate from law school, and they began attending Toronto United Mennonite Church. After practising law in Toronto for about five years, Wichert and Simpson went overseas with MCC.

Several events in his life nudged him toward his career. While attending Columbia Bible College in B.C., he did a service stint with M2W2 (prison visita-

tion). During that time, he was also at a weekend event with Doris Janzen Longacre, who had just written the *More with Less Cookbook*.

“As a result of the impact of her weekend, especially her focus on social justice, I became somewhat deter-



Wichert

mined to go to law school and use that as a way of working for social change through governmental advocacy.” He was attracted to Queen’s University law school because of its focus on “correctional law,” legal services for prisoners. He focused on criminal law and on refugee law which was becoming prominent in the late 1980s with changes in government policy (and the creation of the Immigration and Refugee Board).

Lawyers From page 28

should not mistake the world for the church. John H. Yoder suggested that we can, however, push the world as far as it allows itself to be pushed by its own best wisdom. This might even nudge it towards the reign of God.

One lawyer said: "Be salt and light in that setting, that's all you can do." Another person added: "We need to feel the tension.... We know where we are going, but we are not there yet."

Yoder Neufeld responded: "What is the price we pay for dropping the expectation that as a church we live as much as we can in the new creation, even as we live in the old?"

It was agreed that the conversation is not finished.—From report by **Maurice Martin**

"I have been attracted to both of these areas of law as a direct outgrowth of my Anabaptist upbringing, which focused in part on Christian service, social justice, concern for the poor and vulnerable," says Wichert.

People often ask him, "How can you represent someone who might be guilty?" He has a two-fold response. First, the majority of people charged actually plead guilty and need advocates to get an appropriate sentence. Second, "in some cases people need to be defended against the disproportionate power and resources of the state.... We walk with or stand by people in their most desperate circumstances."

Wichert and Simpson's first MCC assignment was in Kenya, where Wichert worked on land use and ownership, while Simpson focused on issues related to women.

After three years in Kenya, they moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where Wichert worked with the Quaker United Nations office on refugee issues and human rights. Simpson worked on a gender and development project for MCC. After three years in that work, they moved to New York City where Wichert worked as MCC liaison with the United Nations.

Back in Canada, Wichert became refugee coordinator for MCC Canada and MCC Ontario. (Simpson later took over as refugee coordinator for MCC Ontario.) He cites Bill Janzen at the

PROVIDING TOURS FOR 35 YEARS

2005 TOURS

PARAGUAY SERVICE TOUR

(March 31 - April 14)

TULIP TIME in HOLLAND (April 25 - May 4)

In the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL
(May 27 - June 12)

ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 8-20)

SWITZERLAND, FRANCE and GERMANY for
GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN/FAMILIES
(June 14-21)

SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA
and its FJORDS (June 17 - July 1)

EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 7-22)

SMALL TOWN THEATRES and
COUNTRY GARDENS (July 26 - August 1)

RUSSIA and UKRAINE (July 29 - August 12)

EUROPEAN FALL HARVEST
(September 22 - October 6)

EGYPT with MEDA (October 9-21)

FOLLOWING JESUS in ISRAEL (October 19-31)

INDONESIA (November 10-27)

2006 TOURS

JAMAICA SERVICE TOUR (January 20-29)

AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 3-23)

VIETNAM (February 8-25) • MEXICO (March 10-18)

PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA and PERU (March 21 - April 6)

ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (June 28 - July 10)



"Building bridges among Mennonites and other Christians around the world through custom-designed travel."

CALL 1-800-565-0451

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK YOUR TOUR

E-MAIL: office@tourmagination.com

WEB: www.tourmagination.com

9 Willow Street
Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6 Canada
Reg. #1567624

1011 Cathill Road
Sellersville, PA 18960-1315
USA

MCC Ottawa Office as inspiring his return to the practice of law last fall.

"The reason that I decided to leave MCC and return to law practice in September was to focus more specifically on using law to effect social change and social policy—in other words to challenge the government more deliberately on policies that I think are unjust or wrong, related to refugees, new immigrants."

He adds: "Using the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is where my interest lies now. One example of this is a focus on helping refugees that the government has deemed to be 'inadmissible' to Canada," based on their involvement in criminality or civil war.

"My view is that people should be given a second chance more readily than the law currently allows, in particular that someone who was involved as a 'freedom fighter' should not be forever banned from Canada. We make an exception for Nelson Mandela, but very few others.

"In addition, we need to find a more humane way to dealing with those who have done wrong, rather than

simply deporting them," especially those with family in Canada.

How does Wichert feel his calling contributes to the reign of God? "In situations of conflict, human rights abuses, corruption... it is ultimately the careful, deliberate approach to resolving issues that a properly functioning legal system provides that helps immensely in restoring 'law and order.'

"A properly functioning legal system also provides a process for ensuring that 'right relationships' are encouraged. The concept of restorative justice, which Mennonites among others pioneered, is now a staple concept within many justice systems." This is an example of how law changes because of the influence of people concerned about upholding the dignity and worth of individuals.

"I also believe that the concept of human rights is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition.... As a Christian, I believe that a more deliberate focus and acceptance of human rights will lead to both a more peaceful and enduring 'rule of law.' It will also contribute to a more holistic and egalitarian sense of peace and justice."—**Maurice Martin**

Umtata, South Africa

South African churches lead in AIDS response

Zolisa, thin and gasping for breath, strokes her two-year-old son's head as if she could pack a lifetime of love into the caress. Her eyes glisten with tears.

She hesitates before speaking to Lynell Bergen, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker, and Temba Samuel Kulati, a pastor, because Zolisa's community attaches shame to her illness.

A few words find their way through Zolisa's trembling lips. "I met Mama Mawela. She is helping me. I am powerless and she brings me food boosters and medicines." Zolisa died of AIDS two weeks after this conversation.

To celebrate the contributions of Mama Mawela and other volunteers trained by the Transkei AIDS Support Organization (TRASO), Bergen was to travel with her husband, Brian Dyck, and Kulati more than 600 miles for two weeks in November and December. (Bergen and Dyck are from Arnaud, Manitoba.)

During this trip, about 120 TRASO workers will receive T-shirts with *Egameni lika Yesu* (In the name of Jesus) printed on the front.

"It's a small token, considering the hours they give," Bergen said. "Many of them bring from their own limited resources to help persons living with AIDS, and orphans."

Kulati chairs the South African region of the Organization for African-Initiated Churches that founded TRASO in 2001 to provide hope, counselling and home care for people with AIDS. Kulati, Mawela and many other TRASO personnel also participate in Bethany Bible School, a Mennonite-supported program of theological training that provides support to African-Initiated Churches in the Transkei region of South Africa.

MC Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network jointly support Bergen and Dyck through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM). The couple, with two sons, went to Umtata in 1999 with the primary assignment of assisting in leadership training through the Bethany Bible School, the Umtata Women's Theology Group and

other forums.

However, in South Africa where 20 per cent of adults test HIV-positive and where the government responds inadequately, Bergen and Dyck have become involved in health issues. Churches lead the way in AIDS education and caring for families.

"In our region, it is the African-Initiated Churches that are really a step ahead of everyone else," Bergen said. "The government has not done well.... All the churches are beginning to see that this is a call for them to step forward and take up their ministry as people with some moral authority, as people who had an active voice in ending apartheid. Now, this is their new



Photo by Lynell Bergen

Zolisa received loving care from TRASO volunteers during the last days of her life. Her son now lives with relatives.

battle that they need to fight together."

Many families refuse to name the cause of death at a funeral, saying simply that their loved one took ill.

AIDS "remains a mystery because people are afraid of it, don't understand it, don't want to talk about it," says Bergen. "The medical community collaborates in this mystery, because they know that families can suffer persecution in their communities if it becomes public that someone in their

home has died of AIDS." Some funeral homes refuse to honour a person's funeral insurance if they died of AIDS.

Nothobile Mboniswa, a pastor's wife and TRASO volunteer, has lost many close relatives to AIDS. "I decided to volunteer with AIDS work, because I felt [out of my experience] I could talk to people and I could visit them." Mboniswa knows she must keep her conversations confidential to prevent breaking up families.

"When someone calls me, I start off by praying with them and then I tell them that being HIV-positive is not the end of the world. The thing they need to do is to change their lifestyle, so they can stay healthy. Some of them have stopped drinking. Some come to worship with us in our church. We don't have all the answers, but we must learn to accept people."

Not only are South African women taking leadership in the care of families living with HIV/AIDS, but they have been studying the Bible to see how God's word informs their response to the broad swath of devastation caused by this disease.

The Umtata Women's Theology Group, begun in 1986, has produced a booklet about AIDS. Their other booklets treat topics as varied as women in the church, marriage, parenting, divorce, singleness, aging and dying. The Umtata booklets are currently being translated into French for use in the francophone countries of Africa.

The women's theology group strives "to dig deeper into what scripture means to them, and not just what they were hearing from the men in the front," Bergen said.

She finds that TRASO volunteers have grown into community leaders through their ministry. "Though the volunteers may have little formal education, the nurses in the local clinics rely on them as resource people. The volunteers...are finding their voices as women who are courageously confronting apathy and fear among church and traditional leaders," Bergen said.—From MC Canada/AIMM release by **Lynda Hollinger-Janzen**

Transitions

Births/adoptions

Caslich—to Tanya and Mike, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Tianna McKenzie, Nov. 11.

Dyck—to Valerie Martens and Darryl, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Mattheus Darryl, March 28.

Ferguson—to Deanna and Darren of Parkhill, Ont., Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., a son, Scott James, Nov. 25.

Friesen Waldner—to Lanette and David, Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont., a son, Joel Isaac, Oct. 27.

Huebner—to Rachel Klassen and Chris, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Jonah Henry Klassen, March 28.

Koopmans—to Laura and Simon, Milverton Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Salome Everlasting, Sept. 18.

Lee—to Joo Hyan Park and Hoon, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Hyun Joon, Sept. 26.

Lobe—to Julie Derksen and Kenton, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Sophia Anne Derksen, July 30.

Neufeld—to Andrea Goertzen and Byron, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Caleb Goertzen, Nov. 2.

Neufeldt—to Mindy and Bruce, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., a son, Connor James, Nov. 20.

Pilkey—to Jana and Brad, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a son, Jack Christopher, Nov. 12.

Ross—to Angela and David, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Felicia Maria, Nov. 22.

Shantz—to Joanna and Luke, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., a daughter, Keira Lynn, Nov. 15.

Snyder—to Kim and Ben, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Alison Ruth Ann, Nov. 11.

Voth—to Colleen (Janzen) and Eric, Schoenfelder Mennonite, St. Francois Xavier, Man., a son, Zachary John, Nov. 29.

White—to Julie and Ron, Poole Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Alexa Morgan, Dec. 2.

Young—Gillian and Vincent, Salem Mennonite, Tofield, Alta., a son, Wesley Wade, Nov. 1.

Marriages

Friesen-Bush—Michael and Kim, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 11.

Graham-Vanderkooy—Christopher and Sherri, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., July 10.

Kropf-Leis—Trevor and Bethany, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Nov. 6.

McKinnell-Kerklaan—Matthew (Osler Mennonite, Sask.) and Teresa (St. Luke's Catholic, Montreal) at Osler Mennonite, Sask., Aug. 14.

McKinnell-Lockhart—Doug (Osler Mennonite, Sask.) and Diane (United Church, Saskatoon), at Osler Mennonite, Sask., Aug. 28.

Wahl-Doell—D.J. (Dennis John) and Sheree, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Dec. 11.

Weber-Barnard—Don and Christine, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 23.

Deaths

Becker—Gerhard, 79, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Nov. 10.

Bender—Leona, 88, Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Oct. 9.

Brenneman—Katie, 98, Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Nov. 1.

Brubacher—Glen, 66, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 16.

Derksen—Rose (Quiring), 84, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., Nov. 10.

Dyck—Maria, 96, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Nov. 30.

Dyck—Rose, 71, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 13.

Contest winners

Jack Suderman (at right in photo) presents Marj and Vic Falk with a \$2,000 travel voucher, first prize in the World of Witness contest.

The voucher, donated by Bonaventure Travel in Winnipeg, is good for travel to one of the 39 countries where

Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers minister. The Falks, from Morden Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Manitoba, plan to travel to Ukraine next May. "Because my parents and grandparents are from Ukraine, I am naturally interested in going there," said Vic Falk. The couple will visit mission workers Cliff and Natasha Dueck and the Bethania Home in Zaporozhye, which Vic has supported over the years. Karen Schellenberg from Portage Mennonite Church in Manitoba won second prize—a *God's Love is for Everybody* CD. Terry Zimmerly from Grace Mennonite in Regina won third prize—two MC Canada Witness t-shirts.—MC Canada release



Enns—Peter W., 92, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Nov. 28.

Epp—Douglas Keith, 51, Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., Nov. 23.

Friesen—Deirdre, 52, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 25.

Froese—John, 75, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Nov. 16.

Gerber—Calvin, 84, Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Oct. 20.

Karnot—Alex, 86, of Vineland, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 18.

Klassen—Katherine, 89, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Nov. 2.

Penner—David H., Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Nov. 9.

Plett—Delbert F., Steinbach Mennonite, Man., Nov. 4.

Reimer—John D., 73, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 19.

Stobbe—Anne, 100, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Nov. 13.

Baptisms

Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.—Patrick Friesen, Jae Hee Jin, May 30. Daniel Wiebe, June 6.

Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask.—Xu Ming and Sharon Li, Nov. 21.

Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.—Aaron Bender, Katie Entz, Judy Entz, Sam Entz, Dwight Jantzi, Jordan Jantzi, Oct. 31.

Milverton Mennonite, Ont.—Sarah Gropp, Hans Christian Irl, Cory Toutant, Michael Schultz, Michelle Sinclair, Sept. 26. Lindsay Erb, Nov. 28.

Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C.—Stephen Christopher Nickel and Giti Naser Khaki, Nov. 28.

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

Schools directory



Rosthern Junior College
 410 6th Ave
 Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0
 www.rjc.sk.ca 306.232.4222

LIVE AND LEARN



ROCKWAY Mennonite collegiate

for Grades 6 - 12
 Integrating Academic Excellence with...

- ✦ Music ✦ Faith ✦ Athletics ✦
- ✦ Service ✦ Friends ✦ Orchestra ✦
- ✦ Choir ✦ Worship ✦ Leadership ✦
- ✦ Character ✦ Peace ✦ Exchanges ✦
- ✦ Community ✦ Fine Arts ✦ Drama ✦

(519)743-5209
 www.rockway.on.ca

The future starts early



Menno Simons Christian School
 An Education for Life!
 CALGARY, ALBERTA
 www.mennosimons.ab.ca



Canadian Mennonite University



Get Ready...
 to achieve **excellence** in a
 Christian university

500 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB. R3P 2N2
 Ph: (204)487.3300 | cu@cmu.ca | www.cmu.ca



UNITED MENNONITE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE Leamington, Ont.

Academic...Full Secondary School Academic Program
 Spiritual...Daily chapels, courses in religious studies
 Extra-Curricular...Vocal & instrumental music courses, sports, drama

Phone: (519)326-7448 Fax: (519) 326-0278
 E-mail: umei@mnsi.net

The joy of the journey.

At Goshen, your learning stretches far beyond classroom walls...
 To a campus biophysics lab to observe ion channels.
 Or to Peru, to hike the Inca trail.
 To a thoughtful Bible study or lively hymn-sing. Or conservation work at our environmental center.

Wherever your Goshen education may take you,
 your journey will be as meaningful as it is practical,
 as purposeful as it is unpredictable,
 as fulfilling as it is fun.



GOSHEN COLLEGE
 Admission Office
 574-535-7535
 admission@goshen.edu
 www.goshen.edu

GET ROOTED...
 GROW...
 BEAR FRUIT...



Box 160 Hepburn, SK S0K 1Z0 1-866-772-2175
 info@bethany.sk.ca • www.bethany.sk.ca

...a well-rounded education which will inspire and empower students to live as people of God.

86 West Gate, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E1
 T:(204)775-7111 www.westgate.mb.ca



Learn... Grow...
...SUCCEED!
 Expand YOUR Horizons at MCI.

www.mci08ues.net

For more information
 call 1-800-367-6611 ext 111
 (204) 327-5001
 academic.courses@mail.mci08ues.net

Conrad Grebel UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
 ...where tradition and innovation meet



at the University of Waterloo
 519-885-0220
 grebel.uwaterloo.ca

School note



Photo by John Robinson

Mohamed Jamaa, 10, is learning to walk at a school in Arbara, Sudan, for students with mental handicaps. Sara Abuzeid, a physiotherapist, carefully bends his legs to strengthen them. She then helps him stand, and on his thin legs, he steps across the room. Started by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers 30 years ago, Broader Horizons Institute has grown from a single classroom to a 17-acre compound with classrooms, playgrounds, workshops and a farm, and 165 students learning to live with mental and physical handicaps. MCC provides funds for the students' breakfast through its Global Family program, and also provides a \$2,500 grant each year. The school has become a model for other special education schools in Sudan and elsewhere in the Middle East.—MCC release

Sunday dinner

Call them what you will—potlucks, fellowship meals or carry-in dinners—they have become increasingly popular in Mennonite churches. Meanwhile, the traditional Sunday dinner at home, which often included guests, has all but disappeared.

I would seldom be delighted if my husband casually announced on the ride home from church that he had invited guests for dinner. My dad often did that. He would entertain the male guests with stories or engage them in discussing scripture passages until the call to eat came.

Meanwhile my mother scrambled to: 1) fire up the wood-burning cook stove in the kitchen; 2) get water boiling in a

large pot to cook the potatoes (peeled on Saturday); 3) send me to the “cellar” for jars of home-canned pork sausage, pickles and fruit; 4) set up the women guests with sharp knives to slice homemade bread and cabbage for salad; 5) generally oversee all the

My mother had no freezer—not even a refrigerator for many years—no microwave nor dishwasher. Yet she served plain, hearty meals with grace and dignity to guests she hadn’t planned on.

food preparation.

Dessert was easy. Besides the fruit, there were always cookies in tins and cakes and pies—baked on Friday, but that didn’t bother anybody, especially if they were topped with fresh whipped cream, a farm staple.

Meanwhile my sister and I, along with young girl guests, would extend and set the table, adding mis-matched kitchen dishes to the “company” dinnerware, and do whatever else needed to be done. My brothers found chairs enough for all, borrowing from

my grandmother’s rooms.

My mother had no freezer—not even a refrigerator for many years—no microwave nor dishwasher. Yet she served plain, hearty meals with grace and dignity to guests she hadn’t planned on. She didn’t fight traffic to get to a demanding job away from home during the week, but she worked long days at home—every day. She needed a day of rest. But she enjoyed those busy Sundays of fellowship.

And that’s what potlucks are—with a minimum of effort (except for the kitchen volunteers!). And we should keep having them, since serving a traditional Sunday guest meal at home seems too much to handle.

(I wonder why it is such a big problem, given all the ready-to-serve and quick-to-prepare foods available to us, never mind kitchen equipment to make it all easy. Some husbands even know their way around a kitchen, something else my mother’s generation never imagined!)—**Ferne Burkhardt**

Cochrane, Ont.

Christmas dinner for neighbours

Hunta Mennonite Church, a small congregation in northern Ontario, held its annual Christmas dinner on November 27. This tradition, part of the congregation’s outreach program, began in 1980. In previous years, crowds have exceeded 100, but due to a bad winter storm, there were 75 in attendance.

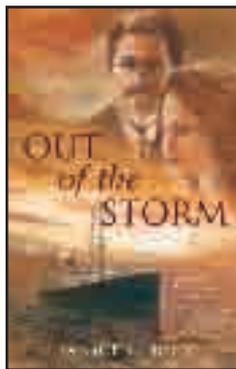


Johnson

Polly Johnson, the pastor, welcomed everyone from the community and led a few Christian songs before grace. The Hunta Mennonite youth made sure everyone received turkey, along with all the trimmings. Elaine Shier, Elna Blackburn and Doris Prior prepared the meal.

The Hunta congregation holds this event for the community to help show the Lord’s blessing to everyone at this important time of year.—**Bill Heavener**

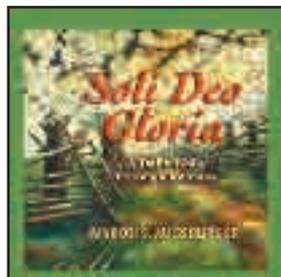
Books for Christmas Gift-Giving



Out of the Storm

The Mennonites of South Russia face a fierce struggle for faith and survival as their dreams are dashed one by one, yet they cling to the hope that God will yet intervene and speak to them as he did to Job, “out of the storm.”

Janice L. Dick is the bestselling author of *Calm Before the Storm* and *Eye of the Storm*. Paper, 380 pages, \$20.99



Soli Deo Gloria

A Daily Walk Through Romans

In reading Romans as the story of the gospel of God, **Myron S. Augsburger** discovers again the beauty and commitment of Romans. These meditations provide daily inspiration.

Paper, 368 pages, \$16.79
Hardcover, \$22.49



1 800 245-7894 • www.heraldpress.com

Mennonite Church Canada

Resources in January mailing

The January edition of *Equipping Canada* has been mailed to churches and is also available at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/current/.

This mailing features resources for adults and children, including a five-session worship and study guide for Prayer Week 2005: "Praying over the broken body of Christ," prepared by Dan Nighswander, and a Lenten "at home" resource, "Marvelous in our Eyes," adapted by Elsie Rempel from 2005 Lenten worship materials.

A Speakers Bureau includes names of MC Canada staff and mission workers who will be on leave from South Korea, Israel, South Africa, Europe and England during 2005. In addition, there are prayer

requests, notes for bulletins, and Mission Action Profiles from Botswana and Israel.

Pray for mission workers

Pray for Cari Friesen, Witness worker in China, in her teaching ministry. She has added a class in a school where they haven't had a foreign teacher before. The new students are excited about learning English. Pray for good connections with her students, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Continue to give thanks and pray for Witness workers in Burkina Faso: for Lillian Haas in the intricate details of translation work, and for Donna and Loren Entz as they work among the Samogho people. Praise God for continuing interest in the Bible story cassettes. Pray also that the new Partnership Council (replacing Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) will strengthen church leadership

and ownership.

Pray for Jack Suderman, Executive Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, who will be leading a one-week course for church leaders in Cuba in late January.—From MC Canada release

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

Mellinger appointed to leadership position

Marianne Mellinger of Kitchener, Ontario, has been appointed to a new position in Leadership Formation, beginning January 1. This is a half-time position shared by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Conrad Grebel University College.



Mellinger

The position reflects the growing partnership between MCEC and Grebel to develop resources for training and nurturing leaders.

Marlene Epp, academic dean at Grebel, says, "Marianne has already demonstrated a gift and passion for leadership development within the Graduate Theological Studies department of CGUC. We look forward to her expanded contribution."

Mellinger began pastoral ministry in the Franconia Conference of Pennsylvania. Since moving to Ontario she has served as an interim pastor, counsellor, teacher and clergy coach.

Her training includes a Doctor of Ministry degree in Pastoral Psychotherapy from Garrett Theological Seminary.

"I am excited to be working at the task of leadership development in the creative context of this shared position," says Mellinger.—From MCEC/Grebel release

Listening, making decisions, talking...

It is no wonder that coming to agreement over contentious issues in the church is difficult. How can we even begin to have a conversation with people who live across the continent, theologically as well as geographically? How do we balance keeping lines of communication open and taking decisive action? Can we give equal power to truth and grace? Sometimes it is amazing that we can come to any agreement at all.

In the process of discernment, we search for wisdom from biblical texts, scholars and theologians, fellow Christians and our culture. All these things are helpful. Perhaps what's most catalytic for moving forward is considering the possibility that God is also at work among those with whom we disagree. Assuming that our discussion partners are striving to walk in close communion with God implies that we should give them our respect and consideration.

When local churches need to make

decisions, they have to take into account the people involved. This is what makes living out our faith so difficult. How do we consistently bring to bear the principles of God's truth and grace in situations that are all a little different from each other?

Overarching guidelines are necessary; they act as lamp posts to provide light for the situation. At the same time, the final decisions need to be appropriate for the individuals within the congregation. Thus, how we work out the details looks different from one church to the next.

Recently I attended a seminar called "Creative dialogue on difficult issues in the congregation" led by Dean Peachey. Among many valuable insights, one has stuck with me. Dean talked about Jesus' suggestion for working out conflicts (Matthew 18). If these steps don't work, let the dissenter "be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector," says Jesus.

And what was Jesus' approach to Gentiles and tax collectors? The welcome mat was always out! Even after decisions

From our leaders

are made, and estrangement happens, Jesus implores us continue the conversation!

Sometimes situations require an immediate decision, without the time to reach consensus or complete clarity. Thankfully, that doesn't mean that conversation, discernment and growth have to stop. If we see our lifetime as a journey towards wholeness, there is time to continue the conversation, even though decisions changing our course of action, for a time, have to be made.

Working towards agreement is helped greatly by assuming that God is also at work with our discussion partners. We owe it to ourselves and the other to hear how the other is experiencing God's grace and love. God may have something better in store for us.

Betty Loewen, chair of Church Ministries Committee, Mennonite Church B.C.

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Young adult retreat on faith and culture

“Interplay of faith and culture” is the theme for the Mennonite Church Manitoba Young Adult Retreat January 7-9 at Camp Koinonia. This event has been held for many years and is eagerly anticipated, said Bob Wiebe, director of Education Ministries. It is a time for worship, faith exploration, recreation and meeting new people.

This year’s theme will explore how culture affects our faith through the insights of two seasoned travellers, one from a Russian Mennonite perspective and one from an aboriginal perspective.

Menno Wiebe, who will offer a Russian Mennonite perspective, has explored a variety of cultures since boyhood days in southern Manitoba. He has served as Pax worker in Paraguay, director of Native Concerns for Mennonite Central Committee, and anthropology instructor at CMU. He is a poet, philosopher and farmer.

Norman Meade gives leadership to the Manigotagan Community Chapel in northern Manitoba. Throughout his life, he has served people both in the church and as a mediator for the Manitoba government. He is currently director of Next Generation Network Youth Leader, a program which brings together aboriginal elders and inner city native youth.

Details are available at www.mennochurch.mb.ca/ events.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Mission Fest goes on tour

The MC Saskatchewan Ministries Commission is planning a Mission Fest for April 16. In the past, the Commission has held a fall

mission festival every other year in Saskatoon, and invited people to learn more about missions by travelling among the five Mennonite churches in the city.

This year, instead of an overseas focus, the day will feature mission work in provincial churches. The “Touring Mission Fest” will offer two all-day tours that will include both urban and rural mission projects.

Tour #1 involves Tiefengrund and Hague and First Mennonite in Saskatoon. Tour #2 will take travellers through Mayfair Hoffnungs-felder Mennonite, Hope Mennonite in North Battleford and Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon.

Financial update for Saskatchewan

A letter to congregational treasurers has gone out from MC Saskatchewan Finance Chair Doyle Wiebe, with a summary of financial needs. In the report, Wiebe notes that just over half of the budget for this year had been received as of September 30.

“This is slightly ahead of year-ago levels and we are very encouraged and thankful for this,” wrote Wiebe.

The letter urges churches to notify the conference of their plans for giving before year end, and reminds churches that if every MC Saskatchewan member contributed just \$70, the budget would be met.

The report also encourages congregations to increase conference contributions.

Mennonite Church Alberta

New name for youth organization

TAMMY, The Alberta and Montana Mennonite Youth, is no more. The new name of the organization is Youth of the Alberta Mennonite Church (YAMC).

TAMMY was adopted in the late 1990s when the Northwest Conference and

Mennonite Church Alberta shared their program and a joint youth minister. When Northwest decided not to join Mennonite Church Canada, the joint program could no longer function.

In 2003, Mary Ann Van Oevern, a member of Bergthal Mennonite Church, became the quarter-time youth ministries co-ordinator for MC Alberta. The youth leadership team (YLT), led by Van Oevern, met in Olds on November 13. The main focus was planning for the annual Junior and Senior High Snowcamps at Camp Valaqua in January and February.

The group planned themes, meals, and recreation for the events. Members of the YLT are in grade 11 or 12, commit to two years on the committee, and organize youth events with the co-ordinator.

Van Oevern has a vision for more than simply co-ordinating youth events. She is working to create better networking between youth pastors, sponsors, and youth leaders among Alberta churches.

On November 25, a group of sponsors and youth pastors met in Red Deer to discuss the future of youth ministry. Van Oevern is planning a second such meeting for March 17 in Calgary. A youth ministry questionnaire sent to churches in December will shape the discussion.

Interested persons can contact Van Oevern, phone (403) 335-8264 or e-mail: gmaster2@telus.net.

Youth fundraiser for Valaqua

The senior high youth at Edmonton First Mennonite Church raised \$783.00 for Camp Valaqua at their November 21 Chili Lunch. The lunch, served before a congregational meeting, was extremely well attended. The youth hosted a similar lunch last year, with funds going to the youth bank account.

This year, the group changed its focus. “Because we still had

money [in our bank account], we felt guilty keeping it all,” explained youth leader Lisa Klassen. “The youth group liked the idea of donating. We gave them a list of options, and they chose Camp Valaqua.”

A significant number of First Mennonite youth consider Valaqua a special place. Many have been campers, staff, or have enjoyed annual church retreats at the camp. Paul Neufeldt, First Mennonite’s camp contact person and former camp staff, displayed pictures of youth at Valaqua to help people at the lunch understand the youth group’s connection.

The money will go to the camp’s general fund. This year, Camp Valaqua needs funds to replace the roof on its main lodge. Camp Valaqua’s phone number is (403) 637-2510.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Women to meet in February

The B.C. Mennonite Women in Mission will hold their annual business meeting on February 5 at Bethel Mennonite Church in Aldergrove, at 2:00 p.m.

During the past year, the women supported two young women who travelled to Chile to work with the 5&2 Multiplying for All—a project that supports women and children in family crisis or suffering abuse. The women will share about their experiences there.

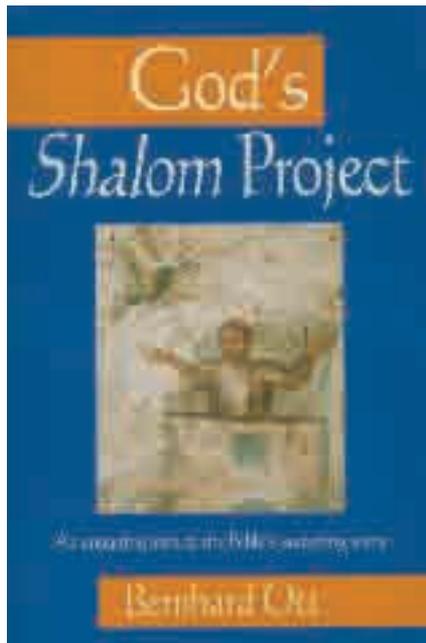
All women who attend an MC B.C. church are invited to come and learn how your contributions to B.C. Women in Mission make a difference here at home and around the world. For details contact Veronica Thiessen at (604) 823-6101.

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.

OUR 2004 SELECTION

Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature

(a project of Mennonite World Conference)



Paperback • \$7.95 (U.S.), \$10.95 (Canadian)

God's Shalom Project

by Bernhard Ott

About this book

This illumination of the biblical story reads like music.

The author shows God to be a gracious parent, intent on a restored relationship with humans. It is that ongoing effort which Ott calls the *Shalom Project*. Realized fully, *Shalom* includes harmony among humans, and between humans and creation.

Ott shows that "God wants a *Shalom* people," a community of faithful Christians who together love God and each other, and then live in the world within that strength.

How you can be involved

Read this book's fresh insights if you're a veteran believer. Hand it to young persons and inquiring friends. Study it with your small group or Sunday school class. (And make sure your library has at least one copy.)

How to get this book

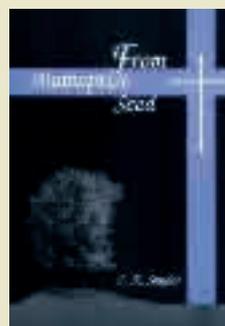
Check with your local bookstore. Or — in the U.S., call the publisher, Good Books, at 800/762-7171, or shop at the secure website, www.goodbks.com. In Canada, shop at www.pandorapress.com, or phone 519/745-1560.

Purpose of the Shelf

The *Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature* envisions a new book selection each year, encouraging the fellowships around the world to translate it into their own languages. The book or booklet of the year may have been published first in any one of the languages spoken within the Anabaptist-related fellowships found in 62 countries around the world. For more information, email Executive Secretary Larry Miller at LarryMiller@MWC-cmm.org.

Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature

2002 Selection



From Anabaptist Seed

by C. Arnold Snyder
Paperback
\$5.00 (U.S.)
\$6.25 (Canadian)

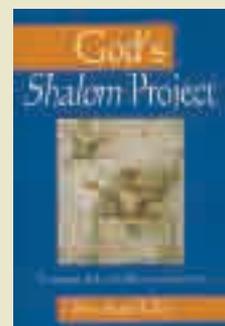
2003 Selection



Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith

by Pakisa K. Tshimika & Tim Lind
Paperback, \$6.95 (U.S.)
\$9.95 (Canadian)

2004 Selection



God's Shalom Project

by Bernhard Ott
Paperback
\$7.95 (U.S.)
\$10.95 (Canadian)

Mennonite World Conference

Strasbourg, France • Kitchener, Ontario, Canada • Clovis, California, USA

(This ad was made possible by an anonymous donation to MWC.)



Employment opportunities

PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY (12-15 hr./wk.) Bloomingdale Mennonite Church

We are seeking a Part-time Administrative Secretary to provide administrative support for the pastor, the leadership teams and the congregation. Excellent communication skills and word processing, along with writing skills for minute taking are required.

Send resume with references to:

Bloomingdale Mennonite Church
1151 Snyder's Flats Rd., Bloomingdale, ON N0B 1K0
bmchurch@golden.net Attention: Sandy Cressman.

Deadline: Friday, January 7, 2005

MCC Manitoba is seeking an
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
for its El'Dad Ranch program.

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

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

Application deadline is January 3, 2005. For more information contact:

Janelle Siemens e-mail: jms@mennonitecc.ca
Sol Janzen e-mail: sjj@mennonitecc.ca
Phone: (204) 261-6381



PeaceWorks
Computer
Consulting Inc.
empowering people we believe in

Accepting resumes for fulltime

Client Network
Administrators

www.peaceworks.ca

PASTOR

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

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

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

EDITORIAL POSITIONS

Mennonite Publishing Network and Brethren Press, publishers of the forthcoming *Gather 'Round* Sunday school curriculum seek to fill two editorial positions:

Managing Editor

Full-time position managing the receipt, scheduling, and production of all curriculum materials; editing and proof-reading copy; and assisting



project director with overall development and administration. Applicants should have excellent editorial and communication skills, have high ability to manage detail, and be well-grounded in Mennonite or Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices. Location: Elgin, Ill., preferred. Start date: End of February 2005 or sooner.

Associate Editor

Half-time contract position overseeing the writing and design of student resources for the curriculum. Applicant should have excellent writing and editorial skills, communicate well in person and over distance, and be well-grounded in Mennonite or Church of the Brethren beliefs and practices. Location: Open. Start date: End of February 2005 or sooner.

Denominational balance on project staff will be a significant factor in selection. Contact Anna Speicher, project director, at 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60120 or gatherround@brethren.org. Phone 800-323-8039, ext. 209. Deadline for inquiries: January 15, 2005.

CANADIAN
Mennonite

ART DIRECTOR/GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Canadian Mennonite is seeking a part-time Art Director/Graphic Designer for the biweekly Mennonite periodical. A resume, design samples and rates should be submitted by Feb. 4, 2005. The position begins Feb. 24, 2005.

Duties include issue design and layout, helping solicit and select artwork, creating and placing ads, troubleshooting ad and print problems, and posting issue contents online on our web site. Applicants should have experience in print publishing; strong print and web design skills; technical knowledge of electronic page design, image editing and web technologies; and be adept at using leading desktop and web design tools.

We are open to flexible working arrangements in terms of location (preferably at our office in Waterloo, Ontario, but we will also consider remote arrangements) and method of payment (salary or a per-issue payment). However, the designer needs to be reachable during production periods to work with staff on the layout.

Applications should have a passion for the church and for *Canadian Mennonite's* ministry and mission. Come to serve and build up the church in this exciting way!

Direct inquiries and applications to:
Timothy Dyck, Editor and Publisher, Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225
E-mail: editor@canadianmennonite.org

Second Mile releases third study book

Winnipeg, Man.—The peace curriculum, “Second Mile: A Peace Journey for Congregations,” has just published its third book, *Pathway C: The Road to Emmaus*, edited by Carol Penner of Vineland, Ontario.

This book includes lessons on Being the church, Communities of refuge, Peace begins at home (eliminating family violence), and Lives of service.

The curriculum could also be adapted for youth.

Instead of booklets in a folder, this third part of the curriculum is available as a book for the price of \$13.99. A leader’s guide is also available.

Order from Faith and Life Resources, phone 1-800-245-7894 or e-mail: flr@mph.org.—From MC Canada release

Notice to congregations

January 23 is Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday, a time to pray and celebrate with churches around the world.

For sale

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

Housing

In Kitchener-Waterloo **female student accomodation.** Beautiful area, on bus route. Close to University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier U., Conestoga College (Wloo Campus). Vacancies for early Jan. 05. Private bedroom in home, mutual kitchen, bathrm, livingrm. NO SMOKING/PETS. \$450 + Utilities. (519)893-1142

Notice of 34th Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

CANADIAN Mennonite

Notice is hereby given that the 34th Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (the non-profit association that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*) will be held on February 5, 2005 at First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver at 4:00 p.m. The meeting will include editorial, circulation and financial reports, elections, and reports from the Board. A banquet follows at 6:00 p.m. at the church. Anyone is welcome to attend. Voting will be limited to Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service members. These are individuals who contributed at least \$25 in the past year, and board members. (See names and nominating bodies below.)

Members who are unable to be present may complete the proxy form and mail it to: *Canadian Mennonite*, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7.

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board:

British Columbia: Henry Neufeld, chair (Mennonite Church B.C.)
John W. Goossen (Mennonite Church Canada)

Alberta: Jan Wilhelm (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service)
Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (Mennonite Church Alberta)

Saskatchewan: Bernie Thiessen (Mennonite Church Saskatchewan)

Manitoba: Paul Krahn (Mennonite Church Canada)

Aiden Enns (Mennonite Church Canada)

Bernie Wiebe (Mennonite Church Manitoba)

Ontario: Ester Neufeldt (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service)

Mary Lymburner (Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service)

Brice Balmer (Mennonite Church Canada)

Larry Cornies (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada)

Jan Wilhelm, Secretary, CMPS Board

Proxy

As a member of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, I hereby appoint

as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the Annual Meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service on February 5, 2005.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send me a copy of the Annual Meeting reports

2004 Index is available

The 2004 Index for *Canadian Mennonite* will not be printed in the magazine this year. It is available on our web site or in print form. If you would like a free copy of the Index, contact the *Canadian Mennonite* office, phone toll-free 1-800-378-2524, or e-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar

British Columbia

February 5: Annual meeting and banquet of Canadian Mennonite at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver. Meeting at 4:00 p.m., banquet 6:00 p.m. For tickets phone Angelika Dawson at (604) 870-09494 or John Goossen at (604) 940-8208.

February 4, 5, 18, 19: MCC B.C. fundraising banquets, at Greendale Mennonite Brethren Church (4); South Langley MB (5); Bakerview MB, Abbotsford (18); Peace Mennonite, Richmond (19).

February 12-20: MCC Arts and Peace Festival.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church B.C. Church Polity Seminar at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

February 26: Mennonite Church B.C. annual delegate sessions at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

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

March 19, 20: Abendmusik Lenten Vespers at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (19), and Knox

United Church, Vancouver (20), 8:00 p.m.

May 15: "Mennonite Piano Concerto" performed by Irmgard Baerg, at Central Heights MB Church, 3:00 p.m. Sponsored by Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

Alberta

January 12: Sweet Interlude at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.

January 21-23: Junior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

January 30: Skate-a-thon for Menno Simons Christian School at Olympic Oval, Calgary.

February 18-20: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church Alberta annual delegate sessions at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

February 25-27: Senior high Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua.

March 4: Peace Fine Arts Festival for youth, sponsored by MCC Alberta, at Rocky Mountain College, Calgary.

March 17: Discussion on future of youth ministry in Alberta. Contact Mary Ann Van Oevern, phone (403) 335-8264, e-mail: gmaster2@telus.net.

June 5: Benefit evening with Stephen Lewis for MCC's Generations at Risk program. Details pending.

July 15-16: MCC Alberta Relief Sale in Sherwood Park, Edmonton.

Saskatchewan

January 7-8: RJC Alumni Tournament of Memories.

January 21-23: Portable CMU/Restorative Justice Workshop at Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert.

January 28-30: Senior high retreat at Shekinah.

February 4-5: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan annual meeting at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.

February 25-26: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Rosthern Junior College.

March 4-6: Poet/hymn writer Jean Janzen at Nutana Park

Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

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

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

April 2: Women in Mission Enrichment Day.

April 16: "Touring Mission Fest" by MC Saskatchewan Ministries Commission.

May 14-15: 40th anniversary celebration at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

June 17-19: Youth Farm Bible Camp 40th anniversary celebrations.

June 25-26: Camp Elim 60th anniversary celebrations.

July 23-24: 50th anniversary celebrations at Grace Mennonite Church, Regina.

Manitoba

January 7-9: Young Adult Retreat at Camp Koinonia on "The interplay of faith and culture."

January 20-22: Refreshing Winds, conference on worship and music at Canadian Mennonite University. Visit www.cmu.ca for details.

January 21-23: Junior Youth Retreat at Camp Koinonia.

January 23: Alumni concert at Performing Arts Centre, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna.

February 4: CMU choirs and Winnipeg Symphony premiere Patrick Carrabré's "In the Beginning" at New Music Festival, Centennial Concert Hall.

February 4-6: Senior Youth Retreat at Camp Koinonia.

February 11-13: Junior Youth Retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

February 18-19: Mennonite Church Manitoba delegate sessions at Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

March 6: Choral Connections concert at CMU, 7:30 p.m.

March 11-13: Peace-It-Together youth conference at Canadian Mennonite University.

March 11-13: Junior Youth Retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

April 23-24: Graduation weekend at Canadian

Mennonite University: Spring concert (23), convocation (24).

Ontario

January 15: Ministers, deacons, elders conference at Listowel Mennonite Church, 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Topic: "Fostering good mental health in the congregations," with Al Dueck.

January 22: Multicultural Leadership Training at First Hmong Church, Kitchener, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

January 26, February 9,

March 9: New music at Conrad Grebel Chapel, Waterloo, 12:30 p.m. Composers Joanne Bender and Tim Corliss (Jan. 26); Len Enns (Feb. 9); Carol Ann Weaver (March 9).

February 15-17: School for Ministers and Chaplains at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

March 16, 17: Bechtel Lecture with Fernando Enns of Germany at Conrad Grebel University College, 7:30 p.m.

April 17: Convocation at Conrad Grebel University College.

United States

January 24-27: Pastors' Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana.

July 4-9: Charlotte 2005, Mennonite Church Canada and MC USA assembly and youth convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Subscriber services CANADIAN Mennonite

How to subscribe:

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

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Payment enclosed

Charge my VISA Mastercard

_____ card number _____ expiry date

Subscription changes:

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

Subscription number **Expiry date**

A999999 00/00/00

Kathy Mennonite
999 Menno St.

WINNIPEG MB X0X 0X0

- Subscription changes are not considered Transitions notices. (Please send Transitions to the editor.)

3. Changes will be made immediately but may take 4-6 weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

Contact information:

Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6H7

Phone: (519) 884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 ext.221

Fax: (519) 884-3331 E-mail: office@canadianmennonite.org



And on the way that they journeyed
on through the night soon
they rested and they a little while
in the sand, the sand, the sand.