

CANADIAN
Mennonite

October 31, 2005
Volume 9, Number 21



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Nurturing rocky relationships

This fall, I'm co-leading a young adult Sunday school class at my home congregation. We're studying hard sayings of Jesus, things Jesus said that require extra head-scratching and Bible-searching to try to figure out.

Last week, we discussed the relationship between Jesus and Peter, that headstrong, outspoken disciple.

Matthew 16 describes two emotional encounters between the two men. There's wild speculation going on about the real identity of this miracle-working preacher. Jesus asks his disciples who they think he really is. I imagine an awkward silence as they drop their eyes, shuffle their feet and look at each other, wondering what kind of riddle they are supposed to answer now. But Peter sticks up his hand and blurts out, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter gets some things with his gut that he doesn't really understand until later.

Jesus blesses Peter for his words, at that moment renaming him from "Simon, son of Jonah," to "Peter," a rock of stability for the future church.

Yet, Peter and Jesus had times in their relationship that were as low as this was high. Later in that chapter, in another setting, Peter tells Jesus that Jesus' upcoming suffering and death—which Jesus has just predicted—must never be allowed to happen. Jesus really lashes out at Peter, telling him, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things, but on human things."

I think this conversation shows us a very human moment between two friends: Peter's right-hearted (but wrong-headed) desire to care for Jesus clashing with Jesus' own mental anguish and stress at what was to come. In that moment, Jesus could not bear to have someone so close to him try to influence him away from a path he already feared.

Jesus does something during the Last Supper that is a model for all of us in our own relationships. Jesus says in Luke 22, "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." And [Peter] said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!"

We know, as Jesus does, that Peter will soon do just the opposite of what he promised. In this moment, when personal betrayal is so close at hand, Jesus prays for his friend anyway, a prayer that will not be answered with a yes. Then he offers Peter personal encouragement to get him through the dark places ahead and gives him a ministry to focus on once he is able to do so.

Jesus and Peter related in the very human ways we all do. They treasured their friendship with all of its natural ups and downs. Both spoke openly of how they made each other feel. Lightening our own relationships with encouragement and hope, keeping them sturdy with accountability and honesty, and all the while blessing them and each other with prayer—these are things that get friendships through hard times. As it was for Jesus and Peter, so may it be with us.

To subscribers outside Canada: A note from one subscriber in the United States asked if we could avoid using plastic mailer bags around our issues. We were unaware our international mail was being packaged this way. To consume less material in our production process, we have asked that issues be mailed without wraps. Over the next few months, could those of you who live outside of Canada please let me know what shape your issues are in when they arrive? Depending on their condition, we'll know if we can continue this way or if the extra protection is really needed.

—**Tim Miller Dyck**

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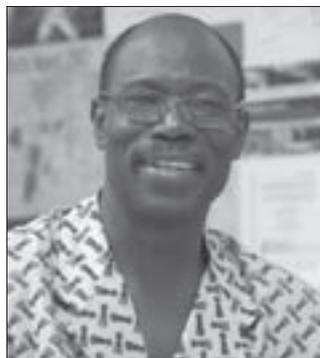
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Web site preview

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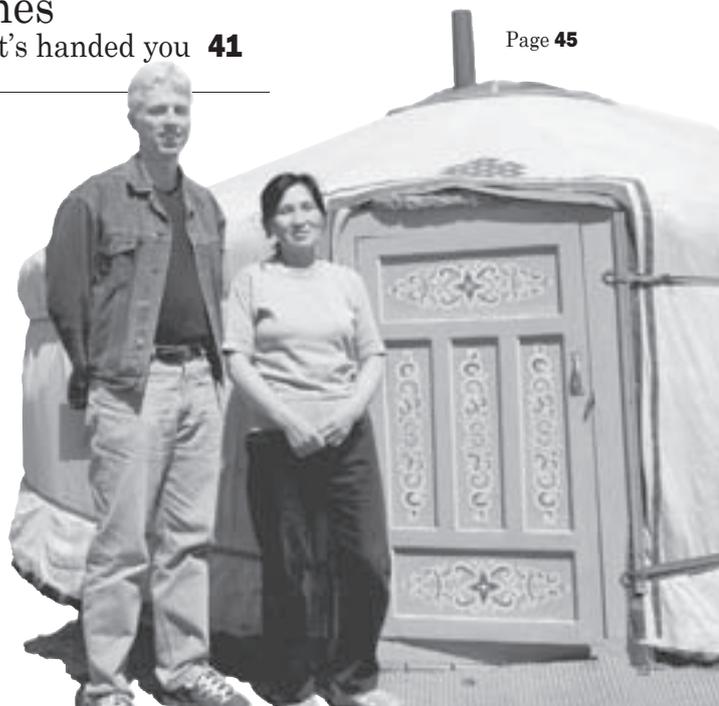
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Cover: Sharon Carter and Garry Erb of Listowel Mennonite Church sang the gospel in front of the Mennonite exhibit at the International Plowing Match. See article on page 33. Photo by Barb Draper



Winnipeg

Convert from Islam now heads Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission

Expressions of gratitude, along with a ready smile, seem to come easily to Siaka Traoré of Burkina Faso, who is the first African chair of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) since its beginnings in 1912. Perhaps that is because he has learned to recognize and celebrate the signs of God's generous and faithful presence in the midst of adversity, beginning with his own conversion from Islam in the late 1970s.

Traoré shared some of his personal experiences and his vision for AIMM—a ministry partner of Mennonite Church Canada Witness—during a recent visit to the MC Canada offices.

"When I first became a Christian," Traoré said, "my family rejected me because my parents were Muslim. [So] I had nothing to feed myself with. [But] Ben Eidse [an AIMM missionary] said to me, 'You can sell books.' And he helped to find me some money to buy some books.... So I began with

a mat on the ground," he said, laughing. "Later, I had a table; now I have a house and a store. It was a good help for the Mennonite Church leaders in Burkina Faso. All of them went to the bookstore [for supplies]. We praise God for this and that [the bookstore] is

still running."

Although he had "differences" with his parents over his conversion and growing interest in Christianity, he was baptized in 1980 and now exults in the reconciliation that has happened. "Before my father died, he came to stay with me in 1986, and we became reconciled after seven years. He saw a real change in my life.... [Now] some of my brothers and sisters

'Missionary vision' a key AIMM priority

Following his visit to Canada, new AIMM chair Siaka Traoré was interviewed via e-mail at his home in Burkina Faso by Canadian Mennonite national correspondent Leona Dueck Penner, with translation by Rod Hollinger-Janzen, AIMM executive coordinator.

CM: *What are the priorities for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) in the coming years?*

Siaka Traoré: One of AIMM's priorities in the coming years is to further develop missionary vision in African Mennonite churches. This missionary vision must be articulated in the direction of mission coming from each local church toward each people [group]. AIMM also wants to enlarge its partnership base by inviting other evangelical Mennonite conferences to join its new missionary vision, in order to accomplish the mandate of the church: "Go and make disciples for Jesus Christ of all nations."

Another of today's priorities is to train leaders of churches in Africa so they can carry out their responsibilities well.

CM: *What relationship would AIMM now like to have with Mennonite Church Canada?*

Traoré: In the new formula of AIMM, the kind of relationship that we want with Mennonite Church Canada and also with our other partners is one of mutual recognition of the gifts and talents of each group that makes up AIMM. We want a fraternal relationship of equals, a relationship where each are givers, a relationship of mutual respect.

CM: *Currently, 10 Canadian missionar-*

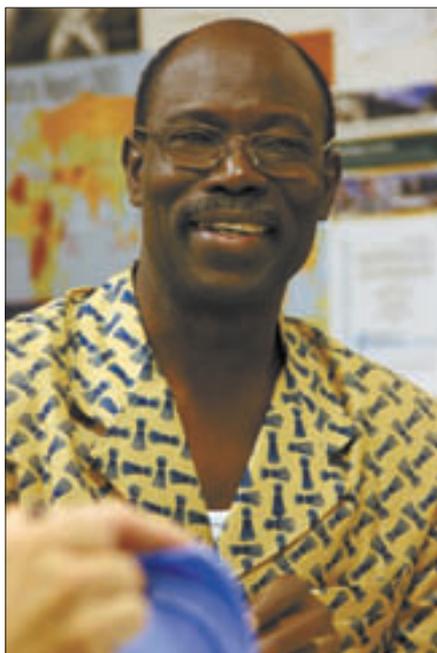
ies serve with AIMM in Africa: Lillian Haas, Anne Garber Kompaore, Donna and Loren Entz, and Paul and Lois Thiessen in Burkina Faso; Glyn Jones and Susan Allison-Jones in Botswana; and Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen in South Africa. Do you think the continued presence of North American mission workers in Africa is important?

Traoré: The presence of North American mission workers in Africa is by...the supreme will of God himself, who sends his church without exception. Their presence is still important wherever there is a need to make disciples for Jesus Christ. As long as the master of the harvest has not said that the harvest is finished, I don't see a limit to the time of North American mission workers in Africa.

The nature of the church as a body, and the relationships that exist between its different parts, must bring the church to have the same vision, in the North as much as in the South. So mission must happen in all directions. We reject the idea that it is only North Americans who must be mission workers in the South; it is equally necessary to see missionary action from South to North, from East to West, and in all directions.

CM: *What are your thoughts on the health of the Canadian church and of the church's role in society?*

Traoré: What I have seen is that there is [only] a small number of young adults in the churches in Canada. The church, being a living body and needing to multiply itself, it is worrisome that this body be inactive. The church in Africa, being made up by a majority of youth, it may be well to develop a missionary strategy of youth toward youth from the South to the North.



Siaka Traoré is the first African chair of AIMM.

are Christian too.”

Traoré’s personal faith journey coincided with the establishment of the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Burkina Faso in 1978, which he now serves as minister and vice-president. The church has six local congregations with five pastors and more than 300

total congregants each Sunday.

As for recent changes in AIMM administration, “this brings opportunity,” Traoré said. “African leaders will be part of making decisions. Before, everything was decided in North America and Africans were just informed about decisions. Now

it’s different. We walk close together, not separate. Before that, the African church had its own vision, sometimes different from North America.... It is our vision now, if this goes well!” he said with a smile.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**
with audio-files from **Dan Dyck**

Oakville, Ont.

Make poverty history at Ten Thousand Villages: A first person account

I have a passion, some might even call it an obsession. I drink it and eat it, eat on it and cook with it, wear it and accessorize with it, use it on my skin and in my hair, decorate and give with it. I talk about it all the time and it is what I gave up nursing to do. “It” is Ten Thousand Villages and fair trade products.

I think I was about 10 years old when my mother took me to the Self Help warehouse in Kitchener, Ont. It was a small room with shelves of wood carvings, nativity sets and needlework, and I loved it. I made my first fair trade purchase that day, a strange wooden cow bell that I kept for about 25 years until it could not take another move and fell apart.

In the mid-1980s my husband Henry and I, along with our children, moved back to Ontario from the U.S. and we joined Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship. I was soon helping at the annual Mennonite Central Committee Self Help sales.

I volunteered eagerly, but I do remember being nervous about what to say to potential customers. It is such an unusual concept, but yet so radically logical. We pay our artisans fairly so they can have enough food to eat, a roof over their heads, and can send their children to school.

In 1990, we moved to Pennsylvania. It didn’t take me long to find Crossroad Gift and Thrift. Within a year I was a volunteer who did all the Self Help ordering, displays and some off-site sales. I even started holding a sale in our home every December; if I could not get my neighbours and friends to the shop, I would bring the

shop to them.

A decade later, Henry’s company moved us to New Jersey. By this time, Self Help had been renamed Ten Thousand Villages and it was a big part of my life. I knew a store had just opened in Princeton and we were able to find a house close enough for me to be able to volunteer. Ten months later, I was manager of the shop! Could life get any better?

When I became the manager I turned into a morning person and couldn’t wait to get to work. It was almost everything I could have wished for, but our children were beginning to settle in Ontario. I mentioned this to some Ten Thousand Villages Canada people I met at a workshop and by the following summer we were moving again—this time to Ontario and this time because of my job. I was to be the manager of a brand new Ten Thousand Villages store in downtown Oakville.

I am overwhelmed by what God has given me. In 1985, as a mother of three children under five, I was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s disease. I remember at the time being grateful not to be able to see the future and how hard life was going to get. I am



Photo submitted by Ingrid Pauls

Ten Thousand Villages really is a way to help make poverty history, says Oakville store manager Ingrid Pauls, noting that every \$3,500 in sales equates to full-time employment for one artisan for one year. “Every time you make a purchase at Ten Thousand Villages you make a positive difference in someone’s life,” she says.

still glad that I can’t see the future, and that I don’t get to make all the plans. I have learned so much, and have taken more risks than I thought I was capable of. My own vision, my own strength, would never have been enough.

—**Ingrid Pauls**

Who is a Mennonite?

One of the major tourist attractions of a Winnipeg summer is Folklorama, a two-week festival celebrating the many different national and cultural groups which have made Winnipeg their home. Each group has a pavilion where its distinctive foods, artwork, dances and culture are celebrated. For a few years Mennonites participated by contributing their own pavilion.

Many Mennonites objected, however. They maintained that a Mennonite pavilion represented an inappropriate mixing of culture and faith. Mennonites were to be defined not by a distinct cultural tradition, they argued, but rather by a particular faith or theology. Whether because of this argument or insufficient interest—I do not know—after a few years the Mennonite pavilion disappeared from Folklorama.

After decades of understanding ourselves as communities in which faith and culture were inseparably fused into one, with culture sometimes even given the upper hand, there has been growing awareness that this is not right. Recognition of the multicultural nature of the Mennonite people, especially as represented by rapidly growing Mennonite churches in other parts of the world, but also by the increasing presence among us of “new” Mennonites with different cultural backgrounds, made the former way of understanding ourselves objectionable. The recent publication of *In God's Image: A Global Anabaptist Family*, prepared for the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe, gives a wonderful picture of this new Mennonite reality. But where does that leave us?

In some circles the term “Mennonite” continues to be used to define a cultural tradition, whether referring to foods or art, or, more recently, literature. Others, however,

have attempted to shift the focus to a set of theological themes or distinctives, often associated with the term “Anabaptism.” A number of years ago, Harold S. Bender suggested that Anabaptism was characterized by three themes:

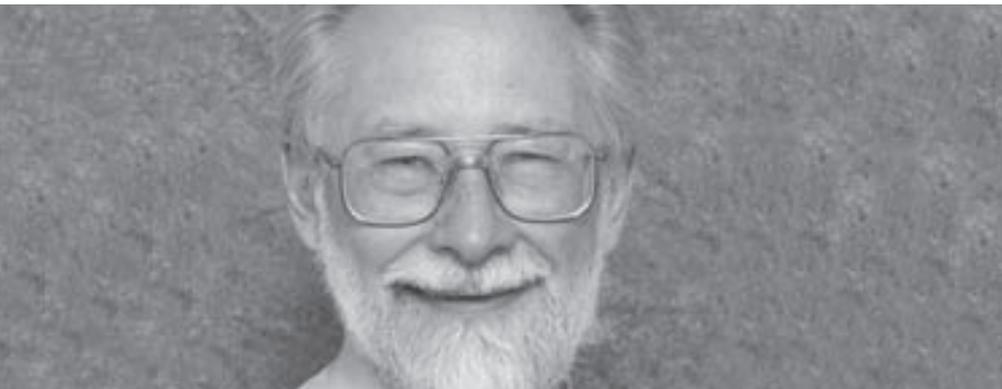
1. *Discipleship, or following in the footsteps of Jesus;*
2. *A new conception of the church as “brotherhood”; and,*
3. *An ethic of love and non-resistance.*

Albert Meyer says in a recent article in *The Mennonite*, “There is a body of distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs for which some of our forebears have given their lives, for which some of our sisters and brothers are suffering today, and for which we are responsible to witness in our time.”

Both of these approaches are understandable, but I would suggest both are inadequate and therefore misleading. A more multi-layered approach is needed. May I propose for testing a three-layered approach, given in order of significance, but with each a necessary part of the picture.

A Mennonite is a Christian

First, and most importantly, to be a Mennonite means to be a Christian. This is a reminder for both approaches. Those who identify Anabaptism by its theological themes sometimes focus so intently on distinctives that they lose, or at least play down, the larger picture. Peace and an emphasis on community may be two of those themes, but when removed from the larger Christian story and message they become something quite different. On the other side, to use the term “Mennonite” of people or culture not self-consciously Christian also is a misnomer. I remind us of Menno Simons’ favourite verse: “*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ*” *I Corinthians 3:11.*



Gerbrandt: [W]e should not say we believe in non-resistance, or the significance of the church, because ‘we are Mennonite,’ or because ‘our founders believed that.’

Having said that, I do not deny the legitimacy of the various cultural traditions in Canada that have as their background the Mennonite experience—Russian Mennonite, Swiss Mennonite, Hutterite, just to give a few examples. I would not consider it inappropriate to have one of these celebrate its culture in a pavilion at Folklorama, or even to have a specific congregation recognize its cultural heritage. But this must be distinguished from what it means to be Mennonite.

At its absolute core, to be Mennonite means to be Christian, to be part of the worldwide Body of Christ. Any reflection on what it means to be Mennonite today thus must begin with, and consistently return to, the commitment to being Christian.

A particular dynamic theological tradition

Mennonites are not generic Christians. Rather, they are Christians with a particular dynamic theological tradition. This, of course, does not make them unique, odd or special. All Christians think and practise their faith within some tradition, or perhaps more realistically, within some combination of traditions and historical influences.

The desire to identify or attain some generic core or traditionless Christianity is a 20th century myth. Christian denominations or traditions are not deviations from this core, but rather the different languages within which Christianity speaks. The non-denominational tradition, although sometimes attempting to avoid this, has identifiable tendencies and emphases that equally characterize it as a particular tradition.

A permanent task of any Christian tradition is to attempt to describe itself in a way that most helpfully highlights its essential characteristics; notice, I do not say “distinctives.” Such a list is valuable in that it identifies what we are, or are striving to be, and necessary for helpful conversation with others. Here are some possibilities for us as a Mennonite people:

We give a preference to the New Testament over the Old Testament, and a preference to the Gospels over the writings of Paul, giving a central-

ity to the person of Jesus Christ.

We tend to make the New Testament church a model for us.

We tend to speak about ourselves by telling our story.

We emphasize ethics as much as, if not more than, theology, with “discipleship” a key term for how we approach ethics. Central to ethics is the commandment to love our neighbour, with the implication that this is incompatible with violence to the neighbour. This is accompanied by an emphasis on justice and a striving for peace.

We emphasize mission, both through spreading the gospel (through mission agencies) and through serving those in need (Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service, for example).

We emphasize the local congregation as a community of mutual support and accountability. The fellowship of believers is part of the salvation we receive. The search for truth and faithfulness is a communal process, with primary authority resting in the community of those who practise the faith. This church is distinct from the larger society.

We are a worldwide body in which the nation state, although recognized as an important political reality, can never be the ultimate boundary for us.

Although I emphasize that we are Christian within a particular dynamic theological tradition, that tradition can never provide the final argument in a conversation about what it means to be faithful. For example, we should not say we believe in non-resistance, or the significance of the church, because “we are Mennonite,” or because “our founders believed that.” When done this way, the tradition has been used inappropriately. Rather, it is our conviction that these positions are in fact biblical, and true to the revelation God has given us. The ground upon which we base our faith, and on the basis of which we argue, must always be the commitment to being Christian.

A family network with a story

To be a Mennonite means to be a Christian within a particular tradition, and then to incarnate that tradition within the life of a concrete living people. It is inadequate to see it as a set of theological themes or an ethical system. On a practical level, this means that a Mennonite is someone who makes that particular tradition of Christianity come alive through active participation in the life of a Mennonite congregation. Through that congregation the person enters the larger world of Mennonites, with its conferences, schools and institutions, para-church programs (camps, service agencies), and worship styles. Personal faith and ethics are practised and given life through participation in a community with a distinct culture and ethos.

Again, I have used the word “culture.” But here it is not referring to ethnic foods, a style of dress, or the Low German language, as highlighted in the Mennonite pavilion at Folklorama. Rather, it is a style and atmosphere, and

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even a “language,” which characterize and bind together the Mennonite family across other boundaries.

Our Mennonite family network does not have any theological priority, but it is a “home” from within which we are Christian. I remember distinctly the first time I ever worshipped with First Mennonite Church in Richmond, Va., or the Mennonite church in Petitcodiac, N.B. Each time, I immediately felt at home—even though I did not know these people previously, and even though they had very different backgrounds—knowing that these brothers and sisters were part of the same family.

To be Mennonite means to be Christian within a particular theological tradition that comes alive through a specific family within which one can be at home.

—**Gerald Gerbrandt**

The author is the president of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

why
I am a
MENNONITE

Diversity makes Mennonites attractive

The question of why I am a Mennonite speaks directly to who I am, to my sense of being.

My husband and I became Mennonites in our late 20s when the community church we were a part of changed quite dramatically, forcing us to re-think both who we were and our role in Christian community. We decided it was important to join a congregation that was part of a greater—national or international—community that had a similar view of the biblical text, one that saw justice and peace as integral to expressions of faith. And because we lived in a city, we had the luxury of choice.

As we considered our church options, I read the biblical

text and saw a central figure—Jesus—who viewed spirituality as being about the whole person, and who came to change the economic, social and religious systems. When I considered the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and other Mennonite organizations, I saw in them an expression of that kind of faith. When I read the works of Mennonite theologians, I usually saw an awareness of, and engagement with, a gospel-centred faith grounded in shalom. When I looked at the Mennonites I knew, I saw a very theologically diverse group of people who believed in peace, justice and community, and who made a real effort to act on that belief.

My interest in Mennonite initiatives has grown, and I am now proud to say that I am a member of the global church that supports the work of such organizations as MCC and Christian Peacemaker Teams. I had the privilege of volunteering for Mennonite Church Canada Witness on a peace project in 2003, an opportunity that allowed me to work for peace, connect with European Mennonites and attend the Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe.

Those experiences served to demonstrate that the diversity that makes the Mennonite community so attractive to me is also one of the challenges it faces. I struggle at times with an acceptance of Constantinianism and substitutionary atonement doctrines, together with other aspects of Christian orthodoxy and evangelicalism that seem at odds with the radical reading I have of the gospel accounts. But I find myself challenged in both my faith and my life—to live more intentionally, to build community, to be more aware of the plight of my fellow human beings, to work and spend for justice and peace, and, most of all, to believe.

—**Deanna Douglas**

The author attends Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton. She sits on the board of Christian Peacemakers International (an Edmonton Mennonite-based peace and justice-focused NGO working in Honduras) and is the former chair of Edmonton City on a Hill (an MC Canada project). She spent 2003-04 in London, England, on a peace project with MC Canada, initiating a dialogue process on conflict prevention alternatives between a dozen British NGOs and the government in the wake of the Iraq war.



Douglas: When I looked at the Mennonites I knew, I saw a very theologically diverse group of people who believed in peace, justice and community, and who made a real effort to act on that belief.

Prison ministry attracts couple

Roy and Vanessa Heide are the caretakers at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C. They found their way to West Abbotsford through prison visitations by Pastor Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, and were baptized in 2004. Because Vanessa is deaf, the Heides realize the importance of assistance animals for the sense-impaired. They are hoping to buy property and start a program in B.C. for training hearing assistance and seeing eye dogs.

Roy: I was part of a Mennonite church until the age of 15, then drifted away from the church. I went into a negative scene with alcohol and criminal activity, and was not involved with Christianity. By the time I met Vanessa five years ago, I needed guidance and strength. I was facing jail time, and through a Catholic priest asking me about my background I made a connection again with my roots in the Mennonite Church.

We looked in a phone directory for Mennonite churches, chose West Abbotsford, and Pastor Karen opened her arms and offered us a place to belong with no criticism and held nothing against us. I was sent to Matsqui Institution and Pastor Karen made weekly visits. She followed me through a work release program, day parole and full parole. Now the church has entrusted me as caretaker. I've gained inner knowledge, self-esteem and self-worth.

We have gained our own families back through this. They say, "We've been waiting for you."

Vanessa: I was an adopted child raised in Scotland, pushed through school because of my deafness. I was raised both Catholic and Protestant, baptized as an infant and attended Mass with my great aunt and the Church of Scotland with other relatives.

I used involvement in sports—swimming, softball and hockey—to vent my anger. I decided I would decide my own calling. I came away from the church with a lot of anger. I wasn't ready to face this until I was baptized.

I had to admit walking away and why I walked away. Then it was like

Photo by Amy Dueckman



Roy and Vanessa Heide: We've been welcomed into the church family and have wonderful mentors.

a whole weight was taken off me. It felt good. I appreciate that I can talk to Karen as a pastor and as a friend.

Roy: Mennonites are more understanding of others. Other churches wanted to pick at me, but here [at West Abbotsford] I can pick up the phone at any time to any one of the members, and they are not judgmental, always willing to help and always willing to listen.

We've been welcomed into the church family and have wonderful mentors. Times are tough, but everybody has thought. Satan jumps in and tries to tempt, but when I look at what I was, it keeps me straight.

—**Roy and Vanessa Heide**, as told to **Amy Dueckman**

Mennonites make being Christian 'too much fun'

Once upon a time, long ago and far away, I was a naval officer learning how to launch missiles carrying nuclear warheads from a submarine. Jesus interrupted my plans by pointing out that, from his point of view, it was wrong to kill another human being. Period. In response, I became a conscientious objector.

Doing that also made me a nonconformist. I became unconventional, not only in relation to my fellow officers, but to almost all North American Christians.

I developed an appreciation for simple living. Not only did I no longer desire to threaten others with death, I did not want others doing that on my behalf.

I asked myself, why all these weapons of mass destruction? The answer: To maintain and enhance an unnecessarily complex way of living that requires the systematic exploitation of other people and God's good creation. If I opposed the weapons, I also needed to adopt a much simpler way of living.

Living simply requires mutual aid. It both requires greater cooperation with others and makes those more meaningful relationships possible.

All this means that being a Christian is something that

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why
I am a
MENNONITE



Farsaci: We can no longer understand being a Christian, and therefore a minister, as a spectator sport.

Fun *From page 9*

requires great intentionality. No point baptizing infants, then, who lack the ability to discern and affirm a call that involves so much rigour.

If living in a distinctively Christian way is daunting, then three things follow:

- We really will have to affirm the ministry of all believers;
- We will also need to acknowledge that our vitality as a community of faith, love, and hope depends upon the quality of all ministries; and,
- We can no longer understand being a Christian, and therefore a minister, as a

spectator sport.

Commitment to peacemaking, nonconformity, simple living, mutual aid, believer's baptism, ministry of all believers: These things I discerned and enjoyed as a mischievous Christian. Then I discovered a well-kept secret—the existence of Mennonites! Now I get to affirm these things with others: too much fun!

—**Steven Farsaci**

The author pastors at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

why
I am a
MENNONITE

Confronting culture a Mennonite legacy

I grew up in Colombia, South America—a country facing violence and social unrest. My family was Catholic.

During the first years of my childhood, my parents struggled a lot, but they worked hard and were able to provide us with a good education and the things we needed. I went to church with my parents and learned to be a good Christian in a Catholic way.

I grew up very aware of the problems facing our country and was always very upset at how the people at the bottom of the ladder were always the ones losing the most. When I was 19 I went through a very difficult time. I was trying to search for the “real me” and how I was to fit in that kind of society. My search began with questions about God.

The first thing I did was read a Bible that no one else in our house read. It had been given to my dad a few years earlier. I began to study at a Catholic university in Bogotá, where I met two people who were not Catholic. These two friends helped me read the Bible and pray. I really responded well to this. I began going to one of their churches—an Assemblies of God congregation—and found great community and good friends there.

A few years later, I began to think more clearly again

about God and my place in Colombian society, but with different sorts of questions. As I read, I remember trying to understand what a Christian was supposed to be and how to act in a society like mine. I grew somewhat critical of the lack of interest in this church about the Colombian situation.

During this time of searching for understanding and knowledge, I began to study theology and, at the same time, I was hired to work in a bookstore owned by the Mennonite Church. I did not know what Mennonites were, even though I was working for them. This was God's plan, as I see it today.

Some of those questions I had were answered and, at the same time, challenged. My reading immediately changed to include books about Anabaptists and Mennonites. I began to see the commitment Anabaptists and Mennonites had, not only by reading about their history but also by looking at their lives.

I remember a sermon delivered by Peter Stucky [president of the Colombian Mennonite Church] in which he told the story of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems along with a story of a Colombian peasant who invited his enemies to eat with him after he was thrown twice from his own house. These two stories together changed my life.

Jesus Christ became more real for me, closer to me, a real example for me. I was able to understand the Jesus who confronted the leaders of his time. I found Anabaptists and Mennonites to be very much like Jesus, and that history that I was learning about was alive in the



Bogoya: Jesus Christ became more real for me.... I was able to understand the Jesus who confronted the leaders of his time.

Colombian Mennonites. This is why I am a Mennonite.

—**Raul Bogoya**

The author is the bookstore manager at Canadian Mennonite University and attends Bethel Mennonite Church, where he teaches Sunday school and sits on the Witness and Service Committee. He is married to Lisa Enns-Bogoya, a pastor at Bethel. They have two daughters, Sofia and Natasha.

Don't you have to be born that way?

Robb Davis, the new executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), brings a fresh passion to his work that isn't muted by generations of familiarity with Mennonite theology and tradition.

Instead, as a relatively new Mennonite who moved from "attending a Mennonite church to being a Mennonite" about three years ago, he views his present role with MCC (and the perspectives of peace, service and discipleship which underlie it), as an exciting new opportunity to be part of a faith community that seeks to live out the Sermon on the Mount on a daily basis.

Becoming Mennonite was "a great shift for me," said Davis, who shared aspects of his personal faith journey and his vision for MCC with Mennonite Church Canada and *Canadian Mennonite* staff in several settings with disarming openness during a recent visit.

Growing up in Lancaster County, Pa.—in a conservative "Jerry Falwell-referenced/dispensationalist" church setting—he'd always considered the Mennonites he lived among as "the other.... Good people, great neighbours and friends, but in high school a guy like me wouldn't have dated a Mennonite girl!"

However, after Bible college and marriage, he and his wife went to Mauritania with World Vision, where they met Christians from a variety of denominational and cultural backgrounds who brought a new perspective to them on what it means to be a Christian. Also, Mennonites "continued to run in and out of my life," he said, including East Africa missionary

Photo by Dan Dyck



Davis: [Mennonites were] good people, great neighbours and friends, but in high school a guy like me wouldn't have dated a Mennonite girl!

David Shenk.

When the Davises returned to the United States a decade ago, they arrived just as the new mega-church movement was emerging. Although they still considered themselves evangelical, they had already left behind their dispensationalist tradition and were looking for teaching that engaged them with what Jesus taught. "Our concern with the mega-church movement was less theological than practical," he said. "We simply did not see a commitment to engagement in peace and justice issues—it all seemed like a kind of 'club' to us."

So they decided to "take the risk" of trying a Mennonite church and eventually began to attend East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, much to the consternation of Davis's father (a former military man), who asked, "How can you become a Mennonite? Don't you have to be born that way?"

"That was the single most important decision as a married couple!" Davis said. "At that church we were challenged in terms of lifestyle [and peace and justice] issues...."

He also began reading Anabaptist theology.

Later, they moved to California and were founding members of a Mennonite house fellowship there. In recent years, Davis has taught at the Summer Peace-building Institute at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Then "this job came open," he said of the executive director's position at MCC. "It was advertised in *Sojourners* magazine and my wife said, 'Why don't you apply?' knowing that they wouldn't hire a Mennonite without MCC experience! But they did...."

"It'll be to others to judge if that was a wise choice," Davis said, acknowledging that it is somewhat "overwhelming" for him at present, given the learning curve involved.

But the people are "great," he concluded. And he is receiving strong affirmation from many since his appointment.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

For more on Robb Davis's views on the future of Mennonite Central Committee, see the Nov. 14 issue of Canadian Mennonite.

why
I am a
MENNONITE

Roth refrains from dumbing down Mennonite beliefs

Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice by John D. Roth. Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pa./Waterloo, Ont., 2005. 150 pages, \$12.49

John Roth has the gift of explaining Anabaptist-Mennonite faith in a readable fashion without dumbing it down. He re-presents our faith in a colour and cadence that will seem especially familiar to those of Swiss Mennonite background.

The author, an Anabaptist historian and teacher at Goshen (Ind.) College, is mainly addressing Mennonites and other churched people. Although his midwestern American context sometimes shows, his reflections are also relevant to Canadian Mennonites.

He begins with two chapters on Christian foundations: “What Mennonites Believe” and “How Mennonites Believe.” After assuring folks that our basic doctrines are orthodox, Roth emphasizes that such statements are “a necessary but insufficient way of describing the essence of the Christian faith” (page 28). Doctrines are to be embodied and lived out in daily life.

Roth divides the rest of his apology into four major Anabaptist themes: interpreting Scripture, believers’ baptism, faith as discipleship, and the visible church. Peacemaking is not a separate theme, but rather an implication woven through the whole text.

Several of Roth’s perspectives may well lead to the “healthy conversation” he hopes to promote.

He has a strong hermeneutic of the local congregation reading the Bible together and interpreting the meaning for its own time and place, with a suspicion of centralized or expert theological interpretation. I’m not as optimistic as Roth about the potential

of this method to help us “go against the grain of the culture.” I also think Roth is left with an unresolved tension between his high regard for ongoing localized discernment, on the one hand, and his strong espousal of our Confession of Faith, on the other.

Roth treats with sensitivity the question of adult re-baptism for persons who come from an infant baptism tradition, but he is not easily swayed.

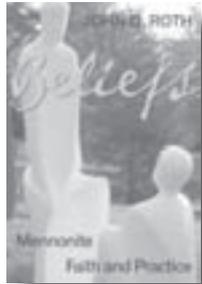
As he puts it, “One might legitimately ask whether newcomers fully understand the nature of the community they seek to join if they are...resistant to a practice constitutive of the group’s very identity” (page 84).

Roth borrows from Richard Foster in naming money, sex and power as

three major categories of discipleship. He then proceeds to spend much more time on money—a commitment to stewardship, simplicity and generosity—than on the other two.

The chapters “Christian Practices in the Mennonite Tradition” and “Practices that Shape Community” contain much fine material. In my view, however, Roth overstates the role of the Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale as a way of practising our faith, and neglects the renewal many congregations are finding in worship, which incorporates practices of the ancient church.

Although I would nuance our faith and practice in some different ways than Roth, I heartily recommend this book for Canadian Mennonite church libraries, for membership classes, and for general readership. Persons of Russian Mennonite background may find it helpful in understanding how some Swiss Mennonites think! A fine project for adult membership classes—and for all of us—would



be to read *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Jim Reimer’s *The Dogmatic Imagination*, and Roth’s *Beliefs* side by side.

I wonder if Roth’s final chapter—“An Invitation: Mennonites in the (post) Modern World”—foreshadows his next book. He broadens his audience, speaking effectively to folks without a Christian memory. What Christian faith offers, says Roth, is truth-telling in a culture of illusions, coherence and community in a culture of cynicism, and forgiveness and love in a culture of violence—in summary, living with purpose in the gap between hope and despair. If this is where Roth is heading next, I say: bring it on!

—Sue C. Steiner

The Waterloo-based writer chairs the Christian Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada.

Publishing note

Rhubarb magazine announces a special West Coast edition featuring such prominent British Columbia and Washington State Mennonite writers as Andreas Schroeder, Patrick Friesen, Barbara Nickel, Carla Funk, Deborah Campbell, Jeff Derksen and others. This is the first such collection of writing by Mennonites living on the West Coast. The West Coast issue of *Rhubarb* went on sale Oct. 18 in all Chapters-Indigo outlets and other quality bookstores. To celebrate, public launches were held in early November in Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Vancouver, featuring writers whose work appears in the magazine. *Rhubarb*, a quarterly magazine that has been published by the Winnipeg-based Mennonite Literary Society since 1998, features art, analysis, commentary, fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, humour and reviews by writers and artists of Mennonite heritage, descent or interest, for a general reading public.

—Joe Wiebe

Theology, Spirituality

Ascough, Richard S. and Sandy Cotton. *Passionate Visionary: Leadership Lessons from the Apostle Paul*. Novalis Publishing, 2005, 216 pages, \$19.95.

Two professors at Queen's University, one a New Testament scholar and the other in the school of business, have put together a study of the qualities that made the Apostle Paul a leader and apply them to today. They are convinced that the principles that made Paul a good leader are still relevant to today's organizations.

Brown, Tricia Gates, ed. *Getting in the Way: Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams*. Herald Press, 2005, 160 pages, \$22.49.

These first-person accounts written by eleven members of Christian Peacemaker Teams are set in Iraq, Canada, Hebron, Haiti, Mexico and Colombia. The CPTers reflect on their own emotions as they face difficult situations around the world.

Haught, John F. *Purpose, Evolution and the Meaning of Life*. Edited by Carl S. Helrich, Pandora Press, 2005, 130 pages.

This book covers the Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science held at Goshen College in 2004. It includes three lectures by Haught, Healey professor of theology at Georgetown University, and the discussion in which Haught responded to questions.

Huebner, Harry J. *Echoes of the Word: Theological Ethics as Rhetorical Practice*. Pandora Press, 2005, 274 pages.

This is the sixth volume in the Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies Series sponsored by the Institute of Anabaptist Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel University College. It is a collection of essays by Huebner, professor of philoso-

phy and theology at Canadian Mennonite University.

Roth, Willard and Gerald W. Schlabach, eds. *Called Together to be Peacemakers: Report of the International Dialogue between the Catholic Church and Mennonite World Conference 1998-2003*. Pandora Press, 2005, 77 pages, \$12.

From 1998 to 2003, for one week each year, Mennonite and Catholic leaders met to discuss "Toward a healing of memories." This abridged edition of the report of those meetings is designed for discussion groups and comes complete with discussion questions.

Shenk, Sara Wenger. *Thank You for Asking: Conversing with Young Adults About the Future Church*. Herald Press, 2005, 282 pages, \$18.79.

Shenk has put together a collection of stories from young adults that gives readers a glimpse into the thought patterns of young people. The author is associate dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

Snider, Howard M. *The Cultural Creation of Christianity*. Infinity Publishing, 2005, 130 pages.

Snider explores how Jewish, Greek and Roman culture impacted Christianity in the early years. He also assesses how culture has interacted with Christianity through the Reformation and into the present.

Thiessen, Brad, ed. *Out of the Strange Silence: The Challenge of Being Christian in the 21st Century*. Kindred Productions, 2005, 222 pages, \$17.95.

The current faculty mem-

bers of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary write about what they believe are the challenges facing Christians in today's world. The chapters are divided into four sections: Reading Scripture anew; Living the Christian life; Church leadership in a new era; and the church's place in the world.

History and Biography

Enns, John. *The Way it Was*. Self-published, 140 pages, \$18.95.

Enns writes about his childhood (1927 to 1937) homesteading at Lost River in rural Saskatchewan. The book is illustrated with sketches by Mary Epp. Copies are available from McNally Robinson in Winnipeg, or at jayandare@shaw.ca.

Konrad, Anne. *And in Their Silent Beauty Speak: A Mennonite Family in Russia and Canada, 1790-1990*. 2004, 500 pages.

Neufeldt, Harvey, Ruth Derksen Siemens and Robert Martens, eds. *First Nations and First Settlers in the Fraser Valley (1890-1960)*. Pandora Press, 2004, 287 pages, \$30.

The majority of papers included in this volume were presented at a conference jointly sponsored by the Yarrow Research Committee and University College of the Fraser Valley in June 2003. The essays trace the historical development of the Fraser Valley.

Sawatsky, Rodney James. *History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition through History*. Pandora Press, 2005, 216

pages, \$24.50.

Rod Sawatsky's Ph.D. dissertation, completed in 1977, was not printed at the time, partly because it critiqued the Goshen school of Mennonite historical scholarship. Sawatsky had hoped to be able to rework this dissertation, but was not able to due to his ill health and subsequent death.

Sawatzky, Dave, ed. *The Halbstadt Heritage*. Privately published, 2005, hardcover, 400 pages, \$48.

This collection of stories and 945 photographs tells the history of the Mennonites who arrived in Halbstadt, Blumenthal and Strassburg in southern Manitoba in the 1870s. It features the families of the area who established farms and a Mennonite community. Order from: Dave Sawatzky, Box 921, Altona, MB R0G 0B0; or by calling 204-324-5281.

Urry, James. *Nur Heilige: Mennoniten in Russland, 1789-1889*. Translated by Elisabeth L. Wiens. Crossway Publications Inc., Steinbach, Man., 2005, 356 pages.

Delbert Plett wrote the foreword for this German translation of Urry's book *None But Saints*, published in 1989. As the title suggests, it tells the story of Mennonites in Russia.

Literature

Bergen, David. *The Time in Between*. McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2005, 273 pages, \$34.99.

Bergen's new novel is set in Vietnam, where his characters from North America search for answers. The story raises questions about the long-term effects of the war. Bergen, who lives in Winnipeg, has won awards for his previous novels: *A Year of Lesser*, *See the Child* and *The Case of Lena S*.

Coggins, James R. *Mountaintop Drive*. Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2005, 263 pages.

This John Smyth murder

Continued on page 14

mystery follows two other novels by the same author: *Who's Grace* and *Desolation Highway*. Coggins is a former editor of *Mennonite Brethren Herald*.

Denise, Cheryl. *I Saw God Dancing*. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, 90 pages, \$18.95.

This collection includes both serious and light-hearted poems taken from a variety of life experiences. Some reflect the author's growing-up years in Elmira, Ont. This is



Volume 2 in the *DreamSeeker Poetry Series*.

Gundy, Jeff. *Walker in the Fog: On Mennonite Writing*. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, 296 pages, \$35.95

In this fifth volume of the C. Henry Smith series, Gundy examines the works of Canadian and American poets, novelists and writers dealing with Mennonite themes. Gundy, who teaches at Bluffton (Ohio) University, takes a personal look at a variety of Mennonite writers from Rudy Wiebe to John Ruth.

Wagner, Shari. *Evening Chores*. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, 106 pages, \$18.95.



Wagner's poems reflect a variety of rural images that draw on her experiences with her

extended Mennonite family as well as time spent in Africa. This is Volume 3 in the *DreamSeeker Poetry Series*.

Wiebe, Dallas. *On the Cross: Devotional Poetry*. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2005, 96 pages, \$18.95.

The poems in this collection are meditations on a variety of crosses, including



the cross-shaped scar from heart surgery. This is Volume 1 in the new *DreamSeeker Poetry Series*.

Waltner-Toews, David. *One Foot in Heaven*. Coteau Books, 2005, 288 pages, \$16.95.

The short stories in this collection are linked, providing a glimpse into the lives of several interconnected Mennonite families as they flee from Russia, and come to terms with what it means to be Mennonites in Canada.

Yoder, Elwood E. *Margaret's Print Shop: A Novel of the Anabaptist Reformation*. Herald Press, 2005, 328 pages, \$18.79.

In this historical novel, Margaret runs a small print shop in Strasbourg, where she comes in contact with Anabaptist leaders and becomes involved in the Anabaptist movement.

Other Books

Beck, Ervin, ed. *MennoFolk 2: A Sampler of Mennonite and Amish Folklore*. Herald Press, 2005, 247 pages, \$19.99.

This second *Mennofolk* book offers 17 studies of folklore that represent subgroups of the Mennonites and Amish. It explores the history, culture and traditions of these communities in an informal way.

Jefferson, Nicholas. *Pursuit of Righteousness: Single Men and Sexual Desire*. Herald Press, 2005, 118 pages, \$11.29.

Jefferson calls single Christian men to live a lifestyle pleasing to God. He examines the meaning and purpose of being single, the need to understand sexual desires, and how to serve God with righteousness. The foreword is written by Myron S. Augsburg.

Lind, Mary Beth and Cathleen Hockman-Wert. *Simply in Season: Recipes that celebrate*

fresh, local foods in the spirit of More-with-Less. Herald Press, 352 pages, comb binding \$24.99, paper \$17.49.

The recipes in this cookbook are grouped into spring, summer, fall, winter and all seasons, according to the time the fruits and vegetables are in season. It was commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee and continues the tradition of two previous cookbooks, *More-With-Less* and *Extending the Table*.

Rovers, Martin. *Healing the Wounds in Couple Relationships*. Novalis Publishing, 2005, 216 pages, \$19.95.

Rovers, a marriage and family therapist, teaches at Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Because we all have wounds from our families of origin, Rovers suggests ways to help couples move beyond their private wounds and to improve their relationships.

Sims, Diane and Marla Fletcher. *Solace: A Correspondence of Gardening, Friendship and Healing*. Novalis, 2005, 232 pages, \$21.95.

Through the correspondence of two friends, readers can catch a glimpse of the solace and healing that can come through friendship and a love of gardening. The authors share not only difficulties and health crises in their letters, but also exchange seeds, plants and gardening information.

Stahl, Martha Denlinger. *Second Wife: Stories and Wisdom from Women Who Have Married Widowers*. Good Books, 2005, 186 pages, \$9.99.

As well as including a variety of personal stories from women in similar situations, Stahl writes about the surprises and challenges of marrying a widower later in life.

Resources

Stuart, Cam. *A Lifelong Apprenticeship: Study Guide for Growing Disciples*. Kindred Productions, 2005, 60 pages, \$7.99.

This study, divided into seven lessons, is designed to help believers mature in their relationship to God. It includes spiritual disciplines for individuals and for interactive group sessions. A leader's guide is included.

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology, focuses on "Scripture" in Spring 2005 and on "Worship" in the Fall issue. The journal is published jointly by the Institute for Mennonite Studies (AMBS) and the Institute for Theology and the Church (CMU).

Mennonite Publishers

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800-762-7171
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Kindred Productions

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How the Bible Came to Be wins Catholic Press award

John W. Miller's recently published book, *How the Bible Came to Be: Exploring the Narrative and Message*, published by Paulist Press in 2004, was awarded first place in the "Scripture" category in the 2005 Book Awards of the Catholic Press Association of the U.S. and Canada.

"This book will be very useful for students of the Bible. It addresses some of the most asked questions about the formation of the Scriptures.

Miller's canon history approach could have important ecumenical benefits, as well as reinforcing a greater appreciation of the many sources that contributed to the Bible," said the award citation.

Miller is professor emeritus at Conrad Grebel University College,



Miller

Waterloo, Ont. He currently serves as pastor for a house church responsible for the Blenheim Retreat and Bible Study Centre.

He has published numerous articles and books, including *The Origins of the Bible*, *Rethinking Canon History* (1994), *Jesus at Thirty, A Psychological and Historical Portrait* (1997), and *Calling God "Father": Essays on the Bible, Fatherhood and Culture* (1999).

After graduating from Goshen College, he received degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary, New York University and the University of Basel. Miller taught Bible at Goshen (Ind.) College Biblical Seminary and several colleges and seminaries in Chicago before joining the religious studies faculty at Conrad Grebel College.

—Eugene K. Souder

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Global Anabaptist encyclopedia set to go online

Now GAMEO?

The partners in the Internet-based Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO for short) hope this question will become more familiar in the coming months.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission have partnered to produce the online encyclopedia. The administrative group appointed by the GAMEO partners met in Winnipeg in June, to plan the structure and timetable for the project. The goal is to launch the encyclopedia by the end of this year.

Initially, the encyclopedia will be English language-only and will focus on North American content. As global partners are added to the project, the range of international subject entries and language possibilities will expand.

An early project, which will require numerous volunteers, will scan and upload the content of the five-volume

Mennonite Encyclopedia published by Herald Press from 1955 through 1959, with a supplemental volume in 1990.

GAMEO is an expansion of the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (CMEO), a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada since 1996. Sam Steiner, managing editor of the present encyclopedia, said that some 2,500 articles already in the Canadian Mennonite database will provide an excellent starting point for the expanded encyclopedia. In addition, 125 confessions of faith or denominational statements are available in a "source documents" section. CMEO can be viewed at www.mhsc.ca/.

Bert Friesen, who chaired the administrative group meeting, said GAMEO will always rely on dedicated volunteers for writing and editorial work, but the encyclopedia plans to find funding to support core administrative work. Although the encyclopedia will be freely available on the Internet, the partners hope to attract institutional and corporate sponsors who will support GAMEO's expansion and maintenance through an annual donation. Individual donations are welcome.

Those wishing to donate to GAMEO, volunteer for writing or editorial work, or stay informed on the encyclopedia's progress, can contact Sam Steiner at mhsc@uwaterloo.ca.

—MC USA release

Echoes of the Word

Theological Ethics as Rhetorical Practice

Harry J. Huebner

Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies Series

Softcover, 264 pp
ISBN 1-894710-55-X
Includes bibliographic references and index.

Retail price \$29.00 CDN/\$25.00 US



"Although Mennonites are the explicit audience Huebner addresses in the essays and sermons that comprise this wonderful book, it would be a loss to the church if only Mennonites read it. Drawing on extraordinary erudition and an equally well-honed theological imagination, Huebner does nothing less than exhibit how our world can be read scripturally. Every essay is a jewel and every sermon edifies. It is often said that theology must recover itself as a discipline of wisdom. That task has been accomplished in this collection."

Stanley Hauerwas, Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics, Duke Divinity School

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FOCUS

Books & Resources

Waltner-Toews relates the story of his people

Waltner-Toews, David. *One Foot in Heaven*. Coteau Books, Regina, Sask., 2004.

After 25 years of writing poetry, David Waltner-Toews writes a novel. Or is it a series of short stories? Each chapter stands well by itself, but when the pearls are strung together they create a whole narrative. It is the story of “a peculiar people” (“Russian” Mennonites) finding their place between an old world and a new one, between time and eternity.

After surviving a spectacular escape from the Soviet Union over the Himalayan mountains, Prom Koslowski finds himself in Plumstein, Alta., a widower with twin children, Thomas and Sarah.

The stories depict the meeting of various cultures “in this hybrid of British and French empires.” The twins encounter their Ukrainian Orthodox and Jewish neighbours, and, of course, *die Englische* (the English).

Sarah marries George, an Orthodox young man who has affiliated with their Mennonite Brethren youth group. Later, she is widowed and, almost inevitably, marries Abner Dueck, “one of us.”

The sex scenes are not spurious; they remind us that our sexuality is never far from our spirituality, even in a strict Mennonite setting. A sense of guilt and shame prevails as Abner discovers his

awakening sexuality, “gets saved” three times and eventually is baptized by full immersion in the Mennonite Brethren church.

Waltner-Toews writes: “Abner Dueck was in the closet with Elma Koop, whom he did not like, wishing he was in the closet with Sarah Kowsloski, who was off with his best friend George.” In the closet “he closed his eyes and prayed earnestly that the Lord would purify his thoughts.”

As the characters encounter the wider world, moving to Winnipeg, Indonesia and back, one wonders whether Waltner-Toews is presenting a kind of parody in which these children of refugees are depicted as “spiritual refugees” from their strict Mennonite upbringing.

The title—*One Foot in Heaven*—comes from Thomas’ experience as an MCC worker at the time of the Cambodian war. A local who had his leg amputated insisted that it be sent to his home village to be cremated, so he would enter Nirvana as an entire

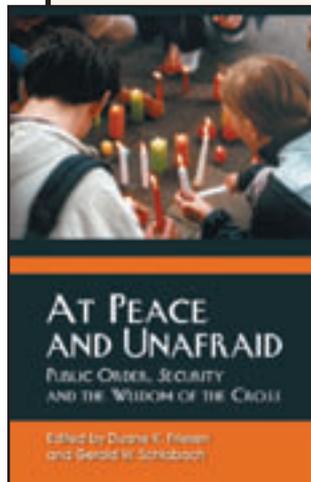
person. “One foot in heaven,” Thomas joked. But then he pondered, “Which part of me am I missing?”

Sarah is the character who, like Waltner-Toews, eventually entered veterinary science. She finds her “missing piece.” Is her twin brother, Thomas, the MCC worker, the other side of Waltner-Toews?

In the final chapter, Prom is in a nursing home in Winnipeg. A lay minister for many years, he thinks he has to speak at Isaac Reimer’s funeral that afternoon. Of his beloved second wife, Rachel, he muses, “One morning, she will lift up through the window like a kite.... I shall be holding the string. When she arrives up there, she will give a little tug, and I too will be pulled loose. I shall float up after her, unstuck from earth.”

And thus Waltner-Toews depicts several generations of Mennonites who live their lives and shape their identity, between two worlds, between time and eternity, very earthy people living always with one foot in heaven.

—Maurice Martin



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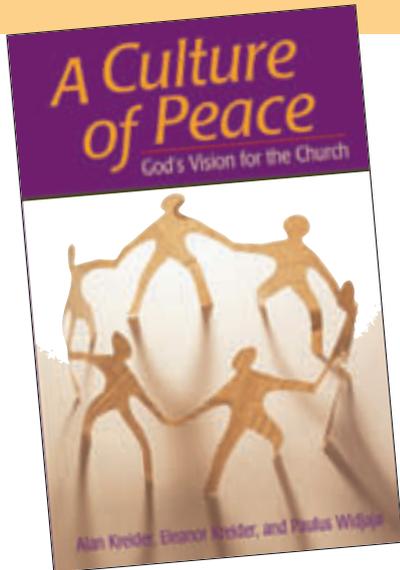
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by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider,
and Paulus Widjaja

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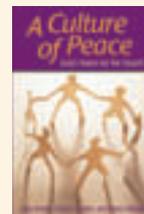
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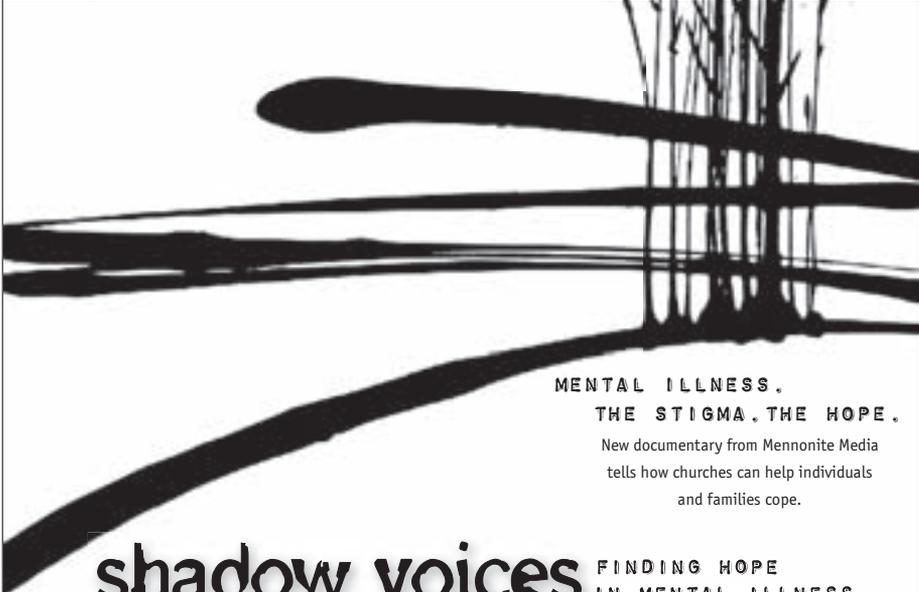
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Cascadia, Herald Press offer Anabaptist poetry series

Cheryl Denise, *I Saw God Dancing*, Cascadia Press and Herald Press, 2005, 90 pages, \$18.95.

Shari Wagner, *Evening Chöre*, Cascadia Press and Herald Press, 2005, 108 pages, \$18.95.

Dallas Wiebe, *On the Cross*, Cascadia Press and Herald Press, 2005, 96 pages, \$18.95.

The three books in this poetry series feature works by Anabaptist-related poets. Each book maintains the signature of the individual poet.

I Saw God Dancing is by Cheryl Denise, a pseudonym of award-winning poet C. D. Miller. The collection contains both serious and light-hearted poems concerning relationships, church and the Bible.

The title is apt because I wanted to dance right through this slight volume of 38 poems. Denise's turn of phrase, lilt of rhythm and acute observations captivated me.

Her poem called "Motherhood" would make this book a wonderful gift to a new mother: "I have something to say to you / and the baby / ...to tell you / this thing you're doing, / planned out and loved; / this disturbance to everything normal and calm / is beautiful."

Many more of the poems reflect memorable scenes, caught with concise imagery, of Mennonite life in Elmira, Ont.

Evening Chöre is by Shari Wagner, who holds an MFA in creative writing from Indiana University and has taught writing in universities and elementary schools.

Wagner's way with words is illustrated in her use of new and fresh similes, as in "The Sunken Gardens": "...her feet

are as white as the flesh of potatoes"; and in "Diana of the Dunes": "While he fashioned furniture / from vines thick as his forearms...."

Wagner's poems present a variety of subjects celebrating previous lifestyles like that of a simple farm girl and memories of a covered bridge. In one, she writes great grandmother "warned against vanity / and the worldliness of face / cards with their kings, queens, / and jacks. Good Mennonites / chose rook instead of pinochle / or poker."

In some instances, and this is true of most poets, the meaning might be obscure, but the musical language will encourage further reading.

On the Cross is by Dallas Wiebe, who has a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan; he has taught literary writing at universities and is a published author. The 41 poems, along with illustrated line drawings based on crosses by sculptor Paul Friesen, are personal reflections based on Wiebe's relationship with the cross.

More like meditations, they will be greatly appreciated by pastors as springboards for sermons. "The Crucifix" is one of several poems in which Wiebe reflects on his strong, personal connection to the cross-like scar left on his chest after surgery: "A cross over my heart / never to be removed / never to be brought down / until I die. / Never to be loaded with a dying saviour...."

Turning to well-known hymns, in "For a World of Lost Sinners," Wiebe writes, "the old rugged cross stood on Golgotha / On that hill far away / And carried the load of centuries of guilt.... Now the old rugged cross / is only a song at Easter, sometimes. / It's only a memory / on a Sunday school picture card...."

With so many poems on one subject, it is inevitable that there will be repetition. Nevertheless, all the poems are powerful reminders of so many connections to the cross, with the drawings adding a dramatic dimension.

—**Betty L. Dyck**



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This year, Canadians have joined millions of people around the world in the Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign—perhaps the largest international anti-poverty coalition in history. The campaign has shone a large spotlight on the immorality of poverty in a world of wealth. Nelson Mandela opened the campaign on Feb. 3 in London with these words, “Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is manmade and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.”

The focus of the campaign has been to hold political leaders accountable to commitments they made in 2000. At that time, 190 world leaders signed the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that sought, at their broadest level, to halve world poverty by 2015. These goals could be met with significant but feasible new investments of aid, fairer trade rules and the cancellation of debt to the poorest countries.

The campaign focused on a series of key international meetings this year: the G8 meetings in July, the UN Millennium Summit in September, and the upcoming World Trade Organization (WTO) talks in December—all places where decision-makers had (or have) opportunities to demonstrate their real commitments to the MDGs.

So, how have we fared? Has the campaign been successful?

In terms of achieving specific campaign goals, there has been some progress. I spoke in an earlier article (“Live 8 spread ‘make poverty history’ message globally,” Aug. 22, page 11) about the G8’s unprecedented \$40 billion US debt cancellation package—something that would not have happened without public pressure—and about the commitments to increase aid budgets in some countries.

Although there had been pressure to backtrack on the debt package commitments, thankfully these were finalized in recent World Bank/International Monetary Fund meet-

Are we making poverty history?

ings. This will have a tangible and positive impact on the poor in eligible countries.

While Canada played a positive role in the debt package, Canadians involved in the campaign have been very frustrated by the unwillingness of Prime Minister Paul Martin to set a timetable to move Canada’s aid from about 0.3 percent of our gross national income (about 30 cents of every \$100) to the international target of 0.7 percent. This is in spite of enjoying a robust, deficit-free economy, having the support of all opposition parties and much of his own caucus, and despite the pleas of Bono, Live 8 organizer Bob Geldof, and, more importantly, hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

The Millennium Summit, held Sept. 14 to 16 at the UN headquarters in New York, was a major disappointment to those who hoped it would signal a recommitment to the MDGs, and the two other major issues on the agenda: UN reform and security.

The draft outcome document that had been negotiated over many months—and which included strong references to the MDGs, 0.7 percent and other important commitments—was largely gutted in the last weeks leading up to the Summit. The U.S. government submitted hundreds of revisions, deleting references to the

MDGs, disarmament, climate change and a host of other issues. Not to be outdone, a number of non-democratic states refused to accept various progressive components of the document, including a stronger Human Rights Council, that may have cast further light on abuses in their countries.

Of course, it is the world’s poor who will suffer the real consequences of this failure of states to look beyond old grievances and agendas, to consider first the needs of their citizens and the poor of the world.

Despite these failures, and in addition to gains made on debt cancellation, I believe the real benefit of the campaign has been to place poverty on the international centre stage. This was at its most literal and visible during the July Live 8 concerts involving hundreds of millions of people worldwide. The campaign and concerts have generated unprecedented levels of public discussion and debate in Canada and around the world on issues of international poverty.

The role of the campaign—and, I would suggest, of the church—will be to ensure that this debate leads to real and lasting change, both in terms of policy and in our own attitudes and commitments to the call of Jesus to address the needs of the poor. We need to sustain public involvement and pressure on our leaders to make decisions based on justice, not self-interest or the vagaries of macro-economics.

The next big test will be the WTO trade talks in Hong Kong in December.

—Chris Derksen Hiebert

The author is a policy analyst for World Vision Canada who attends Waterloo North Mennonite Church.



Letters

Bible calls Christians to warn all sinners

Re: “Mennonite ‘accountability’ akin to papal authority” letter by Victor Fast, Sept. 19, page 14.

To partially quote him—“It is clear that the issue of homosexuality will never be laid to rest”—will be true as long as the God of the Bible is on the throne. The problem is that wayward people and false prophets have spurned God’s Word as they have always done.

We have a responsibility to warn them. “When I say to a wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood” Ezekiel 3:18.

I hesitate to single out one sin—homosexuality—because this applies to all sin. But since the mention of

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

that one sin is on the table, I quote from Romans 1:24-28: “Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their

perversion.”

We need to remember the words of Jude 3b and 4: “I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of God into a licence for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only sovereign and lord.”

We must be biblically, rather than politically, correct, for the sake of the truth.

—George J. Baerg, Rosemary, Alta.

Helping each other to walk

One fall Sunday I walked out of church carrying my infant son in my arms. In the parking lot a young teenager was helping a toddler to walk, holding the little one’s hands to protect him from falling. The teenager looked up and smiled as I approached. “When your son gets older, we’ll help him learn to walk too,” she promised. What a gift she offered! As a new mother, I was deeply touched by her spontaneous comment. Over the years I’ve mined its meaning. Here are some of the gems I’ve received from it.

We are not alone in the work of our family relationships. My husband and I had helpful companions in the task of parenting. The church community joined us, sharing the instruction and care of our child. In parent-child dedication services, this commitment is made explicit when the pastor invites the congregation to “accept responsibility for the well-being of this child” and through “prayer, example and words, support [the] parents in nurturing this child to respond to the grace and truth [of] Christ” (from *Minister’s Manual*, page 125).

We are also not alone when we consider housing transitions as we age, or help others who are doing so. We are not alone as we search for forgiveness and reconciliation when relationships have been damaged or broken. We are not alone as we grieve our dead, although we can feel quite isolated in our sorrow. Let us find ways to offer our hands, listening ears and compassionate counsel in other tasks.

Walking means more than walking.

Family Ties

Melissa Miller



The teenagers in my son’s life were the big people he aspired to follow. They did teach him to walk when the time came. Sometimes, in good humour, they taught him to act goofy. Most importantly, as he watched them, he saw things he wanted to imitate. Their kindness toward him shaped his attitudes toward people younger than him. Their joy in

Mennonite schools led him to the same schools.

Once, when I was leading the youth Sunday school class, I pointed out that they were the models for the little kids. “That’s scary!” one replied. I agree—not just for teenagers, but for all of us. Our influence on others is far greater than we can imagine.

Such help forms the heart of the church. Those who are stronger and bigger and older help others learn the walk of following Jesus. I have been blessed by the example of those who have gone before, including my grandparents and people of their generation (who I knew personally), and the first disciples (known in Scripture). Now middle-aged, I recognize that some people—my son, nieces and nephews—are paying attention to how I follow Jesus. And, of course, we take turns being strong or weak, teaching and learning. Sometimes it’s the young ones who teach the elders.

Like the example witnessed by a young mom stepping out of church on a sunny fall afternoon to see a teenager bent over helping a toddler walk.

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

Letter on Mennonite 'accountability' praised

I was pleased to read the letter from Victor Fast in the Sept. 19 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* (page 14). Finally, we have intelligent input on the contentious church issue of homosexuality. Bravo, Victor.

—**Lorene Nickel, Saskatoon**

Church needs to revisit 'homosexual sin' resolution

I note with interest some of the discussion at the Canadian conference of the Mennonite Church in Charlotte (*Canadian Mennonite*, Aug. 1 and 22 issues).

Our Confession of Faith is under scrutiny and well it should be. Our faith and understanding of God grow and develop as we live in and engage society. I would suggest we revisit the resolution passed in 1986 at the Saskatoon conference—"homosexual activity constitutes sin"—and accept

that it is not the church's role to pass judgment; that task lies with God.

Under the current structure, if you are in the Mennonite Church and you say the three words—"I am gay"—you instantly become a non-person. This will seem ludicrous to our grandchildren in years to come.

Those who cast judgment would do well to listen to the pain that their ill-advised pronouncements cause. Martin Luther observed that sin does not hurt us as much as our own righteousness.

At the end of the 1986 conference, I sat with about 20 of my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. I felt sure that they would eventually receive an apology from the conference. We do not know the extent of the pain—even to the point of suicide—that we have inflicted on some.

Not long ago I went to a gathering of believing gays and lesbians, and I met God there.

—**Paul Klassen, Winnipeg**

Learning from other Christians is important

Suzanne Bender—in the New Order Voice column, "Grace between charismatics and peacemakers," Sept. 19, page 14—leaves us with some wise counsel in our Mennonite expression of community and living it out by respecting Christians of other denominations who do not necessarily express their beliefs and theology as we do.

She sums it up well when she says, "As Mennonites, we often emphasize the importance of community." She goes on to say, "For me, this means we need to expand our notion of community to include other streams of faith." When this happens, then the opportunity for dialogue and learning from each other learning can happen.

Thank you, Suzanne, for this reminder.

—**George H. Epp, Chilliwack, B.C.**

Faith without work boots is dead

Some years ago, I was doing some renovations in the attic of a house. Since it was the middle of a hot summer, the attic was not the most pleasant hangout spot for an eight-hour workday. Especially at the start of the project—when old, itchy insulation had to be ripped out and bagged, and nail-filled boards had to be hauled around—I woke up some mornings and thought, "Aw, this is going to be hard work!"

Thankfully, I experienced a rather bizarre inspiration when I laced up my work boots. The steel-tipped toes and sturdy leather of those boots seemed to make me feel invincible. "Ahah! Now I can do anything!" I girded up my tool belt and clomped up the stairs with what felt like a lilt in my step.

There are times when my journey of faith feels like a long and arduous climb into a hot attic. There seems to be no end to the bent and rusty nails that have to be pulled from my own personal theology, and it takes a lot of energy to figure out how to work well together with others. There are big, itchy piles of church tradition that get in the way of facilitating an active peacemaking faith.

Our justice ministries require dozens of boards that need to be carried up from ground level. Christian faith is hard work!

What kind of "inner work boots" provide you with real get-up-and-go for the work of Christian peacemaking? As you think about the words from Ephesians 6:15 (*"As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace"*), what kind

Shoes for your feet

Matthew Bailey-Dick



of footwear do you need in order to really "dig in" as you proclaim the gospel of peace? How does God give you strength and confidence for this important work?

The Christian gospel is tough because Jesus' way of active nonviolence challenges our comfortable lives. God's call to make justice means that some of our privileges are at stake. The Holy Spirit leads us into places where there are no easy answers.

Nevertheless, there is joy in this work,

and so we spread the word and invite others to join us as we work together for God's kingdom. Perhaps sharing the good news actually sounds something like, "Come with me! We've got some good, hard work to do together!"

Does God wear work boots? What comes to mind when you imagine God covered with dirt and sweat as she works to bring healing and hope to our broken world? What can our congregations do in order to join in the hard work that God is already doing in terms of peace and justice ministry?

I'd like to share the words of a song I learned while in Central America some years ago. The following is a chorus from the "Nicaraguan Peasant Mass" (words by Carlos Mejia Godoy):

*You are the God of the poor ones:
God, human and simple,
God who sweats in the street,
God with wrinkles on your face.
This is why I speak to you
The way my people speak,
Because you are the worker God,
Christ the worker.*

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

Resolution messenger asks 'Who do we serve?'

Since I am the mover of the motion of the "Rosemary resolution" (see "Assembly offers 'enough for all,'" Aug. 2, 2004, page 15), I feel I must answer my detractors. I've seen a constant flow of letters for over a year now, some very negative of the essence of the Confession of Faith and of our motion. The resolution was drafted by a committee and cleared by the congregation before we brought it forward. I was the messenger.

We are a church who firmly believes the Bible is the inspired Word of God and, as such, it holds the truths that are essential to knowing who God is and how he expects us to practise our faith. We love gays and lesbians in Jesus' name, and firmly believe they can be saved from all their sins if they will repent and want to be saved—just as we must be saved from the wrath of God that will surely come upon all unrepentant sinners at the coming Day of the Lord.

I do not understand how we will stand before the supreme creator of the universe who created us, and say, "You cannot punish us for things we don't see as sin." It is he who decides what is sin and what isn't, and he has already declared himself on this. His Holy Scriptures show us quite plainly what he calls sin.

Why all this vitriol and venom directed at us for simply quoting God's Word? The real martyrs in the near future will be those who hold fast to the Word of God. Should that scare me? Is there anything ambiguous about what it says in Romans 1:18-32? It holds some harsh words for people who "suppress the truth by their wickedness." Try reading it.

God is gracious and forgiving, but his terms are that we come to him through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who said, "*I did not come to annul the Law, but to fulfill it.*" When he atoned for our sins, God viewed us through the sacred blood of Jesus and declared us righteous as though we had kept his Law.

My only prayer for all Mennonites is that they stick to the teachings of Scripture and teach all members to be born again by the Holy Spirit. The

God of the universe has said, "*I am the Lord, and beside me there is no other,*" and, "*You shall have no other gods before me, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.*" He will not, and cannot, change. Jesus kept the Law because we couldn't. Many people say, "That's not the God I serve." Are we serving other gods?

The Confession of Faith speaks about the God of the Bible, who is moral, upright and just. A god who can't discern sin is not the real God or his Christ; he's a cheap look-alike concocted from human invention. He is not interested in saving you; in fact, he is powerless to save. He's a genderless, amoral, papier-mache idol, more akin to Harry Potter and the Antichrist.

—Peter Braul, Brooks, Alta.

Evangelizing after '64 facts questioned

I have read the article by Herb Miller ("How do we offer Christ to adults born after 1964?" Sept. 19, page 5) three or four times and found it to need some challenging, although I detect that the intent was sincere.

Miller tends to date things as if they were certain and specific...and cataclysmic, as in "Another reformation began in 1954—one in which historic denominational labels mean little." Also, there seems to be something magical about the difference between people born before 1964 and after 1964. What is that? I wonder if he isn't referring to some work not cited here.

He goes on to list 15 shifts in thinking that happened to "more than 75 per cent of young adults born after 1964." Why 15? And on what basis does Miller conclude that "75 percent" is the right number, I have to wonder.

If he researched these numbers, he should tell us how, at least.

I'm aware that certain churches have attracted young people successfully recently, particularly those that present Christianity as a haven against ennui and the general pain of living. I'm also aware that, in some places, young people have been captivated by churches that promote music similar to the popular music of the day, and informality more in keeping with the general trend in society. The

fact that this is happening is, however, no argument for church communities to take excessive steps to "get with it." Our churches also are home to the middle-aged and the elderly.

When Miller says that "young adults shifted toward congregations whose sense of unity comes through participation in caring ministries among attendees and people outside the church," I hope it is so. But who were these young people, and from which churches did they come, and to which churches did they "shift"?

My observation has been that people also leave churches that require commitment and "work," and drift toward communities where self-indulgence and self-fulfillment are preached more than discipleship. I have also noted that some young people prefer to attend churches where worship is "zippy," entertaining and emotive. Are they necessarily shifting in response to the Spirit's call, or for some other reason?

I, too, could write any number of articles on what I think is going on in the minds of Christians, and why they are making some worship styles popular and others not. Our duty as Christians is not to be "attractive" so that we can oust the outmoded "Montgomery Ward" church with a new and shiny "Sears" gospel. It is to live humble, faithful Christian lives. That applies to old adults, middle-aged adults and young adults.

On the other hand, if Miller is writing from a concern that it might be unfaithfulness that is driving young adults away, then I commend him for putting pen to paper. That should concern us all, deeply.

—George Epp, Rosthern, Sask.

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Cotonou, Benin

The face of poverty

What does the face of poverty look like? It looks like a man, rail thin, wearing old clothes that are rumpled and torn. He is clean, though. He has come to tell us that his daughter—the one we helped him buy school supplies for last fall—had been very ill in the hospital. She was in the main hospital for three weeks and every day they fed three bottles of serum into her body by IV drip. He spent every cent he had and the church helped him out. This daughter, who was eight years old, was his only child. She died this afternoon at 3 p.m.

Now he needs to figure out what to do with the body. He doesn't have any more money. He can't pay to put the body in the morgue. He negotiated with a taxi driver to drive him—and the child's covered body, so no one can see the precious cargo in the car—to another town where he has family. There, they can bury the body without any ceremony. But he needs money for the taxi. Just \$10. The pastor can't help him anymore. Could we help him out?

The naked truth

Tony Blair, Prime Minister of England, commissioned a study on Africa. In the report, it states: "We live in a world where new medicines and medical techniques have eradicated many of the diseases and ailments which plagued the rich world. Yet in Africa some four million children under the age of five die each year, two-thirds of them from illnesses which cost very little to treat.

"We live in a world where rich nations spend almost \$1 billion US a day subsidizing the unnecessary production of unwanted food. Meanwhile in Africa, hunger is a key factor in more deaths than all the continent's infectious diseases put together."

These figures and statistics are too large for our minds to grasp. Yet it

comes down to this scene—a man crying and trying to figure out how he's going to hold himself together long enough to bury his child.

My children ask me why he is crying. How can I explain to them what I can barely understand myself—that in this world there are people who are privileged and advantaged, and others who are not. That where you are born determines in large part your chance of survival. That most people live blissfully ignorant of this reality. But today I cannot ignore this truth. I looked into the face of poverty and saw a human face looking back at me.

The Africa report speaks of hope. Africans are very resilient and they



Photo by Matt Paekkau

Children in Benin die young. The median age of the population is 16 years; life expectancy is 50 years, despite a low AIDS/HIV rate in adults of 1.9 percent. A clean water supply, good nutrition, and basic medicines—all taken for granted by Canadians—are not widely available to most Beninois.

have a strong sense of interdependence that leads them to help each other out.

The rich nations also have a chance to play a role in changing the tide of death. Often a very small investment makes a big difference.

A business loan of \$50 enables a woman to generate income to feed her children better and send them to school. Simple lessons on basic hygiene, or teaching about how to treat diarrhea with rehydration fluids (a mixture of water, salt and sugar), can save lives. Garbage collection and proper storage of dangerous waste makes the community a safer environment in which to live. Monthly baby weighings accompanied by instruction on the importance of breastfeeding can increase a child's chance of survival. These are just some of the areas where Mennonite Church Canada Witness and its partner, Mennonite Mission Network, have invested over the years in Benin.

Our Christian faith is also a source of hope. In Benin, physical health and spiritual health cannot be separated. Illness is a spiritual issue.

'And be thankful'

Our young mission intern, Janessa Otto, writes on her weblog: "We live blessed lives and should not forget it."

We don't deserve to be among the most privileged people in the world. There are too many factors beyond our control to take credit for our privileges. When we are grateful to God for what we have, we acknowledge the true source of our wellbeing. Perhaps our gratitude will make us more humble and more willing to share. It will certainly place us in a better position with our creator.

—**Nancy Frey and Bruce Yoder**

Nancy Frey (St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont.) and Bruce Yoder (Martinsburg Mennonite Church, Pa.) are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network.

Pinawa, Man.

Event seeks to reunite divorce of church and mission

Congregations, conferences and denominations have lost sight of their purpose, despite a belief that the Body of Christ has an essential role in God's mission in the world.

This broad concept was the foundational position around which participants gathered for a Mennonite Church Canada/USA conference ministers and mission leaders event in Pinawa in late September.

One reason the church has lost sight of its purpose is because the unified missional role of the church has been divorced, according to Jack Suderman of Mennonite Church Canada and Phil Bergey of Mennonite Church USA, who served as resource persons for the event. Some leaders are charged strictly with strengthening, nourishing and nurturing the congregation (in-reach), while others are charged solely with traditional mission activity (outreach).

Participants reflected, discussed and meditated on how to renew and revive God's call for the church to be a blessing to the world. Suderman and Bergey challenged participants to revisit Scripture and church history from a perspective that the Body of Christ is not just a part of God's strategy of kingdom building, but plays an essential role in restoring the world to God's intended purpose.

The symptoms of this divorce of roles are evident all around us, they said: young adults want to be baptized but question the need to become members of a congregation; congregations have difficulty clearly articulating their purpose for being; parachurch organizations have formed because the organized church has been an obstacle in their desire to do kingdom work—and as a result are no longer accountable to an organized discerning body of believers.

To stimulate more thinking, Suderman and Bergey asked mission leaders how their work strengthens the church, and how the work of conference ministers strengthens mission.

Bergey then painted a picture of what missional leadership looks like, reminding leaders to get back to core questions: Why does the church/conference/denomination exist? How does it behave as it carries out its reason for being? What things does it actually do, and what does it do really well?

Dorothy Nickel Friesen, MC USA Western District Conference minister, felt the event was a watershed kind of moment, and that leaders in the future will speak about the church in terms of pre- and post-Pinawa.

"This event has provided some vocabulary around which to talk about these concepts," she said. There are "...several silos [different agencies or institutions] that might need to come down in order to accomplish the work of the church.



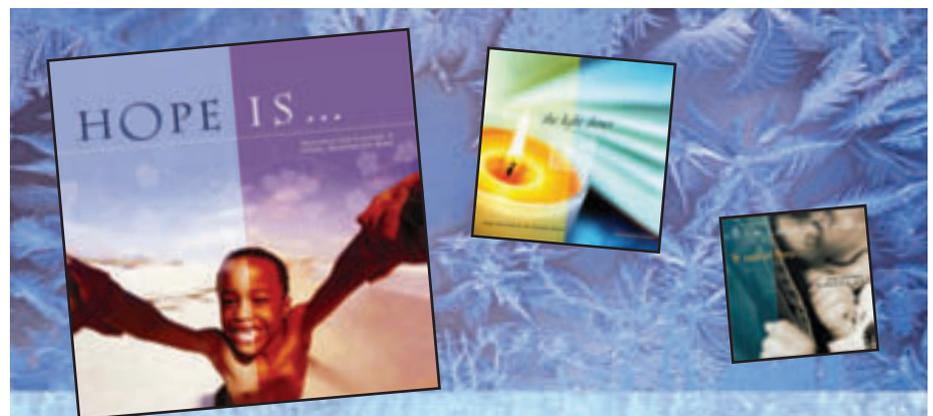
Photo by Dan Dyck

Samson Lo, director of Multicultural Ministries for Mennonite Church Canada, left, and Edgar Rivera, MC B.C. mission leader, reflect on the missional role of the church in today's world.

"The hard work in the next months and years will be to transform our structures to 'be' the church rather than 'run' the church. Post-Pinawa will be the test if we learned how to not only talk to, but to listen to, each other, and God's call."

—MC Canada release
by **Dan Dyck**

A paper by Jack Suderman entitled "Missional Ecclesiology and Leadership: Toward an Understanding of the Emerging Church" served as the background material for this event. The paper is available for free download from www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcencentre/ResourceView/5/7266.



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Winnipeg

Church and church school: A company of strangers?

Kevin Peters Unrau half-jokingly says he wouldn't be around today if it were not for Mennonite schools.

Unrau is referring to the fact that his parents met at Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College. The soft-spoken, articulate teacher and pastor—he maintains two half-time positions—planned to study engineering, but was diverted to Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC, now Canadian Mennonite University) when representatives from the school visited his church to address prospective theology and music students—on the evening that the bombing of Iraq began in the first Gulf War.

As the leaders of the event altered the evening to accommodate the news, Unrau began wondering what God was calling him to be. Soon he found himself enrolling at CMBC instead of engineering school.

Subsequent summer camp work, peace and conflict resolution studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., a term teaching in Egypt, and then seminary studies have all shaped Unrau's spiritual life—and illustrate the value of a Mennonite education. Unrau now teaches at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and pastors at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, both in Kitchener, Ont.

While Unrau's story is cause for celebration, education statistics cause concern for Dave Bergen, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada's Christian Formation ministry. It is estimated that the average Canadian Mennonite church has only eight people with one year or more of Bible college education, and only three of those are Bible college graduates.

Part of Bergen's job is to bring together all of MC Canada's learning institutions from Kindergarten on up, to begin exploring what a more formally organized Mennonite education network might look like and how it might function. As a starting point, Bergen is inviting Canadian Mennonite educa-

tion leaders to Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg from Nov. 18 to 20, where they will look toward a stronger future of Christian education in the Mennonite tradition under the theme of "Church and church school: Committed partners or a company of strangers?"

Leaders will begin by building a common understanding of the unique and important ministry of Mennonite church schools, and the contribution of Anabaptist beliefs and values to the wider world. The forum will also explore how the ministry of Mennonite church schools strengthens the witness of the church in the world.

Ultimately, Bergen says, it is about

In conversation about education

Dave Bergen, executive secretary of MC Canada's Christian Formation ministry, spoke about the importance of a Mennonite education with MC Canada's director of communications, Dan Dyck.

Dan Dyck: *What makes Mennonite education unique?*

Dave Bergen: Frequently we are told by Christians from other denominations, and by people from beyond the Christian tradition, that...our strong emphasis on nurturing disciples of Jesus Christ to live the gospel message of peace in the world is welcomed and needed. I believe it is time to become much more intentional about nurturing the church-school-home equation. Our church schools offer a unique context to form the character and moral values of students from within and beyond the Mennonite Church.

Dyck: *Where are our Mennonite educated leaders coming from now?*

Bergen: A quick unscientific scan of the people giving key leadership in MC Canada churches and related institutions today reveals that a high percentage are graduates of one or more of our Mennonite schools. Their identity as Christians in the world has been deeply influenced by our church schools. Their worldview and life choices are guided by their Anabaptist theological identity, shaped in no small part by their education.



Photo by Dan Dyck

Kevin Peters Unrau spoke about his personal journey through Mennonite education at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Charlotte this past July.

creating a space where the church and its schools can meet to explore shared vision and goals. "I'm encouraged by the strong interest and support being shown for this event," he enthuses. —MC Canada release by **Dan Dyck**

Dyck: *Mennonite Church USA has the Mennonite Education Agency that serves as an umbrella organization for Mennonite Church schools. Is this where Canada is heading?*

Bergen: I don't think anyone is making assumptions that this is where things will end up. The current need is to create avenues for more intentional communication and sharing of goals, so that both the schools and wider church are strengthened. Whatever form the educational conversation [in Winnipeg and beyond] takes, it will be organized in a way that meets the needs of the schools and the church in Canada.

Dyck: *How will a Mennonite Church education network benefit the wider church?*

Bergen: Through networking my hope is that we can better combine academic learning with formation in Christian character, and that our schools will form a partnership with the home and the church to call, equip and send students to fulfill their vocation within the mission of God in the world.

Dyck: *Will a Christian education network address the much-talked-about pastor shortage in the Mennonite Church?*

Bergen: Although this challenge is a big one, my hope is that by working together we can more intentionally address this issue. But it is also important to understand that our schools help to nurture pastoral qualities in students who may be called to other vocations. I believe that everyone influences someone.

Calgary

Unexpected flooding brings out the best in Alberta Mennonites

Southern Alberta is known to be hot and dry between spring and autumn, so surprise turned to despair for many residents as the rains came non-stop day after day this summer. Streams turned to rivers and rivers turned to lakes, flooding towns an hour south and two hours north of Calgary. Many homeowners had to leave until the floodwaters receded, while downtown business owners worked feverishly sandbagging to save their livelihoods.

Calgary residents realized their dilemma when the saturated ground would hold no more and water began seeping up through foundations and cracks in basement walls, soaking carpets and underlay. Flood-affected residents scrambled to emergency centres seeking help as mould crept through their houses. Many people had nowhere to turn.

Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) became involved as an increasing number of cases were brought to our attention.

Volunteers who visited one home were met by a very distraught woman. As they entered the house, she threw herself on the sofa, covering her face and moaning, "I don't know what to do."

Another homeowner, when asked by a volunteer what she needed, responded, "Just sit down and talk to me." In the next breath, she asked, "What is a Mennonite?" She could not believe

people would come and help with no strings attached.

When MDS was alerted by a caregiver of the needs of a rural elderly homeowner, volunteers discovered the woman had been without heat and hot water for a month. Her well was contaminated and her flooded basement contained water-damaged furniture and a fridge.

Out of 40 requests for help, MDS has been able to follow through with assistance to 29 of them. Basements were emptied of wet carpet and underlay, soaked drywall and wallboard, waterlogged furniture and boxes filled with precious valuables. Homeowners looked on as their once comfortable basements turned into unsightly shells.

A total of 95 volunteers worked together to bring hope and encouragement when many did not know how to go on. Some volunteers came back many times. Clients responded with, "Wonderful people...lots of fun...did a great job...they really cared about me...I feel so much better...a fun bunch...they were neat and tidy...did what I can no longer do." Many were amazed at how quickly their homes were restored.

—MDS release by **Sandra Friesen**

The author served as the MDS volunteer coordinator during the flood cleanup in southern Alberta this past summer.



Members of Abbeydale Christian Fellowship were just nine of 95 Albertans who helped Mennonite Disaster Service restore 29 flooded homes in and around Calgary.

New York

Colombian peacemaker honoured in New York

Ricardo Esquivia, a Mennonite peacemaker in Colombia, has been given the 2005 Peacemakers in Action Award by the Tannenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding in New York.

The award, which comes with a \$15,000 U.S. prize to help fund Esquivia's peacemaking efforts, was presented during a Sept. 25 to 30 retreat sponsored by the Tannenbaum Center. Entitled "Peacemakers in action," the retreat brought together religiously motivated leaders doing peace work around the world.

Esquivia is a leader in the Colombian Mennonite Church; a former vice-president of the Council of



Esquivia

Evangelical Churches of Colombia; and the founder of Justapaz, a Colombian Mennonite organization that works for peace and justice. He is also a member of Mennonite World Conference's Global Anabaptist Peace and Justice

Network, serving as its spokesperson. Esquivia is currently working to organize a variety of churches to work for peace in the conflicted northern Colombian region of Montes de Maria. In January 2004 rumours circulated in Colombia that Esquivia was about to be arrested on false charges of belonging to a guerrilla group. The Colombian Mennonite Church led an international campaign to protect him, and he credits his safety to thousands of concerned individuals around the world who sent letters to U.S. and Colombian officials. Later that year, he testified at a congressional briefing in Washington, D.C., on civil rights abuses in Colombia and the harm done by U.S. military aid.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) financially supported Esquivia's work from 1990 to 2004, and nominated him for the Peacemakers in Action Award.

—Joint MWC/MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

New Hamburg, Ont.

Young adults learn morality 'at the mountain'

The setting was not a mountain. It was a campground with a playing field and pond among the rolling hills near New Hamburg. But at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp more than 70 young adults from across the United States and Canada, along with some from Europe, came together at the end of September to go to that mountain from which Jesus taught his Sermon on the Mount.

The weekend event—entitled “Morality: Learning at the mountain”—was planned by Young Adult Fellowship (YAF), a binational organization of young adults and people interested in young adult ministry. This year, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada young adults hosted the event in lieu of having their own regular fall retreat.

Besides an interactive reading of Matthew 5 to 7, interactive skits, a prayer walk around the campground and periods of quiet personal prayer, the participants—who were divided into six groups—brainstormed what they considered to be significant moral issues that the world and the church need to pay attention to. Their list was long! Not surprisingly, issues important to young adults include: abortion, homosexuality, gay marriage, sex, purity, racism, integrity, globalization, addictions, health care and materialism, among many others.

Friends, family and church were identified almost equally as the top three groups that influence the young adults' decisions. Past experiences; the testimony of others; tradition, culture and ethnic heritage; and societal norms were also listed as factors. Their moral decisions are also personally guided by praying with Scripture, individual faith, rational thought and sometimes simply by their “gut feeling.”

Definitions of morality varied among the six groups. “Morality is based on the unwritten rules and beliefs on how we make decisions and interact with



Photo by Maurice Martin

Canadian Gaohlee Vang of Kitchener, Ont., left, was joined by American young adults Jeremy Schuh and Matthew Troyer on a panel discussion on their connectedness—or disconnectedness—with the church, at the Young Adult Fellowship retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp last month.

others,” stated one group. Another defined it as “the decisions we make when determining ‘right’ from ‘wrong’ or ‘good’ from ‘bad.’” This group wondered if there is “a continuum” to morality and if it is “based on God.”

During a panel discussion, three young adults were asked about their feelings of connectedness—or disconnectedness—to the Mennonite Church, and their visions for its future.

Gaohlee Vang, a young adult from First Hmong Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., has been in a Mennonite church all her life. Her parents were refugees sponsored by a Mennonite church in Ontario, but she feels a huge church disconnect.

“Being Hmong, it feels weird, we don’t fit in,” Vang said. “I want to tell the elders in the church that we are not the future church; we are the present church. If you can’t relate to us now, how will you relate to us in the future?”

Matthew Troyer of Shickley, Neb., was not raised in the Mennonite Church, but his father embodied everything in the Mennonite Confession of Faith, he said. After his father’s death, Troyer began to inquire what his dad’s value of love was all about.

During his studies at Goshen College, people tried hard to be helpful. “That’s what I like about the Mennonite Church,” Troyer said. “They embody the love of Christ in a world of hatred, homophobia, etc. So I have chosen the Mennonite Church as being the best way for me to be a Christian.”

Jeremy Schuh grew up in the Mennonite Church, going to Mennonite camps and schools. During his time at Hesston College he sought

to identify Anabaptist beliefs “as my own, not my parents,” he said. Part of that was not going to church for a while. “But I missed being part of a community that knew me, loved me,” he admitted. “It was a huge realization for me.”

Now a youth pastor at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church, Schuh said, “We need to bring new people in. We need older people to mentor new leaders, not only to pad the numbers in our own church, but to leave, go get some training, serve in some other church.”

Intergenerational issues—including the church’s worship wars—were discussed. Some felt that hymns were outdated or that congregations “spend too much effort singing them right, getting the right notes and beats, and don’t experience the words.” Others, though, objected to the new worship technologies, including using overheads and PowerPoint, instead of hymnals. “Why do people always assume it is a generational thing—old folks like hymns, young folks like choruses?” one young adult asked, stating for the record, “I prefer hymns.”

Whatever the issues, the young adults agreed that more intergenerational dialogue is necessary. They talked of feeling valued when older congregants ask them how they are feeling or what they are doing.

But they acknowledged that church is often a place where they feel vulnerable. Said one participant, “I would like the church to be a safe place for all people to bring questions [and] share struggles. Too often, when I raise a question, I am treated like a heretic by well-meaning people who say, ‘I’ll pray for you.’”

—Maurice Martin

Kitchener, Ont.

Credit Union's first share offering a success

Just two months after the official launch date, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) sold out its first ever Investment Share offering. After many months of planning, the Kitchener-based credit union launched the share offering on April 25. By mid-June, investments were rapidly approaching the \$15 million limit set by the Credit Union's board. The Credit Union closed the offering on June 27.

The Class B Investment Shares, offered to MSCU members as a way of building the Credit Union's capital base, provided investors with a high variable rate of return pegged to the Government of Canada five-year yield for bonds plus a full percentage point. The Credit Union's need to raise capital has arisen from continued double-digit growth and demand for services, particularly loan services, which have the most

The Credit Union's need to raise capital has arisen from continued double-digit growth....

direct impact on the Credit Union's asset base and capital ratios.

MSCU chief operating officer John Klassen says, "While the financial services sector, as a whole, is becoming increasingly competitive, we are seeing more people coming our way for reasons of flexibility and personable delivery of financial services. The overwhelming response to the share offering confirms that our members, all part owners of the Credit Union, are key to our growing success."

MSCU was founded in 1964 to provide a way for members to participate in a faith-based financial cooperative that promotes key principles of biblical stewardship, particularly mutual aid. MSCU serves members of Mennonite, Amish and Brethren in Christ churches across Ontario, administering more than \$500 million in assets.

—MSCU release

Kenora, Ont.

CPT returning to Kenora

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Canada sent a team to Kenora for two months on Oct. 17, to continue a community-organizing project focused on reducing the racist treatment of Anishinaabe residents and visitors.

Aboriginal people who live in or visit the northwestern Ontario community routinely report experiencing stereotyping and mistreatment in the course of shopping, attending school or obtaining health care. Some report being harassed, abused, targeted or having their complaints ignored by Kenora Police Services (KPS), which currently has no aboriginal representation on the police force or board.

CPT's partner in Kenora is the

Anishinaabe Coalition for Peace and Justice, formed after the bungled investigation and prosecution of a Kenora resident who had been charged in the death of Max Kakegamic in 2000.

When CPT returns to Kenora in October, it will document racism in the town, explore with local churches possibilities for organizing against racism, and support the ongoing work of the coalition. CPT concluded its full-time presence in the community in June 2005 after moving to Kenora from Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) in August 2004.

Kenora, a town of 16,000, is an important regional centre for 13 Anishinaabe communities. In addition to tourism and logging-related industries, Kenora's economy is sustained by Anishinaabe spending and the social service sector that serves Anishinaabe people.

—CPT release



MC Canada photo by Dan Dyck

Walter Franz, right, and his wife Hilda received a painting and card from Norman Meade, long-time church leader, friend and associate from Manigotagan, Man., on the occasion of his retirement from 15 years of service with Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry and more than 40 years of service to the church. Franz also completed stints of service as executive secretary of the former Ministries Commission and European Ministries staff with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, predecessor to MC Canada. He also served as pastor at Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., and Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona, Man., and principal at Swift Current (Sask.) Bible Institute. About 170 friends, family and colleagues gathered to wish him well and celebrate his time of service and commitment to ministry in the aboriginal community. This month, the Franzes will begin a one-year volunteer service term ministering in the Riverton Fellowship community north of Winnipeg.

Akron, Pa.

Hurricane response continues through local churches

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is continuing a nearly \$2 million response to Gulf Coast hurricanes. Efforts include hiring local hurricane response workers, supporting church-initiated responses and providing more than \$820,000 worth of material resources to storm-damaged areas and communities sheltering evacuees.

As part of an effort to respond to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through local congregations, MCC has provided funds to hire workers from churches in hurricane-affected areas of Louisiana and in Houston, Tex., and Meridian, Miss., where many evacuees continue to stay.

So far, MCC has provided some 12,000 health kits, 3,000 relief kits and more than 14,000 blankets and comforters. Some 3,600 cartons of MCC canned meat have been shipped to Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

In the first week of October, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) workers south of Houma, La., went door-to-door delivering an MCC shipment that included 597 health kits, 229 relief kits, 10 cartons of canned turkey, and household items such as towels and blankets. MCC also provided funding to purchase 175 mattresses for families in the area.

The same week, MCC shipped more than 500 cartons of canned meat to Biloxi, Miss., 560 cartons to Meridian, Miss., and 800 cartons to Houston, to help feed evacuees. A late September shipment to DeRidder, La., included 640 cartons of canned meat, as well as 500 relief kits and bedding materials.

In early October, MCC and Mennonite Disaster Service officials met with local Anabaptist leaders in the greater New Orleans area, identifying needs for reconstruction and assistance with issues such as insurance and immigration. A few days later, church leaders in southern Louisiana formed a committee to coordinate

responses to the damage, prompting MCC U.S. executive director Rolando Santiago to speak highly of local leadership and the church communities' capacity to guide participants in the rebuilding process.

Santiago and others note that church members were reaching out to each other even in the midst of the storm. Groups from congregations such as Iglesia Amor Viviente, Evangelical Garífuna Church and Comunidad Cristiana Internacional (CCI) kept in touch after evacuating to Houston.

Blanca Mackay, like other members of Amor Viviente whose houses in Metairie, La., weren't damaged, are taking in fellow members who cannot return home. Mackay, who had to rearrange her pantry to hold all the food people have brought her, said she's

reminded of the first century church where members held all their possessions in common.

"Everybody is sharing. Everybody is thinking about everybody else," she said.

"We have been so wrapped in our own world we don't realize there are people next to us," Mackay added. "This is making us realize the people next to us. We are really beginning to come together."

Neighbours on her street are trading tools back and forth, giving each other what they have. In line at Wal-Mart, she heard strangers sharing their stories with each other, breaking down the walls between separate, busy lives.

"We have gone through so much that really people are becoming more human," Mackay said. "I hope we don't lose that. I hope we treasure that and we don't go back to our old self."

—MCC release

'We have gone through so much that really people are becoming more human.'



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Morris, Man.

MCC sale celebrates giving and sharing

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Relief Sale held in Morris, Man., last month raised about \$123,000 for health and education programs supported by MCC, a drop of \$20,000 from last year although attendance remained about the same.

“Our goal is \$120,000. If we raise more than that we are extraordinarily blessed,” said David Reimer, chair of the 40-member coordinating committee. The sale, he noted, is a celebration of people giving, sharing and working together to support MCC programs and the people who benefit from them.

About 200 volunteers worked the day of the sale—directing traffic, sorting and pricing items, serving food, collecting money and assisting in many other ways. Prior to the sale, individuals and church groups spent numerous hours preparing food, sewing quilts and collecting items for the sale.

The lively country auction and quilt auction drew large crowds, with 12 professional auctioneers donating



Rosenort auctioneer Herm Martens works up the bidding at the Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale in Morris, Man.

Photo by Gladys Terichow

their time.

Many people came to the sale to meet people, visit and eat hearty meals. The day started with a pancake breakfast, followed by the sale of a Mennonite meal—*Vereniki* (boiled pockets of soft dough filled with cottage cheese), farmer’s sausage, cabbage *Borscht* and pie. Sale of these meals, as well as other food items, were brisk throughout the day, Reimer reported.

MCC uses the proceeds from this and other relief sales to develop and strengthen programs that assist families struggling with famine, natural disasters, war, disease and poverty. Many of these programs are eligible for matching funds on a ratio of three-to-one by the Canadian International Development Agency.

The Morris sale is one of three MCC relief sales in Manitoba and one of about 40 in North America. Last year, North American relief sales raised about \$6 million for MCC programs.

—Gladys Terichow

Charlotte, N.C.

‘Can’t keep quiet’ on the plane

The theme of last summer’s joint assembly in Charlotte, N.C.—“Can’t keep quiet”—carried on beyond the conference centre in a remarkable way.

Leaving Charlotte after the assembly, our plane encountered take-off delay—first because of mechanical difficulties, then because of storm warnings. Two-and-a-half hours in a plane filled to capacity could have been a time filled with anxiety and impatience, as people had connecting flights to worry about and were anxious to get home.

A youth group from Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church was on the plane. Leaders began pulling conference songbooks from their luggage. Before long, other conference attendees began chiming in, at points breaking out into four-part harmonies.

Airline attendants normally would not offer snacks on this 40-minute flight to Atlanta. But under the circumstances they began passing them out to anyone who asked. Seattle Mennonite youths began helping in the process. What could have been a period of tension and sweat became, instead, a two-

hour party. Even non-conference flyers relaxed.

One airline attendant commented, “You have no idea how rough a situation like this can be on passengers and staff. What happened here was such a relief to us as staff. There are some pretty amazing people out there.”

A non-conference couple asked if the young people were planning to continue their singing on the connecting flight from Atlanta to Seattle. When told they were probably too tired, as it was now near midnight, they said, “Oh, that’s too bad. They were such a blessing to us. We enjoyed them so much. We’re on our way to Seattle to our Alaska cruise. This has provided a wonderful setting to begin.”

And what is it we “can’t keep quiet” about? “[W]e cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” Acts 4:20. So we break out in song. Thanks to a group of young people for making the theme real.

—Henry Kliever

The author was an MC B.C. executive delegate to Charlotte. The article was originally published in the MC B.C. newsletter.

Edmonton

Welcome mat out at Holyrood Mennonite

Remember the game where you're given 20 different objects to observe and later try to recall? Now try 20 new people, hear their names for the first time, then try calling them by name the next time you meet. That is a prelude to what is happening at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

Sponsored by the congregation, Jeremiah, Dixon, Thomas and Oden arrived in 2001 from Sierra Leone. They, in turn, began the process of sponsoring their wives, children, siblings, aunts and uncles from their home country of Liberia. This past summer, a great many of them arrived in a short period of time. It was natural for them to worship with their relatives at Holyrood, so it became important to find ways to welcome and get to know each other as a church family.

The leadership at Holyrood scratched their collective heads and came up with several novel ideas. Three Sundays in September were designated as "welcome" and "get acquainted" times. After the regular service, the congregation moved to the fellowship hall for getting-to-know-you activities.

As much as possible, congregants were paired with someone they did not know. Five minutes was given for them to learn their partner's name, birthplace and length of time in Canada, and then be prepared to introduce them as the mike was passed around the large circle. Participants came from such African countries as Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea and Liberia. A designated map pinner put a pin on the world map to indicate the country, state or province of birth.

Sharing favourite things, combined with a kind of musical chairs, created further interaction. Lingering chat time followed the activities with finger food snacks and beverages.

The first Sunday in October was the ribbon that tied the three September events together into a welcoming and

celebrative package of collective commitment and renewal. Taking a cue from a Passover ritual, in which a child asks the question, "Why are we here?" and the parent reiterates the reason for the occasion, seven-year-old Kessler Douglas directed this question to his mother.

Jeremiah 29:11 was the key scripture for the occasion: "*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future of hope.*"

Doreen and Hugo Neufeld, pastoral advisers, and Associate Pastor Mike Perschon shared what this verse meant to them and to Holyrood.

The renewal/commitment statement for all to sign was illustrated by five artists: Helena Ball, Dennis Breen, Paul Cook, Mike Perschon and Erin Taniguchi. Standing by their works of art, each in turn verbally reminded the congregation of the commitment they were reaffirming.

The invitation to the banquet was symbolized by a round table at the



Photo by Millie Glick

Members of Holyrood Mennonite's burgeoning multi-cultural congregation play a word association game at recent "get acquainted" church events.

front of the sanctuary beautifully and bountifully set. Everyone present was invited to come and take something to eat from the table, receive communion and sign the renewal/commitment statement, then continue on to the fellowship hall.

Musical interludes—including a mixed quartet, African group songs, and the renowned Holyrood Extencicare Singers—punctuated the potluck meal.

—**Millie Glick**

Steve Schumm was installed as pastor of Hamilton Mennonite Church on Sept. 18. Schumm is pictured signing the Covenant Regarding Ethics in Ministry in the presence of Muriel Bechtel, conference minister.



Hamilton Mennonite Church photo

Listowel, Ont.

Mennonite exhibit witnesses ‘across the street’

Each year the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo brings thousands of visitors to its host community in rural Ontario. Fred Lichti, pastor of Listowel Mennonite Church, wondered how his church could witness to the many people coming to town for the 2005 Plowing Match. Together with representatives from other Mennonite churches of the Woolwich-Grey cluster, Lichti organized a “Mennonite” display for the five-day fair held in late September.

The Mennonite exhibit was part of a huge tent city where the 100,000 visitors browsed and shopped. A steady stream of people dropped in and chatted with the volunteers. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario had a demonstration rower water pump as part of its display. Ten Thousand Villages had a large assortment of fair trade coffee, tea and cocoa, while Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) had its new early-response trailer and a display board. Mennonite



Photo by Barb Draper

Jason Martin, recently returned from Italy as a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker, took his turn knotting a comforter in the Mennonite tent at the International Plowing Match.

Church Canada Witness was also present.

In order to provide some visual interest, the local churches of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada provided quilt tops and comforters, demonstrating the art of quilting and how knotted comforters are made. Because so much of the exhibit focused on service, Lichti and his committee wanted to include some verbal witness. Every day, for about 10 minutes each hour, local Mennonite singing groups brought songs of faith to the volunteers and

visitors.

Among the visitors to the display were all sorts of Mennonites. Although some came to visit people they knew, others were able to learn more about MDS, MCC and Ten Thousand Villages. Some came to rest their weary bodies on the chairs scattered around the tent. For those who were specifically looking for the Mennonite exhibit at the plowing match, the universal complaint was that it was too hard to find in “that maze of tents!”

—**Barb Draper**

Winkler, Man.

Manitoba churches get ‘equipped’

For those who simply skimmed over the church bulletin announcement of the 2005 Equipping Conference, the opportunity for refreshing ideas and new resources was missed. For those 130 or so—representing half of the Mennonite Church Manitoba congregations—who attended the Oct. 1 event at Winkler Berghaler Mennonite Church, it proved to be an event that offered them renewed vision for their involvement in their home congregations.

Sixteen workshops offered a wide range of options to participants. Several workshops were designed for caregivers.

A popular one was “Say ‘yes’ to the calendar: Aging and mortality,” led by John Neufeld. About 25 partici-

pants listened carefully as Neufeld offered helpful ways for communities to “stand with us as we go through these diminishments...and stand with us even when we can’t speak for ourselves.”

Some participants came specifically to take in Gordon Driedger’s afternoon workshop entitled “How deacons give spiritual care in the congregation.” Many deacons and caregivers came seeking guidance and support in their efforts to serve their congregations.

Jim and Sharon Brown, members of Charleswood Mennonite Church and parents of three boys, made a generous contribution of their time in leading four workshops between the two of them.

Jim, a stewardship consultant with

Continued on page 34

Jake and Anne Neufeldt of Coaldale (Alta.) Mennonite Church celebrated their 60th anniversary on Aug. 14 with family and friends. Their motto in life has always been “O give thanks unto the Lord” Psalm 118:1. The church and Alberta Mennonite community are thankful for this couple’s heritage.



Doreen Lloyd photo

Equipped *From page 33*

Mennonite Foundation of Canada, led a workshop on "Asset mapping: Harnessing your congregation's potential," which drew a lot of interest. Jim helped participants experience a simple but creative way of identifying and encouraging the gifts in their congregations.

Sharon, who between seasonal teaching assignments at Catherine Booth College and Canadian Mennonite University, is renovating their home, brought her keen interest in Christian education to both her workshops. In the workshop, "Beyond the children's story: Worshipping with children and youth," she addressed the anxiety participants expressed about how to keep their children in church. "In the early church, Christian example played a much stronger role in the growth of the church than how they worshipped," she explained. "It was their demonstration of strong community, trust and relationship that nurtured that growth."

Of the afternoon workshops, one introducing the new Sunday school

curriculum, "Gather 'Round: Hearing and sharing God's good news," was a popular choice. Elsie Rempel of Mennonite Church Canada introduced the features of this new curriculum that builds on the strengths of "Jubilee: God's Good News," and adapts them to changing realities.

Participants appreciated the extended lunch break that allowed them to linger over interesting displays and explore a myriad of resources available to them.

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Warman, Sask.

Blocks lauded for 11 years of ministry

Friends and family gathered at the Warman Mennonite Church on Sept. 24 for a potluck farewell to honour retiring pastor Henry Block and his wife Gladys. The supper was followed by a program during which the congregation expressed its appreciation for the 11-and-a-half



Warman (Sask.) Mennonite Church presented Henry and Gladys Block with a Glen Scrimshaw print and a "memory" book on the occasion of his retirement after 11-and-a-half years as the congregation's pastor.

years of faithful service in both the church and the community.

The program included a variety of entertainment and other memorable moments. Frequently mentioned was how equally well Block worked with the various age groups and the encouragement he gave in witnessing to the community as a whole, as well as Gladys' generosity with both her time and willingness to help whenever and wherever needed. The Blocks were presented with a "memory" book as well as a Glen Scrimshaw print.

Before coming to Warman on Nov. 15, 1994, Block both taught and counselled in a Kitimat, B.C., high school for eight years. Previously, the Blocks had served as missionaries in Jamaica for approximately 10 years.

Block is looking forward to slowing down and giving more quality time to his responsibilities with MC Saskatchewan, where he will continue with his role as moderator, as well as his work with MC Canada. He adds, though, that it will be nice to be more flexible with his hours and be able to spend more time with his children and grandchildren. His wife will continue her part-time clerical position at MCC in Saskatoon.

—Warman Mennonite Church release

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w i n d o w

Making peace with God's creation

J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president

"Can we expand our Anabaptist emphasis on peace with God and all humans to include the creation itself?" Mennonite sociologist Cal Redekop asked recently in a letter to *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

His question reverberates as we read about hurricanes and resulting environmental chaos. Humans did not cause the hurricanes. But poor stewardship of the earth probably added to global climate change, making the disasters worse. Rising energy prices remind us that we are consuming irreplaceable natural resources at an increasing rate.

AMBS student Matt Hickman believes Christians must do more than join the secular environmental movement. "Save the Planet" people make the assumption that humans ourselves can save the world," he says. "We cannot, since that is God-level redemption work."

Matt cares so much about the environment

that he is helping to manage a 17-acre hardwood tree planting project at Camp Menno Haven. He also is working to reintroduce native plants at Camp Friedenswald where he is on staff. With encyclopedic knowledge of plants, animals and trees, he is passionate about his love for the natural world.

But just as it takes the intervention of God to save mortals from sin, it will take an act of God to make a "new heaven and new earth." In the meantime, followers of Jesus Christ must care for the world by Kingdom standards. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, and children of God must show the same

respect for the world that God showed through the incarnation.

AMBS is preparing to build a new facility for our library and bookstore with construction and operation in harmony with these concerns. Our goal is for this "green" building to serve as a teaching tool in creation care for all who come to campus. (See page 3.)

Theology books in the library testify that restoration of creation ultimately God's work. But we as Christians are responsible for making choices now to safeguard the natural world in obedience to Jesus, through whom all of creation someday will be set free from bondage and decay. (Romans 8:21). ●

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- 2 **New library and campus center: Vision focuses on stewardship and hospitality**
- 3 **More than books, more than students**
- 4 **Studer Bible collection Panorama**

AMBS student Matt Hickman and Nelson Kraybill look over designs for rain gardens that are planned around the new AMBS library building to capture rain water and support restored prairie grasses.



New AMBS library and campus center planned

Vision focuses on stewardship and hospitality

For a seminary, the library is the center of intellectual activity and inquiry, just as the chapel is the center of worship life. But while AMBS is undisputed in claiming to have the best Mennonite theological library collection in the world, the facilities which house it need some "home improvement."

As part of the Next Generation Campaign for Church Leadership, AMBS is working toward building a new facility, primarily for the library.

The vision for the new building encompasses several priorities for AMBS:

- Stewardship of God's creation with a commitment to building the library as a "green building," reflected in choices for design, construction and sustainable operation.
- Hospitality to welcome scholars—both students and guests—in a comfortable and convenient place for research, study, reflection and writing.
- Integration of new technologies and traditional materials to support scholarship of past generations and contemporary authors.
- Visibility of the library—and thus the seminary as a whole—as a place for scholarship, theological dialogue and pastoral training.

While the major part of the new building will be a new, completely above-ground library, other improvements also are included:

- new facilities for the AMBS Cooperative Bookstore;
- renovated space (now the library reading room) for the student lounge,

- including a coffee bar;
- renovated offices for the Church Leadership Center;
- a new foyer and gathering area with gallery space;
- reassigned space for offices, a large meeting room or classroom, and a faculty work room.

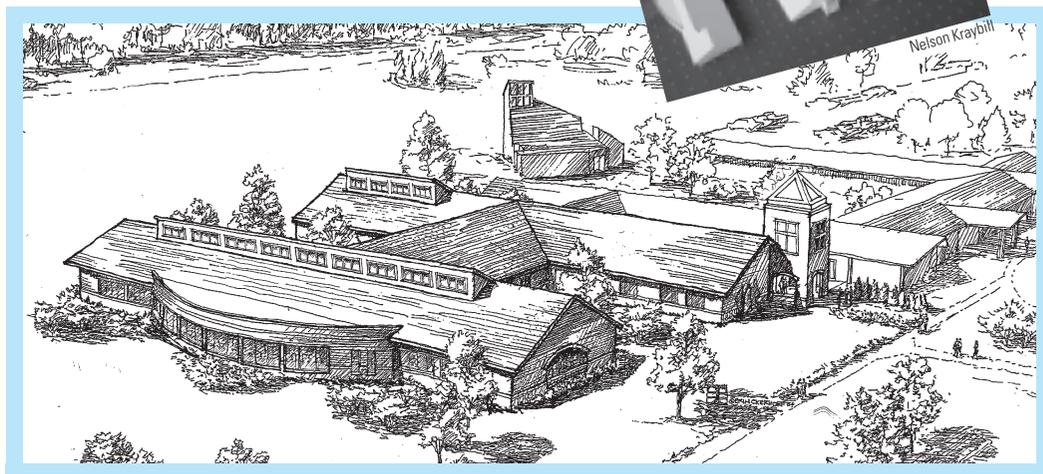
The new library facility will solve a variety of problems in the existing space, and will provide

valuable upgrades. For example, all seats in the new library will have power and data connections.

AMBS is seeking contributions to complete the funding of the construction costs so that groundbreaking can occur in spring 2006.

For more information and to make a gift, see the AMBS web site:

www.ambs.edu. Select *For Friends and Alumni*, then *Next Generation Campaign*. Or send an e-mail message to development@ambs.edu; or call 1+800-964-2627. ●



This artist's sketch shows the proposed library building in the foreground with the chapel in the background. Waltner Hall, the original AMBS building which now houses the library is at the back to the right. The inset photo shows a top-down view of the library model with Waltner Hall on the right.



The AMBS library currently consists of a reading room and workroom that were part of the original 1958 structure, a basement area for periodical stacks and a separate underground room for book stacks. Limited space, water leakage during heavy rains and lack of comfortable work stations are some of the problems in the current bookstack area that make a new library facility a priority for AMBS.

More than books, more than students

This is the only Mennonite library that supports *only* a theological educational institution,” Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian, says. “So the collection focuses on materials needed by faculty and students for training for pastoral ministry and for theological study.” The result is a Mennonite theological library unequaled anywhere else in the world.

The content of materials in the AMBS library offers scholarship in history, theology, biblical studies, pastoral ministry, church leadership and much more. But many books reveal something else—who some of the original owners were. Bookplates and notations show that early resources came from Witmarsum Seminary at Bluffton College (1921–1931), Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago (1945–1958) and H.S. Bender of Goshen College.

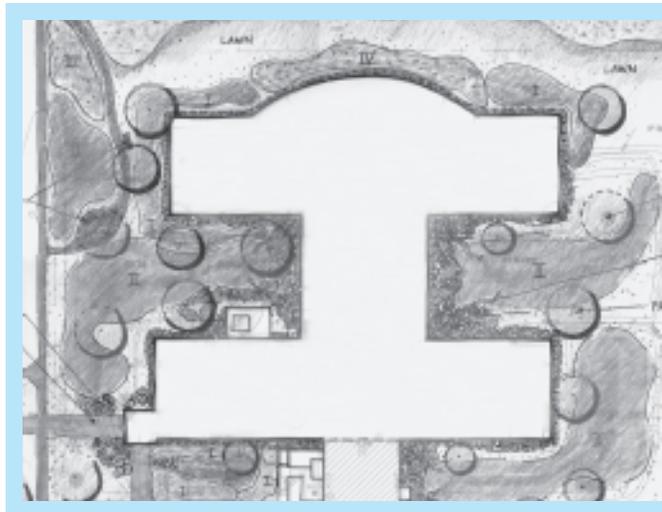
Building on these early sources, AMBS has given priority to purchasing library materials for more than half a century. The collection now comprises not only the traditional books, journals and audio-visual materials, but also subscriptions to online collections of full text journal articles and ebooks.

AMBS shares with Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., the Mennonite Historical Library which encompasses a comprehensive collection of Mennonite-Anabaptist materials. The Studer Bible collection is also a key component of the AMBS library (see page 4). In addition, the online catalog gives access to 22 other academic libraries in Indiana, including seven seminary libraries.

Users don’t have to be on campus to take advantage of the benefits of the library. Resources are available to students, pastors and others through the online catalog and library web pages:

www.ambs.edu/Library. Several hundred “community borrowers” check out materials and use the library to prepare for sermons, worship leading and teaching ministries. Each year the library responds to hundreds of requests by sending books and journal articles across North America and beyond.

Eileen emphasizes that the library is more than books and it is for more than students. “The library is fundamentally a place where people come for research, study, quiet reflection and access to the riches of the Christian tradition.” ●



The new AMBS Library is planned as a “green” building, with attention to design, construction and operation to make a minimal impact on the environment. Key decisions include:

- Ground-source heat pump for heating and cooling
- Windows that maximize daylight and provide efficient insulation
- Use of locally produced building materials (40%) that can be replenished readily
- Rain gardens surrounding the building (shown above) to make use of runoff rainwater instead of passing it on to city sewers
- Restored prairie grasses to minimize need for mowing
- Bathroom facilities that reduce water use

AMBS is working toward “gold” certification according to L.E.E.D. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.



Campaign Report

Next Generation, the fund-raising effort of AMBS, includes the following components. To find out more, see www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 9.30.05
AMBS Fund	\$ 5,800,000	Ongoing
Library	6,300,000*	\$5,727,054
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	30,700
Preaching laboratory	170,000	Fully funded
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,310,959
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,642,988
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,173,898
Other		368,923
Total	\$20,000,000	\$17,739,612 88.7%

*This goal was set in 2001; the current estimate is \$8,000,000.

Library Facts

Current books	113,000
Projected number of books in 20 years	136,000
New books and AV materials each year	1,200
Current subscriptions	500
Circulation last year:	
AMBS students	5,956
AMBS faculty	1,756
Community borrowers	1,192

Studer Bible collection enhances history and worldwide scope of AMBS library



Mary E. Klassen

Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian and director of educational resources, explores a carefully reproduced copy of the Gutenberg Bible, a donation from Gerald Studer, who has turned over his extensive collection of Bibles to the AMBS library.

Panorama

Faculty on the road

You can find out when faculty members are scheduled to speak in your area. A list of faculty travel is at www.ambs.edu; Select *Church Leadership Center*, then *Faculty on the Road*.

Pastors Week 2006

A focus on important events in congregational life is planned as Pastors Week (January 23–26, 2006) looks at weddings, funerals, baptisms and communion. Speakers include Alan Kreider, Gayle Gerber Koontz, John Rempel, Irma Fast Dueck and Eleanor Kreider. See more at www.ambs.edu; select *Church Leadership Center*, then *Pastors Week*.

Ever since he was a teenager, retired pastor Gerald Studer has been collecting Bibles. The extensive collection he has assembled spans the world and nearly five hundred years of printing history. Gerald chose the AMBS library to be the repository of his collection and recently, as he moved to a retirement home in Souderton, Pa., he made his final donation.

The six boxes that came to the AMBS library this summer included several items that are considered most valuable to collectors. Among them is a two-volume facsimile of the Gutenberg Bible, early nineteenth century printings of the Bible and New Testament and three English translations done by women.

Earlier donations from Gerald included an extensive collection of Bible story books with early 20th century imprints. Some of these have been added to the AMBS collection and duplicates were added to the Goshen College Library curriculum collection. Historic volumes will be placed in a special children's area in the new AMBS library building.

In addition to rare, old copies of the Bible, Gerald collected Bibles in many languages of the world—more than 800 languages, he has reported. AMBS has completed the cataloging of all non-English Bibles and portions of scripture, and an alphabetical list by language is available on request from AMBS Librarian, Eileen Saner, esaner@ambs.edu. ●

Alumni News

David L. Myers (Master of Divinity 1991) is executive director of Teen Living Programs in Chicago, Ill.

Linda Gehman Peachey (Master of Divinity 2004) is director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Concerns Program.

Steven M. Nolt (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1994) and Thomas J. Meyers are authors of *An Amish Patchwork: Indiana's Old Orders in the Modern World*, published in February 2005 by Indiana University Press.

Tim Schultz (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 2000) is youth minister at Clarence Center/Akron Mennonite Church and he continues studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

Fall 2005 Volume 16 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen

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People&Events

Winnipeg—Janet (Sinclair) Plenert has been appointed to succeed Robert J. Suderman as executive secretary for Mennonite Church Canada Witness; she will assume her post on Jan.

1. She has served as a mission worker with the former Commission on Overseas Mission and Mennonite Board of Missions—both of which are predecessors to both Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network (USA); and as a representative or board member with Global Mission Fellowship, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, the World Council of Churches Conference on Mission and World Evangelism and the Junta Menonita de Missões Internacionais, the mission agency of the Brazil Mennonite Church. In North America, Plenert served on mission transition teams during the transformation process of the former General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church—now Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. She currently serves as executive director of International Ministries for Mennonite Church Canada Witness. Plenert has done graduate studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. —MC Canada release



Plenert

Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Bartel—to Becky and Rick, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., a daughter, Gracyn Olivia, Sept. 19.

Dow—to Julie and Todd of Toronto, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-

Lake, Ont., a son, Noah Peter, Oct. 2.

Dueck—to Christine and Keith, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Madelyn Hope, July 4.

Gader—to Grace and Tracy, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, June Victoria, July 25.

Lebold—to Anita and Randy, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a son, Hudson Jebediah, in Jakarta, Indonesia, Oct. 2.

Markentin—to Joan and Morris, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., twin daughters, Erika Sophie and Elisa Annie, Oct. 7.

Roes—to Amanda and Scott, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., a daughter, Chloe Elizabeth, July 26.

Sawatzky—to Cheryl Koop and Jonathan Sawatzky, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Mia Koop, Aug. 16.

Sebslav—to Marion and Jason, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., a daughter, Sasha Kate, Sept. 22.

Marriages

Cressman-Johnson—Blaine and Jody (of Huntia Mennonite, Ont.), at St. Peter's Lutheran, Desboro, Ont., Oct. 1.

Froese-Bieman—Aaron (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.,) and Melanie, at Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 1.

Hamm-Reimer—Jeremy (Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.) and Jessica, at Altona, Man., July 2.

Jacomen-Nafziger—Tom and Jaime, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 8.

Lequerre-Lebold—J.R. and Gwendolyn, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Oct. 1.

McKee-Snyder—Allen and Eleanor (Kehl), Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 8.

Unrau-Toews—Tillmann and Annella, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 16.

Deaths

Baan—Martin, 90 (b. Sept. 14, 1915), Brussels Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 28.

Cressman—Clifford, 87, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Sept. 30.

Dueck—Betty, 71, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 17.

Epp—Rudy, 77, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Sept. 27.

Friesen—Sara, 85, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 19.

Hildebrand—Mary (nee Harms), 92 (b. Oct. 9, 1912), Crystal City Mennonite, Man., June 27.

Sawatzky—Anna, 96, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 20.

Siemens—Henry, 79, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-

on-the-Lake, Ont., Sept. 4.
Woolner—Ella, 82, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 4.

Baptisms

Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.—Emily Fieguth, Jake Driedger, Rita Hofmann, Ryan Pauls, Victoria Thiessen, Stephanie Wiens, May 15.
Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.—Ben Janzen, Oct. 2.

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

Taipei, Taiwan

Asian Mennonites discuss international options, ministry training camp

Discussion on the relationship of Asia Mennonite Conference (AMC) to Mennonite World Conference (MWC) was the major issue during the AMC Executive Committee meeting held in Taipei, Taiwan, last month.

"The AMC and MWC are moving closer together," said Asian chair Yoshihira Inamine, "so we need to discern what a formal relationship looks like."

Two possible options—an associate membership or an integrated partnership that allows for some autonomy by the Asian conference to conduct Asia-related programs—were debated. The consensus of executive committee members was to move towards partnership over the next few years. The discussion will continue during the MWC officers meeting in November and at the MWC General Council meetings in Pasadena, Calif., next March.

Decisions were made to conduct a discipleship ministry training camp next July for Mennonite youth in the East Asia region, possibly in South Korea. The AMC general council meeting is planned for Tokyo in October 2007, and a youth work camp is in the works for southeast Asia in 2008.

To strengthen identity and financial support, the first Sunday in June was designated as AMC Sunday.

On Sunday morning, the group attended the worship service at the Sung-Chiang Mennonite Church in Taipei. Inamine preached the sermon in Japanese, which was translated into Chinese and then via headphone into English for the guests.

—MWC release from a report by **Sheldon Sawatzky**

Mennonite Church Canada

Seasonal resources in Nov./Dec. *Equipping*

Check out the November/December *Equipping* at your church office to find:

- A family-centred “Advent/Epiphany at Home” booklet adapted by Elsie Rempel on the theme of “God’s Unstoppable Purpose”;
- A “Moment of celebration” story from Japan;
- Materials for Mennonite World Fellowship Sunday and the booklet, “Reveling in God’s Love: Praying with Psalm 36,” by Sue C. Steiner, prepared for Prayer Week 2006;
- A poster inviting contributions for quilters and fabric artists to submit original quilts, banners or wall hangings for exhibit and auction at the 2006 assembly in Edmonton;
- A Faith and Life resources update; and,
- *Vision: a Journal of Faith and Theology* published twice yearly by CMU and AMBS, which highlights the theme of worship by various writers.

Prayer requests

- Mennonite church leaders from Congo and Burkina Faso, as well as mission workers and North America mission leaders, who are gathering in France for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission meetings from Nov. 11 to 18. Janet Plenert, executive director of International Ministries, will be representing Mennonite Church Canada Witness at these meetings.
- Glenn E. Witmer in Israel, on the board of Nazareth Village, as he expands his role to include helping out with the village’s new Internet publication, *The Word on the Street*, and in promoting Nazareth Village to potential visitors

and travellers worldwide. In other roles, Witmer plays a vital part in bringing together Jews, Muslims and Christians through his teaching work at Bat Kol Institute in Jerusalem and informing readers worldwide through his e-zine, *MennoLetter from Jerusalem*.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

VBS troupe celebrates a summer well spent

“Our theme for the summer was ‘Celebrate the Psalms,’ and it felt like a celebration at every church we were at,” says Adrienne Janzen, leader of the 2005 MC Eastern Canada Vacation Bible School troupe. “Everywhere we went, we were warmly welcomed, well taken care of through the week, ministered to as we ministered to the kids, and then sent off again at the end of the week challenged and encouraged to do it all over again at the next church.”

“None of us had met before this summer, but we definitely learned a lot about each other and developed a bond after spending all of our time together,” Janzen says of her summer with troupe members Janna Cressman, Stephanie Dueck, John Keller and David Neufeld.

They also experienced an ecumenical spirit at the various congregations where they worked with people from many denominations: United, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and Christian Reformed.

They were impressed with the thoughtful and thought-provoking questions the kids asked, and with their energy as they sang together each day. Their favourite songs seemed to be “My God is so Big” and “Boogie for Jesus.”

Janzen says the children

showed creatively how they perceive God. “God is like...our favourite stuffed animal because he makes us feel safe,” said one. “God is like...ice cream on a hot day because God refreshes us,” added another.

Other memories include the letters of solidarity the junior youth wrote to their counterparts attending summer camp in Israel, and a four-year-old boy softly singing “Bwana Awabariki” (“May God Grant You a Blessing”) to himself as he waited for his parents to arrive.

“We followed the life of David and learned that just as God guided David through struggles and also good times, God is our guide too,” Janzen says. “Any success we may have had this summer was definitely a result of God’s leading and faithfulness.”

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Document to help prevent child abuse

MC Saskatchewan conference minister Ken Bechtel, on behalf of the Pastoral Leadership Commission and the Safe Churches Task Group, has issued a draft template for helping MC Saskatchewan churches create a policy to prevent abuse when working with children and youth within the context of church programs.

The detailed 20-page document covers all aspects of ministry to “children, youth and vulnerable adults.” The document is a template only, offering constructive suggestions to congregations on how to develop their own policies.

Topics such as appropriate touching, the Open Door Policy, police checks and volunteer screening are dealt with in an effort to protect churches from abuse allega-

tions and protect children from harm. According to the policy, any and all staff working with children and youth are considered high-risk for potential misunderstandings.

Concerns about the correct way to report suspected abuse are also discussed in detail.

Further resources for education are listed in the back and necessary consent forms for parents and volunteer workers to sign are also included in the package.

Tiefengrund donates carrots to food bank

On Sept. 11, the congregation at Tiefengrund Mennonite Church celebrated an abundant harvest of carrots grown specifically for the food bank in Saskatoon. The harvest was the brainchild of Lil Regier, service ministries director. Carrot seeds were handed out in the spring to church members and by the end of summer more than 1,200 pounds of produce were hauled into the church.

“As the carrots began to accumulate in the foyer, a wonderful aroma of soil and carrots filled the building,” related Janet Regier.

A carrot judging contest was held between Sunday school and the morning church service. The bright orange root vegetable was also the featured guest at a potluck following the service. Everything from carrot soup and carrot casserole down to carrot cake and carrot pie livened up the menu at this most unusual meal.

Thankful hearts over God’s goodness were evident at the bountiful harvest.

One child was asked, “Did you see a miracle when you planted the seed?”

“Yes, so little came out so big and just...lots of them,” answered 12-year-old Tenelle.

Mennonite Church British Columbia

Associate pastor joins Emmanuel staff

Rodney Wiebe is the new associate pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, as of Oct. 4. His responsibilities include ministering to youth and young adults and their families.

A 1996 graduate of Columbia Bible College, Wiebe had assisted with the youth at his home church of Olivet Mennonite and was youth pastor at Sherbrooke Mennonite in Vancouver from 1995 to 2002. He earned an M.A. in Old Testament studies at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif., earlier this year.

Wiebe, his wife Becky and two young children are making their home in Abbotsford.

West Abbotsford hosts kitchen ministry

The kitchen at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church has been busy this past year as an outlet for Community Kitchens of the Fraser Valley. Cooks from seven to ten families pool their resources once a month to prepare meals for their families, first meeting on Tuesdays to plan menus. The program coordinator buys the food needed for the selected menus and then the group gets together again on Saturdays to cook meals together, with each household taking portions home to freeze for use in the following days.

The cost of \$2.50 to \$3 per

person per meal is attractive to families on a budget, households with employed parents too busy to cook, and single people who don't like to cook for just one.

Both church members and community members are part of the group.

Wanda Hildebrandt, coordinator of the program at West Abbotsford, says anyone is welcome to join Community Kitchens. For more information, call the church office at 604-854-8181.

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

News brief

School being built near site of quake

Nearly two years after an earthquake destroyed schools and levelled public buildings in Bam, Iran, and in villages surrounding the city, the need for educational facilities remains severe. Mennonite Central Committee is providing \$240,675 to help the Iranian Red Crescent Society construct a junior high school in the village of Seyedabad, near Bam. The school will have six classrooms, computer and audiovisual rooms, a laboratory and a library.

—MCC release

The terrain that's been handed to you

I recently listened to a prominent retired businessman reflect on his career. He made frequent references to the "terrain" that surrounded his enterprise and he as its leader. Characterized by sky-high interest rates and inflation, this terrain influenced the strategies that he used to lead his enterprise more than anything else. He went so far as to say, "Leaders have to be obsessed with the terrain around them. You can only fight the battle on the terrain that's been handed to you."

Listening to this business leader, I was struck by the critical importance of locating our identity and purpose as a church in a particular terrain. The church does not exist and act in a vacuum. The church is there, as Mennonite Church Canada's Statement of Identity and Purpose says, to "engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ."

To understand the significance of the word "engage," consider what it means to be disengaged. Disengagement implies a lack of awareness of, and concern for, our surroundings. To dis-

engage is to put some distance between ourselves and a situation, or perhaps remove ourselves from it altogether. We sometimes say that people are disengaged when they act as though their surroundings

From our leaders

the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ, our church needs to be engaged with the world. We need to be obsessed with the terrain in which our ministry occurs, whether that terrain is local, national or global in scope.

How is God at work in our surroundings? What dreams and desires surround us? What challenges do our communities face, and what challenges can we expect to face in engaging them with the gospel?

We in the church are often obsessed with our own internal workings and challenges. We need to apply the same interest and attention to the terrain that surrounds us. Without a deep interest in, and love for, the communities in which our churches exist, we will not be able to

effectively "engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ."

Pam Peters-Pries is executive secretary, Support Services, Mennonite Church Canada.



Mennonite Church Canada Statement of Identity and Purpose

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

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

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

have no effect on them, or vice versa.

In contrast, engagement implies interest in, and concern for, our surroundings. To engage is to be present and active in a situation. We say that people are engaged when they immerse themselves in their surroundings, striving to affect, and be affected by, them.

To effectively engage the world with

Employment opportunities

Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the positions of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES (.75 FTE), and MISSION PARTNERSHIP FACILITATOR FOR LATIN AMERICA (.25 FTE)
(ideally both filled by one person)

Mennonite Church Canada is a dynamic and exciting place to work and serve, where the team players are enthusiastic, energetic, and strive to put their faith into practice. These positions, based in Winnipeg, Man., participate in the Christian Witness Council's mandate to lead, mobilize and resource the church to participate in holistic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in a broken world. Both positions require considerable travel within and outside of Canada. Duties would commence in January 2006 or as soon as possible.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and responsibility areas for each position, see the job descriptions posted at www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/.

A letter of intent and a resume, or any inquiries or nominations, can be directed to:

Jack Suderman, Executive Secretary, Witness
E-mail: rjsuderman@mennonitechurch.ca
Mennonite Church Canada
600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
Phone: 204-888-6781; Toll-free: 1-866-888-6785

Application processing will begin Nov. 28.



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND HEAD COOK
Silver Lake Mennonite Camp

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp invites applications for the positions of Assistant Director and Head Cook.

As part of a leadership team of three Directors, the Assistant Director will participate in hiring, leading and supporting a staff of approximately 40, giving overall direction to the children's summer camp program, and fulfilling administration duties. The position is part-time from December 2005 to April 2006 and becomes full-time from May to August.

The Head Cook is to oversee the preparation of all food and management of the kitchen at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp from the middle of June until the end of August.

For more information on either job, visit:
www.slmc.on.ca/jobs.php

Please send a letter of application, a resume and the names of two references to:

Ben Janzen, Director, c/o Silver Lake Mennonite Camp
50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
E-mail: silverlake@sympatico.ca
Deadline: Nov. 25, 2005



MCC CANADA seeks applications for the following salaried position in Winnipeg:

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Director gives leadership to staff in the MCC Canada Human Resources department. Preference will be given to candidates with a degree or diploma in Human Resources and relevant experience. Equivalent education and experience will also be considered.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership, and nonviolent peacemaking.

Contact:

Marsha Jones
Phone: 204-261-6381
E-mail: mj@mennonitecc.ca

View job descriptions on the web at: www.mcc.org

Application review will begin Nov. 15, 2005.

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

Coaldale Mennonite Church invites applications for a full-time Lead Pastor. This individual would be expected to be the Spiritual leader to a multi-generational congregation of about 300 members.

The successful candidate will be part of a Pastoral Team comprised of a Youth Pastor and Lay Ministers, and should be gifted in preaching, discipling, visitation and administration. An emphasis on evangelism and in caring for and relating to people, in both the congregation and the community, is an asset. Previous pastoral experience and education in our Evangelical Mennonite Anabaptist tradition is important.

Please forward your note of inquiry and/or resume to:

Search Committee
c/o Coaldale Mennonite Church
2316-17 Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G3
E-mail: cmchurch@telusplanet.net

Columbia Bible College announces an opening for

VICE-PRESIDENT for STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

We are seeking a Senior Administration position in Student Development for Spring 2006. For a full list of qualifications, job description, and contact information, please consult our website at: www.columbiabc.edu.

Please forward resume to the attention of Dr. Paul Wartman. Resumes will be received until October 31, 2005; the post will be open until position is filled. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed in the first instance to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

Bluffton University invites applications for the following full-time tenure-track faculty positions to begin fall 2006:

Accounting & Information Systems: Academic preparation in accounting and/or information systems required, as well as capability and willingness to bridge both fields. A terminal degree (Ph.D. or functional equivalent) will be required for tenure. Completing this degree after employment is acceptable. Candidates who are closely linked to accounting and have an MBA and CPA will be considered. Responsibilities: Teach in the areas of accounting and information systems, with some flexibility in course load depending on the candidate's expertise. Teaching at graduate and undergraduate level is expected.

Church Music & Choral Conducting: Proven excellence in church music leadership and choral conducting. Strong preference for candidate to have doctorate (or near completion) in church music or choral conducting; will consider with masters. Demonstrated excellence in university-level teaching preferred. Anabaptist/Mennonite commitment desirable. Responsibilities: Conduct at least one of four choirs, teach undergraduate courses in church music and worship. Possible other areas: Teach music history, music appreciation, applied lessons in area of expertise, or direct musical.

English/TESOL: Ph.D. in rhetoric/composition, linguistics, or English (ABD will be considered), with advanced degree in TESOL. Background/experience in public school teaching desirable. Responsibilities: Direct growing TESOL program (minor and education endorsement), teach TESOL and language courses, composition, and general education courses, including possible involvement in active cross-cultural program.

Psychology: Ph.D., ABD, or international equivalent required upon appointment. Evidence of excellence in teaching and interest in mentoring students. Areas of specialization open, but preference given to candidates with interests in industrial-organizational, cross-cultural, applied social or community psychology. Responsibilities: Teach a variety of courses in the major, and in the general education program. Opportunities to teach in Peace and Conflict studies, masters program in Organizational Management and other business courses.

Religion/Theology: Ph.D. required (ABD considered). Specialization in Theology. The successful applicant will be a creative theologian deeply rooted in the Anabaptist and Mennonite traditions, history and theology. Commitment to these ideals as realized in Bluffton University's mission is essential. Responsibilities: Teach a variety of undergraduate theology courses. Expected to contribute to the general education and adult degree completion programs. Ability to teach in the area of Liberation Theology, broadly considered, is desirable (Womanist Theology, Political Theology, Economic Theology, Theologies attentive to World Religions). Participation in scholarly and churchly activity expected.

Social Work: MSW degree from an accredited social work program and minimum of two years of practice experience is required. Ph.D. or ABD preferred. Should have, or be eligible for, Ohio's practice license at Licensed Independent Social Worker level. Demonstrate effective teaching skills and experience. International experience is a plus. Responsibilities: Teach a range of introductory, human behaviour social environment, mezzo-practice, human diversity, and policy courses, as well as occasional general education course. Serve as director of fieldwork activities, placing students for spring semester internships, and providing orientation for new field instructors. Scholarship is supported and service activities with community/church are encouraged.

Review of applications begins Nov. 15 and continues until an appointment is made. Compensation for these positions is commensurate with education and experience within the

university pay scale. Send letter of interest, resume or curriculum vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or, if necessary, from placement office), and official transcripts to:

Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs
Bluffton University
1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104, USA
Visit: www.bluffton.edu

Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified persons who respect the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.



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Send resume asap to:

Layne Bieber, HR Assistant
Email: layne@mccscs.com
Fax: 604-850-2634

Apply online at www.mccscs.com/jobs

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c/o Karl Wiebe

145 Henderson Hwy, Winnipeg, MB R2L 1L4

Phone: 204-668-3244

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Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Mongolia movement offers hope covered in felt

Nima used to spend her time digging through trash. She looked for heavy cardboard or plastic shopping bags without too many holes.

The cardboard helped cover the cracks riddling the exterior of Nima's *ger*, a traditional, portable felt tent that is home for many Mongolians. The bags, secured with transparent tape, covered the roof. Neither stopgap worked well. Despite using a great deal of coal and wood for heat, the widow and her three children wore coats through the winters and spent much of their time patching holes.

Today, Nima's family has a new home.

They live on the same small lot with no running water and a single electric wire strung 100 metres to the nearest pole. But their new *ger* has a solid cover to protect them from the rain and two layers of felt to keep them warm. They use less fuel, do not worry about shelter and no longer dig through garbage.

Thanks to the shelter relief project through Joint Christian Services International (JCS) and the Swiss Agency for Development

and Cooperation, 400 families in Bayankhongor, Gobi-Altai and Zavkhan provinces have new homes.

Marlow Ramsay, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) worker, gave oversight to the giveaways. Ramsay is team leader of development operations for Witness partner JCS in Mongolia.

"Receiving a *ger* that is warm and does not need a lot of repair can make the difference between a sustainable livelihood or sinking further into poverty," Ramsay says.

Since Mongolia began separating itself from the Soviet bloc 15 years ago, the country's social safety net has worn through. Several dry summers and winter *dzud*—weather disasters where heavy ice and snow build-up prevents animals from grazing—added to the nomadic herding community's hardships. The animals provide food, fuel through their dung, and shelter with their wool and skins.

Project coordinators establish local committees in each community they enter—both rural and urban. The committees, working with local governments, choose the needy families to be helped. They look for young families in overcrowded conditions, people whose *gers* have burned, or struggling families that are not destitute. Project organizers hope the new *gers* will allow overcrowded families the extra boost they need to thrive.

Nima says her new *ger* looks good, has a lighter interior and has changed her family's self-image. Her Grade 9 daughter now invites friends home for the first time in years. Living in a whole home gives

them hope that other things can change in their lives and in the lives of others.

A widow for more than a decade, Nima talks with other single mothers in her area, inspiring them to stay positive and inviting them to Chungsung (Heaven and Earth) Church, which she attends. In 1998—a year when she struggled with health problems while raising her young children—coincided with her new Christian faith, and gave her hope, help and support. Now she has a better home.

"The *gers* do not solve all their problems," Ramsay says, "but they give [people] a hand up to the next level, where they can address other issues in their lives."

Marlow and Vicky Ramsay have served with JCS through MC Canada Witness and MMN since 1999. They live in Ulaanbaatar. Their oldest daughter, Rebekah, lives in Alberta, and their youngest daughter, Jessica, is a boarding student at Faith Academy in Manila.

JCS is a consortium of international Christian agencies working together as one non-governmental organization to meet physical, spiritual and intellectual needs of the people and nation of Mongolia.

—Ryan Miller

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(see ad page 44)

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Marlow Ramsay, left, stands with Nima, a Mongolian widow who received a *ger* through a JCS International giveaway project Ramsay helped oversee.



Photo by John Mark Derbyshire, JCS International

Collaborative worship conference planned

Abbotsford, B.C.—The worship arts department at Columbia Bible College is partnering with Emmanuel Mennonite Church (EMC) to present “Come to the table: A conference on the arts in worship” next May 26 and 27.

Keynote speakers June Alliman Yoder, Marlene Kropf and Rebecca Slough (all from AMBS) will explore the theme of collaborative worship, and workshops will explore dance, drama, visual arts, writing for worship, storytelling and more.

This is a conference for pastors, song leaders, artists, dancers, musicians, writers and worship leaders. It’s a conference for anyone interested in a collaborative approach to worship.

Brochures and online registration information will be available after Christmas. For more information now, contact Angelika Dawson by e-mail at music@emmanuelmennonite.com.

—EMC release
by **Angelika Dawson**

Calendar

British Columbia

Nov. 18-20: Senior Youth IMPACT Retreat at Camp Squeah.

Nov. 19: “Gather ‘Round” Sunday school curriculum introduction with Elsie Rempel, Emmanuel Mennonite Church, 9 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact office@emmanuelmennonite.com.

Nov. 27: Advent/Christmas Music Fest for MC B.C. churches at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, 2:30 p.m., followed by *faspa* and fellowship. For more information, call Trudy Goertzen at 604-596-9202 or Amy Dueckman at 604-854-3735.

Dec. 3: “Oratorio for AIDS at Eben-Ezer Mennonite

Church, Abbotsford, 7:30 p.m., in support of MCC HIV/AIDS projects. For tickets call MCC B.C. office at 604-850-6639.

Dec. 3,4: Advent vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (3), and Knox United Church, Vancouver (4). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

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

Jan. 27-29: Missions Fest, Vancouver.

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

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

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

April 21: Columbia Bible College spring concert.

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

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

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

Alberta

Nov. 19: Caring for Ex-prisoners conference with David Milgaard and Rev. Pierre

Allard, Foothills Alliance Church, Calgary, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, call 403-275-6935.

Nov. 25-26: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta fall workshop at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury. Theme: “Rise and decline of Bible schools in Alberta.” Speaker: Bruce Gunter. For more information, call Henry Goerzen at 403-335-8414.

Dec. 1: World AIDS Day “Generations at Risk” fundraiser with special guest speaker and entertainment in Calgary.

Saskatchewan

Nov. 12: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan’s Genealogy Day at Bethany Manor, 9:30 a.m.

Nov. 19, 26, 29: Ten Thousand Villages Festival Sales—Bethany Mennonite Church, Lost River (19); Rosthern Mennonite Church (26, 1 to 4 p.m.); Bethany Manor, Saskatoon (29).

Dec. 3-4: Handel’s *Messiah*, Bethany College, Hepburn.

Dec. 10, 17: Buncha’ Guys concerts—Knox United Church, Saskatoon (10); Shekinah Retreat Centre (17); 7 p.m. both evenings. For tickets, call 306-249-3650.

Dec. 18: RJC Christmas concert, 2:30 p.m.

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

Manitoba

Nov. 9-10: John and Margaret Friesen Lecture at CMU: “Recovering a heritage: The Mennonite experience in Poland and Russia.” Presenter: Peter Klassen, professor emeritus of history, California State University.

Nov. 11-13: Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake. To register, call 895-2267 or e-mail

camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.
Nov. 12: Loren Hiebert and Rosemary Siemens CD release concert with guests An Even Seven, 7:30 p.m., Buhler Hall, MCI, Gretna.

Nov. 18: House of Doc concert, 8 p.m., Buhler Hall, MCI, Gretna.

Nov. 18-20: Canadian Mennonite education leaders gathering at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Theme: “Church and church school: Committed partners or a company of strangers?”

Nov. 19: CMU alumni recital featuring Xin Want, soprano, and Leanne Regehr, piano; 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 20: First Mennonite Church Choir presents Brahms Requiem Mass, 7 p.m., First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Featured soloists: Victor Engbrecht and Mary Jane Hiebert.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

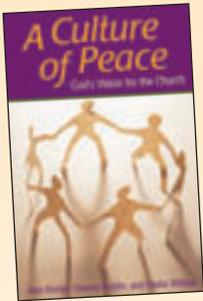
March 3-5: Families, friends and persons with a disability retreat at Camp Assiniboia.

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

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

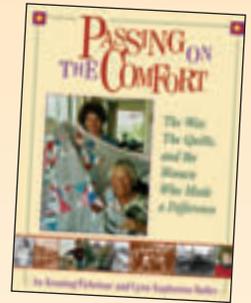
June 5-7: Plus 55 retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Suggestions for Discussion Groups



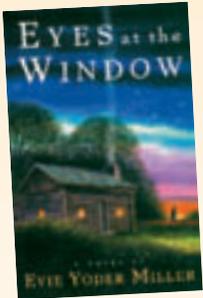
A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church,
by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, and Paulus Widjaja

A thoughtful, engaging new book. For churches and individuals. "A clear, winsome articulation." — Ron Sider. \$9.99 (U.S.), \$13.95 (Can.), paper



Passing on the Comfort: The War, the Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference, by An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller

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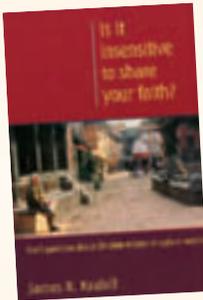
Eyes at the Window, a novel by Evie Yoder Miller

This acclaimed historical novel, literary and engaging, explores the many pluses and minuses of Christian community. "First-rate writing." — Library Journal. \$11.95 (U.S.), \$16.95 (Can.), paper



House Calls and Hitching Posts: Stories from Dr. Elton Lehman's career among the Amish, as told to Dorcas Sharp Hoover

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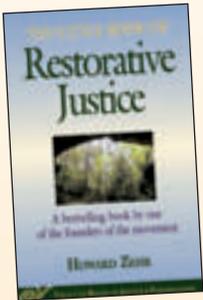
Is It Insensitive to Share Your Faith? by James R. Krabill

Excellent discussion piece for adults, young adults, and youth. Krabill deals with questions often not discussed at church. \$9.99 (U.S.), \$13.95 (Can.), paper



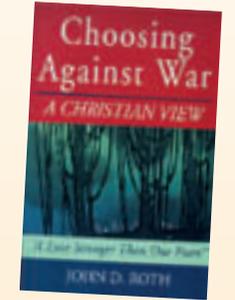
The Bible: A History, by Stephen M. Miller and Robert V. Huber

Lively, beautiful presentation in an accessible format. Authoritative look at the many questions through the ages. "Superb." — Gerald C. Studer. \$29.95 (U.S.), \$41.95 (Can.), hardcover



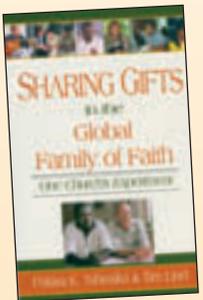
The Little Book of Restorative Justice, by Howard Zehr

This book is the bestseller in its field. Zehr is known around the world for his insights on the subject. Great for discussion. \$4.95 (U.S.), \$6.95 (Can.), paper



Choosing Against War: A Christian View, by John D. Roth

How might Christians look on the world differently if they actually believed that God's love was indeed stronger than our fears? "A fine contribution." — Mennonite Quarterly Review. \$9.99 (U.S.), \$13.95 (Can.), paperback



Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith, by Pakisa K. Tshimika and Tim Lind

A great resource for discussion. What are gifts? What is need? How does this conversation play between churches north and south? This book has been very useful for many groups. \$6.95 (U.S.), \$9.95 (Can.), paper



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