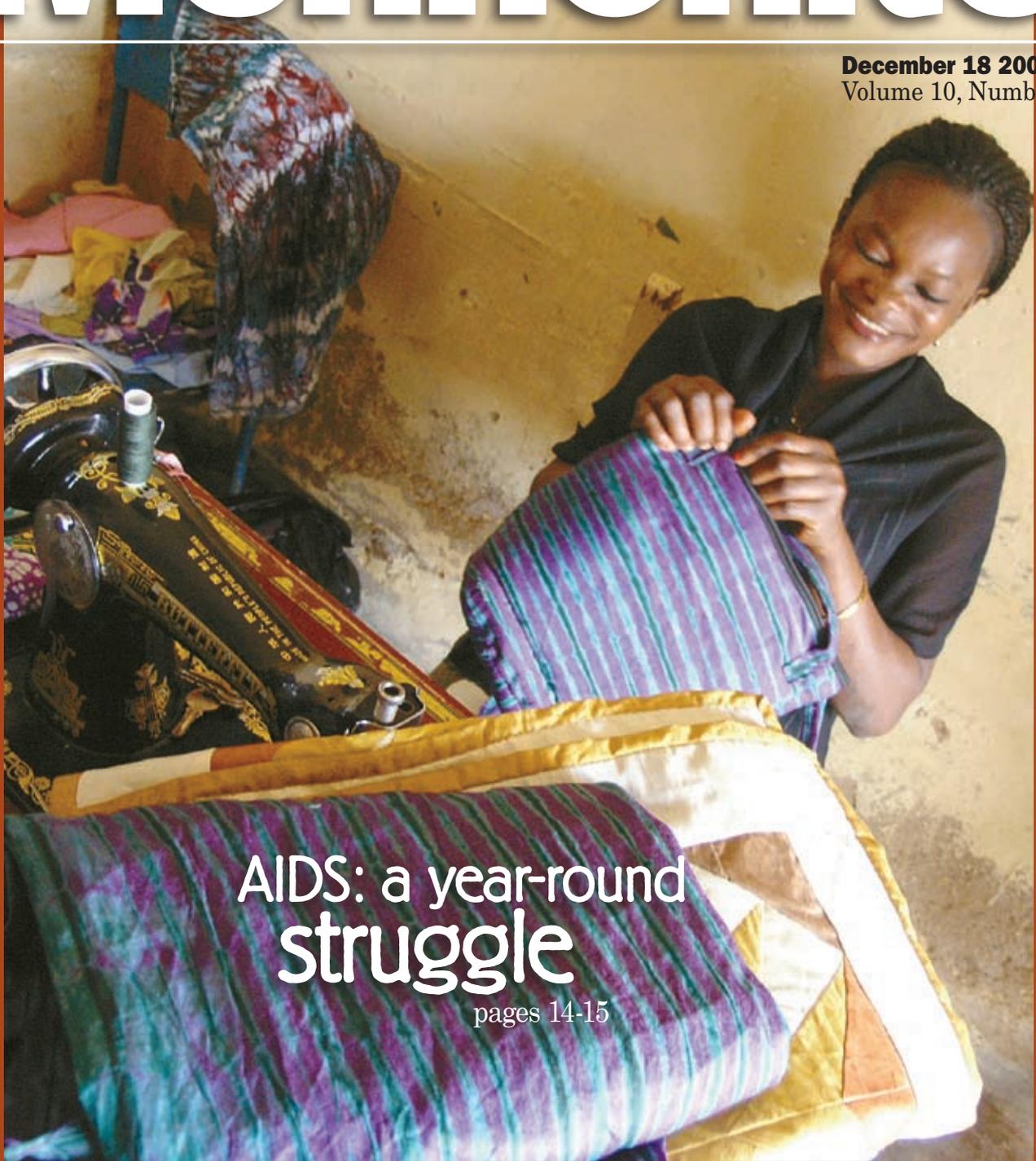


C A N A D I A N

Mennonite

December 18 2006
Volume 10, Number 24



**AIDS: a year-round
struggle**

pages 14-15

**Space and
time for God**

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Choosing Jesus' way

“How do we punish those who have wronged us?” That was the lead-in question during a national radio interview earlier this month with two of the Christian Peacemaker Teams members who were kidnapped a year ago in Iraq. In fact, it was on Dec. 8, 2005, that the captors holding the four CPT members first threatened to kill their hostages if demands were not met. One of them, Tom Fox, was later killed.

That was thought to be the end of it. But now Iraqi authorities have arrested a group of men for the CPT kidnappings. If convicted, they will likely be executed, as kidnapping is a capital crime in Iraq.

Exactly a year after their own first death sentence passed them by, the three CPT staff members who lived spoke about the men they now may see again in an Iraqi courtroom.

“We unconditionally forgive our captors for abducting us and holding us,” said Norman Kember, James Loney and Harmeet Sooden. “We have no desire to punish them. Punishment can never restore what was taken from us.

What our captors did was wrong. They caused us, our families and our friends great suffering. Yet we bear no malice towards them and have no wish for retribution.” They also go on to say they categorically oppose the death penalty.

Our society’s approach is that punishment equals justice. The ultimate punishment—death—destroys any chance for reconciliation and restitution. On the other hand, doing nothing tears at the human worth of the victims and doesn’t respond to evil deeds.

Jesus called us to a third approach—to respond in ways that use love to build a bridge between human justice and God’s judgment. Theologian Walter Wink writes that Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, is teaching those harmed by violence how to recover the initiative and assert their dignity. “The rules are Caesar’s, but how one responds to the rules is God’s, and Caesar has no power over that.”

Responding in ways that confound human wisdom is Christian witness, and we need all the more of it in our violent world as we prepare to enter the new year.

—Tim Miller Dyck



Photo by Myrna Miller Dyck

Canadian Mennonite’s head office staff (pictured) and our six correspondents from across the country wish you God’s grace and peace in the coming year. From left to right, back row: Lisa Jacky, Ross W. Muir, Tim Miller Dyck and Barb Draper; front row: Karen Suderman and Tim R. Dyck.

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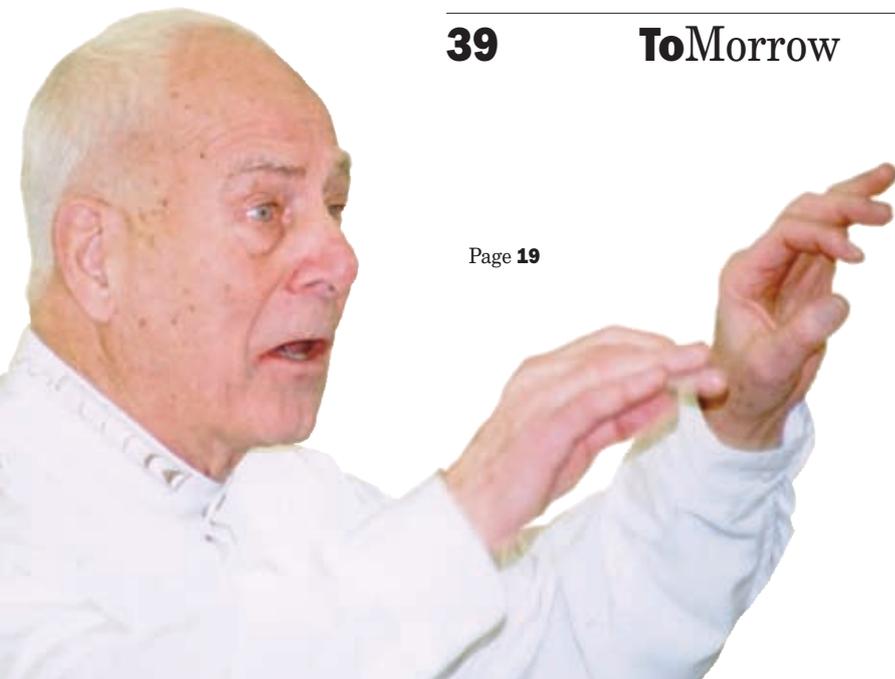


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Electronic delivery

All subscribers can get the complete contents of *Canadian Mennonite* delivered free by e-mail or view selected articles online. For either option, visit our website at canadianmennonite.org. The Jan. 8 online issue will be ready by Jan. 4.

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Cover: In Jos, Nigeria, HIV-positive women like Mary Obot are trained in sewing at the Faith Alive Sewing Annex. The school, supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), was started by Blessing Daniel, a woman living with AIDS who graduated from the sewing school income generation program through Faith Alive Hospital. For coverage of MCC activities relating to World AIDS Day, see pages 14-15. —MCC photo by Sarah Adams

Leamington, Ont.

Colombian refugee recalls a life of fear

This is the story of how Nelcy Martinez Padilla went from being a middle-class working mother in Colombia to a refugee fleeing with three sons to Canada, where they eventually settled in Leamington.

To a Canadian audience her story seems closer to fiction than reality, in that it shares so many of the hallmarks of a Hollywood movie plot—kidnappings, narrow escapes and sacrifices. Padilla has lived through things that many Canadians cannot begin to understand. She has seen one brother shot and another taken by the paramilitary, never to be seen again; she has been kidnapped by armed men and kept against her will, never knowing whether she would live to see her family.

As a single mother, Padilla raised three children in central Colombia, worked hard at multiple jobs and took university courses in her spare time. She worked hard to make a comfortable living for herself and her family.

One defining character trait that has shaped the course of Padilla's life—for good and ill—has been her stubbornness and drive. She entered the work force at a young age to help support her family, and worked diligently to become a secretary for the local mayor, a prestigious although low-paying job. To supplement her income, she sold cosmetics, eventually becoming the director of sales for the company.

While hard work rewarded her with financial security, it came at the expense of her physical security. It was her hard-won comfortable living that brought her to the attention of the paramilitary forces that controlled the area of Colombia where she lived.

According to Padilla, the paramilitary would often ask "favours"



Photo by Tim Miller Dyck

Nelcy Martinez Padilla and her three sons, Luis, Diego and Roland, are pictured with Vicki Dick, a member of North Leamington United Mennonite Church.

of civilians, including "borrowing" money and cars. These cars are often used in kidnappings—and sometimes even murders—of suspected guerrilla sympathizers. The "paras," as she calls them, asked her for such a favour—and she boldly refused.

Soon after her refusal, the paramilitary broke into her apartment, put a gun to her head, and dragged her out past her mother, sister and young son. Although Padilla bravely told her family that she would be fine, none of them believed it. She was then taken to the paras' camp, where she was kept with other kidnap victims.

While Padilla was held at the camp, her family and allies worked hard to ensure that she would not become one of the "disappeared." The local mayor made phone calls on her behalf and bribed the *commandante* with a considerable amount of money to guarantee her release. The length that Padilla's family and friends went to save her life is a testament to their love for her.

After 16 days of captivity, the paramilitary released Padilla with the clear warning that she had 24 hours to leave the area or she would certainly be killed. Grateful to be alive, Padilla packed up as much as she could and travelled to Bogotá, the Colombian capital, before the day was out. The mayor performed yet another act of

kindness and generosity by continuing to pay Padilla her salary for a year despite the fact that she no longer could work for him.

She worked in Bogotá but could not find sufficient employment to maintain the lifestyle she had before. To complicate her situation, the *commandante* who had released Padilla had been arrested on multiple charges of kidnapping and murder. The paramilitary tracked her down and told her that unless she testified in court that she had never been kidnapped, her family would be killed. This time Padilla did not dare refuse their demands—and she lied to save her family.

This ended any illusions of safety that she still had, and Padilla started the application process to come to Canada as a refugee.

The Leamington Area Ecumenical Refugee Committee entered Padilla's life and story at this point. Founded in 2005, the committee is composed of members of local Protestant congregations (including North Leamington United Mennonite Church) who volunteer their time and resources to sponsor refugees. Padilla and her three sons—Luis, Diego and Roland—were the first refugees the committee has helped.

Padilla is now safe, and gratefully so. She is happy she no longer has to live in fear for her safety or that of her children, but she still worries for her family left behind in Colombia.

Her stubbornness and determination will serve her well in Canada. She is working hard to learn English quickly, and laughs when she remembers her early days in Canada when she cooked without tomatoes and onions because she did not know their English names.

There are still hardships to be overcome as she sets up her new life in Leamington, but she approaches them with renewed strength and determination, confident that these problems can be overcome.

—**Kaycee Haig**

A longer version of this article originally appeared in the Leamington Post newspaper.

Edmonton

Bread for the hungry

I'm a pastor, but I've never seen a burning bush, been blinded on a Damascus road, or witnessed tongues of fire resting on God's people. There are, however, times when less dramatic events convince me of God's presence. One such epiphany happened on World Communion Sunday, when worship and life collided, and God stood in our church foyer.

"This morning, our communion plates will serve a variety of breads, symbolic of the many different peoples in the world. I invite you to take a few moments to think about the people represented by this variety," I told the congregants on Oct. 1, as pita, bannock, rice cakes, tortillas and buns were decoratively arranged around

the chalice and golden communion plates. A cheap white loaf, left in its garish plastic bag, ruined the symmetry of the table setting. It sat there, conspicuous, not fitting onto the plate with the rest. This loaf symbolized people forced

by circumstance to rely on charity for daily sustenance.

The service ended, communion glasses clinking into their little wooden holders, and we prayed from *Sing the Journey*, "Suffering God, who bears the wounds of the world with the strength of love, stand with us, that we may willingly carry Christ's compassion into the pain of the world. In the name of the Wounded One. Amen."

Afterward, as the congregation mingled, I came down from the pulpit to notice a church member speaking with a stranger in the foyer. The newcomer wore dirty work clothes and he needed a shave. He smiled hopefully and told his story. He said his sandblasting job was not enough to pay the bills because of a sudden rent increase. He and his wife and two teenage sons didn't have enough money for groceries this month. Could we help?

It's hard, sometimes, to know how to respond to these requests. I do not doubt that a need exists, but is it what

the person says it is? We've been lied to before, and will be again, so how do we best help someone? Has this particular man been here before? Is he doing the rounds of area churches? These questions, and more, ran through my head as I considered a response.

As he gratefully accepted the offer of a food voucher, I remembered my garden behind the church. Recent rains had delayed the harvest.

"Would you like some fresh potatoes and carrots? You'll have to dig them yourself," I told him.

He eagerly shovelled through the cold mud, filling a couple of bags with produce. As he dug, I gathered the leftover communion bread. Along with

fresh potatoes and carrots, and a food voucher, he left with fresh buns and bread and a smile.

"Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17).

On World Communion Sunday, worship and work were one. God was among us as the communion bread fed people in both spirit and body.

—**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**

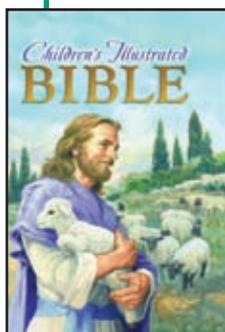
The author is co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.



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He said his sandblasting job was not enough to pay the bills.

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Like other North Americans, Mennonites often find their lives get cluttered throughout the year. Which is why some turn to New Year's resolutions as a way to make a clean start—everything from wanting to lose weight to promising to be a better person. While these may be laudable goals, what does God ask of us? Micah 6:8 tells us what is both good and required of us: doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with our God. But walking humbly with our God implies making both space and time for God—something worth resolving to do at any time of year.

When I was growing up in southern Ontario in the 1950s and '60s, the Mennonite Brethren congregation I belonged to gathered frequently, holding services Sunday morning and evening, together with Sunday school, Wednesday evening children's program and prayer meeting, Friday night choir practice and youth meeting, monthly membership meetings, yearly "deeper life" services, summer Vacation Bible Schools and special outreach events.

These weekly, monthly and annual routines immersed us in a rich variety of activities—or Christian disciplines—that regularly broke into the work-a-day routine of our family to "clear space." In these breaks of cleared time, we "paid attention" to God and one another. As our lives were centred in the disciplines of worship, learning and service, we "connected" with God and one another.

Half a century later—especially in urban settings, but in rural communities also—the congregational calendar must compete for our presence and attention. Demanding work schedules, dual career families, sports, entertainment of all kinds and community activities have successfully crowded into the congregational schedule. As a result, there is limited time to clear space for God and God's people.

Even though we desire a personal relationship with Jesus, we don't have space for him. So how can we satisfy

this spiritual hunger? Many people today are turning to spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines—the practice of clearing space, paying attention and being connected.

In June 2005, for example, some 1,600 Christians from across the denominational spectrum and around the world gathered in Denver, Col., for *Renovaré*, an international conference on church renewal and spirituality led by Richard J. Foster. At the same time, people are signing up for courses in spiritual formation at monasteries and seminaries alike. Vesper services are attracting people who want to find a quiet, considered way to encounter God. And Mennonite pastors are being trained as spiritual directors so they can serve those in their congregations who are seeking a deeper spiritual life.

How can people who want more from their relationship with God practise spiritual formation? To begin with, it helps to see that it's not something that is just for Catholics—a common misconception among Protestants and many Mennonites as well.

Richard Foster, a Quaker, insists that historic Christianity—of whatever tradition—is energized by six streams of awareness and practice:

- Contemplation—meditative and prayerful attention to the Bible.
- Holiness—careful, obedient, accountable attention to our daily walk.
- Being Spirit-led—being open to guidance and to the extraordinary ministries of the Holy Spirit in our present experience.
- Evangelical—being biblically

centred in our thinking and doing, coupled with a passion for evangelism.

- Compassionate—being committed to, and active in, the ministries of mercy and justice.
- An incarnational life—being focused on recognizing and cooperating with the action of God in the small things of daily life.

These, Foster says, are ways of following Jesus that transcend denominations.

C. Arnold Snyder writes about Anabaptist and Mennonite spirituality. In his recent book, *Following in the Footsteps of Christ: The Anabaptist Tradition* (Orbis, 2004), Snyder states, “Anabaptist spirituality marked the challenging path that retains its prophetic activity today, calling for surrender to the Spirit of the living God in all things, putting Christ’s way into concrete practice in the ‘real world’ by following in his footsteps.”

We can also look back to the wisdom of the early Christian saints, both eastern and western. They have left us records of how they followed Christ while living in the tension between the realities of daily life and the ideals of God’s kingdom. Amidst these tensions, they teach us to constantly and regularly activate our good intentions to attend to God’s love, care and correction that are already present, but sometimes hidden, in the stuff of our daily routines.

Finally, when we begin to become aware of our spiritual hunger, we need not—and should not—imagine that the answer is to throw ourselves into a frenetic spate of pious activities. Most often, the simplest action is the best and the wisest.

A few moments of quiet, captured upon rising or retiring, or as we take a walk during our coffee break, or when we find ourselves alone in the kitchen with the dishes—these are powerful beginnings. In these moments of space, cleared from our activity, we can simply bend our thoughts toward God, perhaps doing nothing more than acknowledging—without self-recrimination—that we regret God’s frequent absence from our conscious life. Perhaps we can simply repeat the historic prayer, “Lord, have mercy!”

Creating this space can signal to the Holy Spirit that we are open to God.

It may even help us see that God is already there in our experience, waiting for us to see and accept love and grace.

Such intention, patiently accepted and activated, can lead to other healthy spiritual practices that are suited to our needs and disposition.

We may begin experimenting with *lectio divina* (divine reading), an approach to Bible reading that blends reading, prayer, meditation and silence.

Another option would be to begin journaling our prayers and, when we have finished writing, sit in silence to hear—and perhaps even to record—what the Holy Spirit might be saying to us in response.

A half-hour spent praying for the coming worship service and meditating on the sermon text, if it is known, can renew our experience of worship.

Taking the risk of meeting with a spiritual director can open our eyes to God’s presence in our experience and enhance our awareness of how we respond to that presence.

Books such as Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline*, Dallas Willard’s *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, or Marjorie Thompson’s *Soul Feast* (all contemporary Protestant works on Christian spirituality) can encourage us with the many options before us in addressing our spiritual hunger.

No two spiritual pathways are alike, but each of our pathways is opened before us as we clear space in our daily life—space for attention to God, and to the connecting such attention brings to our awareness of God and others around us.

—Gerry Ediger

The author is associate professor of Christian history at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, where he also teaches Christian spirituality.

Do you have the time?

We often ask other people if they “have the time.” How simple and benign this question appears on the surface. How complex and profound it becomes when we contemplate the double entendre.

I hold in my hands two important symbols—my watch, which I call my “pace maker,” and my date book, the other “good book” around which I shape my life! Do you see how idolatrous this can get?

Do you manage your time? Or does it manage you? It is another stewardship question, I suppose. And about it, as well as about money, Jesus might say, “*You cannot serve two masters.*”

We are so busy communicating with our e-mails and cell phones that we hardly take the time to ask whether God is saying anything in this world. We have lost the ability to do what God invites us to in Psalm 46:10: “*Be still and know that I am God.*”

The English poet T.S. Elliot says it this way: “Where shall the word be found? / Where will the word resound? / Not

Continued on page 8

Creating this space can signal to the Holy Spirit that we are open to God.

Time From page 7

here, there is not enough silence.”

Eugene H. Peterson, in a *Christianity Today* article several years ago, said that we are “an entire culture living on the edge of panic.”

Have you ever heard people say they are “killing time”? On one level that means simply “putting in time” or “biding our time” until something important shows up.

“Killing time” can also take on a deeper, more damaging meaning. How odd it is that we have more leisure hours as a society than anyone could have imagined a century ago, with our 36- to 40-hour work-weeks. Yet we are not leisurely!

In fact, we are dying by the thousands of heart failure and strokes. We are anxious and we are in a hurry. But hurry kills; speed kills—on our highways and other places, too. This is “killing time.”

We know it takes time to build friendships and relationships in family life, in congregational life and in community. If we hardly have time for each other, that, too, is “killing time.” It kills family life, community life, church life, and it’s rather hard on marriages too.

Between chronos and kairos

The writer of Ecclesiastes 3 says there is “a time for everything under heaven.” On one level, he is talking about chronological time, which can be measured by watch or calendar. On another level, though, he is speaking of *kairos* time or “meaningful” time.

How differently you might look at each day if you saw yourself standing always in this place between time and eternity. How differently you might look at each day if you sang with the Psalmist, “*This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.*” The wall plaque says it this way: “Time is a gift of God; that’s why it’s called ‘the present.’” It is a present we can give as well as receive. We can “give of our time” for others.

We cannot manage time; that is a contradiction in terms. It simply marches on towards an eternal goal. It cannot be stretched, added to, or even saved, although many people may be trying to sell you a “time-saving” device.

Consider the words of Ecclesiastes 3, where the author lists “a time” for many things. As we contemplate time in respect to our families, perhaps we can add to the list: “A time to eat, and a time to run!” Or, “a time to watch TV, and

a time to turn the darn thing off.”

Our children were invited at an early age to live in Mr. Rogers’ neighbourhood. Now as an adult, every month or two I get a call from Rogers Cable, wondering if I wouldn’t like to sign up and once again live in Mr. (Ted) Rogers’ neighbourhood!

I resist for two reasons. First, it is costly, and second, I don’t need any more incentive to spend even more time “surfing” the channels, instead of giving time to family and friends. We have allowed culture around us to define how we should spend our time. We have set before us a huge buffet table of possible activities.

How do we get off this merry-go-round? Someone has to say, “Whoa! Enough already!” Someone has to say, “Gimme a break!”

Actually, God has already done that for us; God has given us a break. It’s called Sabbath. Now, there is an old word that hardly anyone uses any more. But perhaps we need to bring the word back.

It all begins at the beginning. After God created the world—in a liturgical pattern described as six days—it is said, “*God rested on that day and God blessed that day and made it holy*” (*Genesis 2:3*).

In other words, God said there should be a “holiday” (the term is an old short form of “holy day”) every seventh day. On that day, we remember who we are and whose we are. We are made by God to relate to God, a relationship that takes time to cultivate. And on that day, we meet as the people of God to worship, celebrate God’s goodness, offer hospitality, visit family and maybe even take an afternoon nap.

Such time is full of meaning when we take time to meet with others in worship, friendship and hospitality in the bonds of love, because in such times we enhance our walk with God and each other.

And as you pause to reflect in silence in your own personal space, you come to the realization that you stand always in this place between time and eternity.

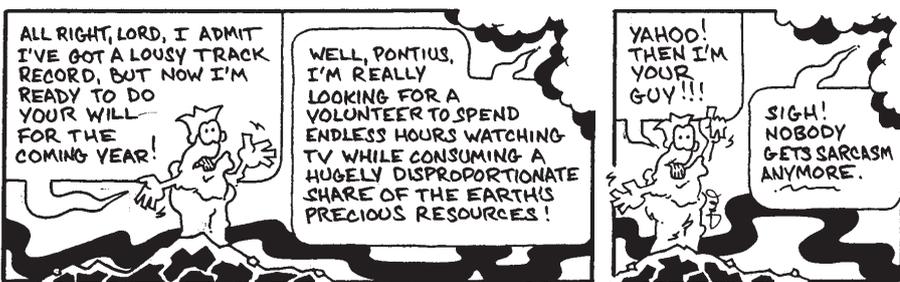
—Maurice Martin

The author, former minister at Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., adapted a sermon he preached to create this article.

God has given us a break. It’s called Sabbath.



Pontius' Puddle



‘Refreshing winds’ of worship

Canadian Mennonite continues its three-part series on worship in preparation for the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Refreshing Winds conference in January. Below, Greg Wiebe reports on the recent J.J. Thiessen Lectures, at which Christian ethicist Joel Shuman presented his thoughts on the connection between worship and bioethics. The final part of the series (Jan. 8) will provide reflections on worship issues close to the heart of three CMU staff members.

To live is to worship: Thiessen Lectures explore bioethics and worship

Worship and bioethics don't seem like they would have much in common. But, according to Joel Shuman, who teaches Christian ethics and bioethics at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., they are not as distinct as might first be thought.

Shuman, the speaker at this year's Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) J. J. Thiessen Lectures, provided a glimpse into the ongoing conversation between worship and medical ethics with a series of lectures entitled "To live is to worship: Bioethics and the Body of Christ."

To say that worship and bioethics are now connected assumes falsely that the two were separate to begin with, according to Shuman, who subtitled his opening talk, "Why worship is bioethics and vice-versa." By this, Shuman meant that as bodily creatures humans are always engaged in some form of worship—whether of the Triune God or other gods.

In his first lecture, Shuman started with the eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet." He said there is a certain sense in which the victory of Christ has meant the coming of an age in which humans can experience the physical health of a redeemed creation in the present life. Yet, he observed, there is also a sense that the fullness of that health will not come until the final consummation of history.

In the embrace of the "already—not yet," Shuman looked at what worship of the Triune God has to

say about the opportunities afforded by modern medicine, and how far many humans go in their struggle against suffering, sickness and death. Shuman said the church must ask how medicine might participate faithfully in the goodness of God's creation, remembering that it is God alone who heals.

In his second lecture, Shuman dis-

[M]edicine is less a question of restoring bodies to technological definitions of health, and more about caring for particular people in the development of their lives within communion.



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cussed the significance of naming medicine among what is referred to in the New Testament as the principalities and powers. Naming medicine among the powers, Shuman argued that the church must resist the temptation to worship doctors and their "magic" as saviours, and should, instead, participate in using medicine for its created purpose of witnessing to God's activity in the world.

Shuman went on to challenge the dominant paradigm of thinking of the human body as a machine in his third lecture. Drawing on the work of farmer-theologian-poet Wendell Berry, he suggested that it is more helpful to think of the body as a landscape, which implies a certain particularity and belovedness that is lacking in the concept of body-as-machine. This, he suggested, means that medicine is less a question of restoring bodies to technological definitions of health, and more about caring for particular people in the development of their lives within communion.

Shuman's last lecture was a discussion of death. He named the North American obsession with escaping death as one of the archetypal examples of humanity's estrangement from God.

He invoked the practice of the Christian funeral as a way to remind listeners of their dependence on God; it does this by reminding people that they came out of the earth, they are sustained by the earth, and in death it is to the earth they return. Even in death, humanity is entirely bound up with God and God's creation. Yet it is the promise of the resurrection—of which we remind ourselves at funerals—that turns the finality of death into hope.

Shuman closed his final lecture with these thoughts: Being a Christian, he said, means knowing "that we belong—in sickness and in health, in flourishing and in suffering, and finally in death—to the earth, to each other, and to God."

—CMU release by **Greg Wiebe**

The author is a 2006 graduate of CMU.

Nationhood: First Quebec, now Mennonites?

The following humorous article has been circulating in Mennonite cyberspace for the past few weeks, following the federal government debate surrounding Quebec's status as a nation. The author is unknown. Ed.

In light of the recent parliamentary motion regarding the nationhood of the Quebecois, many feel that Mennonites should also be recognized as a distinct nation within Canada.

Once recognition from Parliament has been achieved, the Mennonite nation should then proceed to exercise its right to claim land in the Fraser Valley, southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan, southern Manitoba and select portions of southern Ontario.

A sovereign nation should then be declared, with Low German functioning as the second official language. Provincial capitals would be located in Yarrow, La Glace, Rosthern, Niverville and Waterloo, while Abbotsford and Winkler can fight it out for the federal capital.

A fully operational social safety net would be set up, including food banks and soup kitchens serving up borscht and *plume moos* three times a day for the less fortunate; then put the bums to work picking hops!

It is to be anticipated that a big argument will break out over who is a Mennonite? Friesens and Dycks who go to a Mennonite church are in for sure. But what about a Peters who goes to an Alliance church? Will a Johnson who goes to a Mennonite church disguised as a "community church" qualify? Will culinary Mennonites who simply say they enjoy borscht get citizenship?

Before you know it, everyone who buys sausage at Rempel's or shops for groceries at Funk's will claim they are Mennonites! It is even conceiv-

able that anyone who ever went to a Mennonite Central Committee sale might claim they are Mennonites. Then there will be more Mennonites than non-Mennonites, and Mennonites could lose our minority status.

You think that the pacifist

Mennonites will take all this lying down? The Quebecois question is easy compared to the Mennonite one. Non? Maybe it all should be turned over to a committee of MC Canada and Mennonite Brethren to write a Clarity Act!

This section is a forum for discussion and discernment. Letters express the opinion of the writer only, not necessarily the position of Canadian Mennonite, the five area churches or Mennonite Church Canada. Letters should address issues rather than criticizing individuals and include contact information. We will send copies of letters referring to other parties to them to provide an opportunity to respond in a future issue if their views have not already been printed in an earlier letter. Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or to Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7, "Attn: Letter to the Editor." Letters may be edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

Letters

Typo promotes minister to deity

I often suspect that those great bulletin bloopers are made up, but an authentic one appeared recently in our bulletin.

As part of MC Eastern Canada's restructuring, regional minister for the northern churches Gord Alton recently drove five hours north from Kitchener to spend time with the leadership of the Waters, Calvary and Tree of Life congregations in Lively, Sudbury and Monetville. On Saturday, despite storm warnings, he continued another five hours north to visit Hunta Mennonite Church, planning to return early Sunday morning to preach at Calvary.

Sunday morning our bulletin at Waters announced, "MC Eastern Canada regional minister Gord Alton visited us on Friday.... Yesterday God drove north to Hunta and this morning he is sharing in the service at Calvary Mennonite in Monetville."

It was nice that we could share "God" with our sister congregations. Hope his tires were ready for winter driving!

—Dave Nicol

The writer is pastor of Waters Mennonite Church, Lively, Ont.

Chickens, not churches, now labelled 'Mennonite'

A few months ago, my husband sent me off to the meat section of our favourite grocery store in Vancouver. We needed some chicken, so I looked over the regular fare—thighs, breasts, whole fryers.

From there, my eyes moved to the more expensive free range, grain-fed chicken just to the left. And then to the left of that chicken sat the largest, plumpest whole chicken for an even higher price—labelled "Mennonite chicken."

I smiled and then spotted one of the butchers placing meat packages just a little further down. "Excuse me," I said to him in my polite, retired teacher's voice. "Can you please tell me...is this chicken baptized?"

Not even a smile from this butcher.

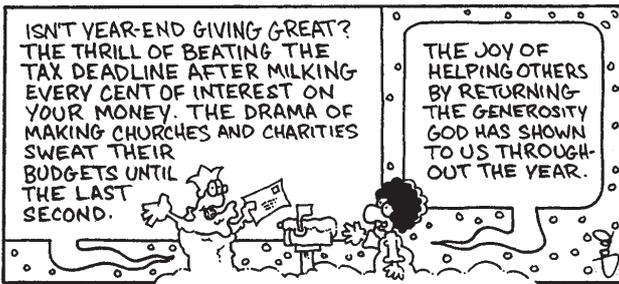
So I continued. "I mean, I really wanted a Baptist chicken or a Presbyterian one...."

Still no smile. Clearly, this man did not know what "Mennonite" means.

I have two points to make about all this:

- I understand "Mennonite sausage." The recipe, process and result are the creation of Mennonite families. You only have to go to Abbotsford, B.C., to check out the "Mennonite sausage" made at Funk's or at Rempel's, both claiming to make the best sausage—

Pontius' Puddle



that bears no resemblance to one of God's creatures.

• But what of the opposite tendency—to take the name “Mennonite” out of church names, like it has some kind of negative connotation or it will scare people away—and now use it to label chickens?

After having said all that, I want the readers to know that this sum-

mer I lined up to buy two plump “Mennonite chickens” at a little village called Riondel on the shores of Kootenay Lake—and they were delicious! My husband Ross, who is not a Mennonite, thinks those chickens were definitely Mennonite, as they had prepared all of their lives for death!

—**Deberah (Dueckman) Shears, Vancouver**

PHIL WAGLER



Outside the box

In a South American airport recently, I caught the disturbing smell of smoke! Yes, despite the heightened security, despite the fact that even my Aqua Velva was confiscated, despite all this, smoke was detected. No, it was not a terrorist plot, but the frightful stench of cigarette smoke in a public place.

We Canadians have been made acutely aware that smoking kills. Ads remind us—often shockingly—that this habit is nasty, harmful, even evil. Smokers are segregated in special rooms where their presence will not offend. Smokers are the target of a new trendy and healthy campaign that marks the darlings of this new age as those with health club memberships, definitely do not smoke, and consume granola and bottled water in some postmodern form of the eucharist. Smokers have become one of secularism's infidels. It's time Christians come to the defence of smokers.

Now please don't begin your letter to the editor quite yet. I am not in any way espousing that we should champion the inhaling of carcinogens. Smoking, as a habit, is clearly unhealthy and unwise. It is an abuse of the body God has given and a mark of misplaced dependency, not to mention a profound waste of money. Most smokers I know would rather not be trapped in their addiction. I am not a smoker and I do not want my kids to smoke, but I do want them to love all people made in God's image—and that, I believe, is the place where the church must offer a “light.”

Has the church succumbed to the broader culture's degradation of a select group of scapegoats? Be honest: What is your opinion of those who smoke? What is your first response to butts on the ground in the church park-

Something smells like smoke

Is not the Gospel about God's scandalous love for those who scandalize us?

ing lot? Can those who smoke in our churches and families come out of the closet? I believe God loves smokers and non-smokers alike.

The church must constantly beware of sacrificing the truth of the Gospel and God's immense love for a cause—no matter how noble. If we love people's health more than them, we don't know God and we are idolaters. Secularism seeks to evangelize smokers by the salvation of “the patch” with the promise of a potentially long life

lived in the “heaven” of a smoke-free environment.

But is this the essence of the church's message these days? Have we really been reduced to majoring on minors while leaving the deeper issues of the heart untouched by a gospel not preached? Is not the Gospel about God's scandalous love for those who scandalize us?

So here's the crux of this whole “stinking” argument: Love people! If you know Jesus who loved you, then love people, even people our culture calls suspect. One of the primary gifts the church has to offer the world is the ability to see people for who they really are—as people, not as labels or habits; as those loved of God and made in his image; as those he strives with all his might to save from perishing, whether they smoke or not.

One of the greatest statements we may make these days is to join some chilled smoker on a winter sidewalk for no other reason than to know and love them, and marvel that God knows, loves and seeks to make us both smell like Jesus (II Corinthians 2:15).

Phil Wagler is lead pastor of Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite. You can reach him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca or theo-phil-us.blogspot.com.

Survey seeks pacifist, military similarities

What do pacifists and the military have in common?

The Military/Pacifist Similarities Survey attempts to answer this question. A group of Quakers from Hartford, Conn., is circulating a list of 45 possible similarities between military and pacifist approaches to armed conflicts and terrorist threats.

Any interested party can fill out this informal opinion survey online (americanconfusion.com). Members of the military, students, faculty, staff and interns of non-governmental and governmental organizations, members of religious bodies and others may find the survey worthwhile.

Surveys will be collected online through January. After that, all par-

ties can examine the results and explore the implications of shared values and experiences.

—**William R. Taylor, West Hartford, Conn.**

New Mennonite magazines urged

As many already know, the *Der Bote* and *Mennonitische Rundschau* periodicals will soon cease publication after 84 and 130 years, respectively. (See “*Der Bote to cease publication in 2008*,” Oct. 2, page 15; and *People&Events*, Oct. 30, page 26.) I am sure that for many people this was disappointing news.

Even for me, being part of the first non-German-speaking generation in my family, it was a little sad, as I remember seeing copies of *Der Bote* lying

around at my Oma and Opa’s house.

I want to take this opportunity to throw out a bit of a challenge. Although the subscription base for these publications has shrunk in recent years, we are reminded that most Mennonites now live outside of North America. How about if we, in North America, began to sponsor similar publications for other Mennonites around the world?

For example, I think of our brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I am certain that promoting a publication among the Congolese Mennonite Church would not only strengthen the church, but also bring encouragement during these difficult times, in the same way that the German periodicals provided encouraging words to my grandparents.

—**Kurtis Unger, Winnipeg**

AIDEN ENNS



New Order voice

Ah, shopping. It’s a joy for some and a curse for others. Unavoidable, it seems. And in December, look out, it’s shopping madness.

We can even bring our social conscience to the cash register. Apparently, we can shop for a better world. Just pick up an alternative gift catalogue put out by charities and churches, flip through the pages, make a selection, pay, and boom, you’ve just “made a difference.” The world now is a little bit better because we’ve shopped for justice, purchased packets of mercy and put compassion on our credit card.

Positively, and in a strict utilitarian sense, I suppose a few thousand cows and goats bought overseas on behalf of loved ones here at home is a bona fide good. And, I suppose, saving a couple endangered species here and there, in the name of gifts for family and friends—complete with a dolphin key fob—is incrementally better than buying a new shaver for dad.

But deep down, is this really better? Can we shop for the salvation of the planet? Can we purchase our way to happiness and sustainability? I think the consumer mentality is part of our problem.

It’s directly addressed in our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (1995). The commentary for the article on Christian stewardship is unusual in its plainness:

“We are to seek first the reign of God and to cease from consumerism.” Did I read that right? Yup. We are also to refrain from “unchecked competition, overburdened productivity, greed and possessiveness.” The *Confession* says, “We are to live simply, practise mutual aid within the church, uphold economic justice, and give generously

What would Jesus buy?

and cheerfully” (Article 21).

On the positive side, I applaud efforts such as Mennonite Church Canada’s gift selection in our 2006 Christmas Gift Sampler. It has a peace-building emphasis. If we have to ramp up spending in December, why not spend it on camp for kids in the Ukraine and peace programs in the Philippines? Makes perfect sense. It’s a better—and unglitzy—option than gizmos and gadgets. The church does an important

ministry of peace and it’s good to support this any time of year.

But there’s a subtle negative side. When we couch donation appeals and peace programs in terms of Christmas gift giving, we act as if we condone consumerism. This encourages us to keep earning money so we can keep buying these gifts. This quietly fortifies the economic model that has made us so rich and keeps them so poor. The charity model redistributes wealth, but it also blesses the system that creates it.

The problem is, how do we question a system from which most of us benefit? And what does questioning the system look like? I wish I knew.

This is part of the reason why, year after year, I still take part in the Buy Nothing Christmas campaign. It’s at least one way to stop and question the consumer mentality and encourage creative, homegrown alternatives. It’s not much, and I welcome wisdom from readers. Who knows, maybe this is a concrete way we can keep our *Confession of Faith* to “care for the earth and to bring rest and renewal to the land and everything that lives on it” (Article 21).

Aiden Enns can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org. He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and sits on the Canadian Mennonite board.

Can we shop for the salvation of the planet?

MCC/TTV connection still intact

Thank you for your story about Ten Thousand Villages' 60th anniversary in the Nov. 27 edition of *Canadian Mennonite* ("60 years of 'alternative shopping' experiences," page 24). It was truly a celebration across Canada, for which we are grateful.

However, we would like to correct the misconception that Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) Canada is severing its connection with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada. While it is true that the rapid growth of TTV Canada is requiring us to look at alternative legal structures, this should not be equated with "severing" of the connection to MCC.

In fact, quite the opposite is true. All the discussions to date have assumed that the connection to MCC is essential to both MCC and TTV, and that this connection will remain.

—**Marv Frey**, chief executive officer, Ten Thousand Villages, and **Don Peters**, executive director, MCC Canada

Correction

The sentence in the above-mentioned article should have read, "As TTV sales continue to climb in both Canada and the U.S., talks are underway to consider severing TTV's connection to Mennonite Central Committee" (*emphasis added*). As stated by the letter writers, though, such "discussions to date have assumed that the connection to MCC is essential to both MCC and Ten Thousand Villages, and that this connection will remain." *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

No 'real presence' with cell phones

Like Ed Janzen, I don't have a cell phone ("Should I get a cell phone?" Oct. 30, page 28). Also like him, I am not technophobic. I do have Internet and voice mail. I can be reached—if not instantly—at least within a few hours.

It is a lifestyle decision. The saddest thing to observe is a group of people with cell phones in hand. I see parties where people are together only physically. Mentally and emotionally they are with those who are not there. I see people constantly excuse themselves—if they are polite—from present company to check for phone or text messages.

If I am with someone whose phone rings, I am left feeling that the call must be more important than the current conversation. Even worse are the phones that are attached to the ear, for I don't know if I should even approach someone who has one. Communication, if it can even be commenced, is breached by the interruption of calls, however brief they may be.

In very few situations have I wished I had one. I won't be interrupted from watching my son play basketball, listening to my daughters play the piano or having coffee with a friend to receive a call from someone else. I won't put my family or myself at risk by driving with a cell phone. I will cherish the time I have with them by being fully present. It is a decision based on the desire for real communication with God and those around me.

—**LaDona Ahenda, Calgary**

Klassen lends credence to 'creation' debate

I am responding to "Uncritical acceptance of Darwinism criticized," Oct. 30, page 18.

I wish to thank Glen Klassen for stepping forward to initiate the debate on creation ("Pointing us to a loving God," May 29, page 6). My guess is that there are many of us who are unconvinced about both intelligent design and traditional creationism. A Christian scientist like Klassen adds credence to the debate.

My bottom line to this discussion is that it is possible for people holding a variety of theories to worship together and to be equal in their faith in a creative and omnipotent God.

—**Peter A Dueck, Vancouver**

End times warning is not 'gibberish'

When I was reading Aiden Enns' article in the Oct. 16 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* ("Love subverts the lingo," page 12), I could hardly believe what he wrote.

When Simon was quoting scripture passages on the end times and Enns says that it is "gibberish," then I say Enns had better take a look at what God is saying to us in Revelation.

The people in Noah's day thought Noah too was speaking "gibberish" when he was preaching and building the ark. They were eating, drinking and marrying, but when the door of the ark was closed and it rained, there was not one person saved—except for Noah and his family.

If Enns would take his Bible and read Revelation he would see that Simon's words are all there—Satan's No. 666 and Armageddon, the last world war. Revelation 14:9-11 speaks about the people who take the mark of the beast; Revelation 19:20 says that anyone who takes the mark of the beast will be cast into hell.

I would like to see Enns go to Simon and get him to write an article on the last days to put into *Canadian Mennonite*.

—**P.J. Rempel, Rosthern, Sask.**



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Akron, Pa.

Greater efforts lead to progress on AIDS

The world is witnessing unprecedented growth in efforts to stop the spread of AIDS and care for people affected by the disease, according to Sarah Adams, AIDS program coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

International donors are giving more than ever for AIDS care and medical research, while more and more churches and grassroots organizations are responding to AIDS in their communities.

However, there is also a growing realization of the difficulty and complexity of stopping AIDS, which has killed more than 25 million people since it was first diagnosed in 1981, Adams says.

Every year, about four million people are newly infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

"I think globally the world is owning up to the problem and also realizing that it's not an easy problem to solve," Adams says. "It's rooted in issues of poverty and gender issues and personal behaviour, and those aren't issues that are easily solved."

Although medications can now extend the life of someone with HIV for decades, the vast majority of people who need these medications still do not receive them because of poverty, a lack of medical services or ignorance. In fact, health experts say only 10 percent of people with HIV even know they are infected.

As part of MCC's Generations at Risk AIDS program, which supports 60 partner organizations responding to AIDS around the world, MCC provides tens of thousands of rapid HIV tests that are administered for free. HIV tests not only alert a person to the need for medical care, but provide an opportunity for counselling about

behavioural changes necessary to avoid spreading HIV to others.

"Tests are a big tool in stopping the spread of HIV," Adams says.

Adams also says there is a new willingness to talk about AIDS in churches in many countries despite taboos about sexual behaviour. At a global convention on AIDS in Toronto in August, Adams helped lead a workshop entitled "The pastor said what?" on helpful and unhelpful responses to AIDS in churches.

While churches have sometimes discouraged frank discussions of AIDS and stigmatized people with the disease, Adams believes that many Christians are interested in being a part of the

worldwide AIDS response.

"When you look at the numbers, there are 50 Christians in the world for every one AIDS patient," Adams says. "So if each of us could take care of 1/50th of the needs of one AIDS patient, the disease would be taken care of."

—MCC release
by **Tim Shenk**



Adams



Rosthern Junior College students Katie Smith, left, and Jeff Crawford took time out on Dec. 1 (World AIDS Day) to hand out red AIDS memorial ribbons to patrons at a Saskatoon mall, while others stitched an AIDS memorial quilt. The students were there in support of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Generations at Risk initiative, which supports children orphaned because of the disease, teaches prevention methods, and addresses the poverty and injustice that perpetuate the spread of AIDS.

Zaporozhye, Ukraine

HIV education takes on urgency as numbers climb

When Natalia Starastenkova completes her 12-hour shift as a security guard she doesn't go home to rest. Five mornings a week, Starastenkova goes to public schools in Zaporozhye to teach a healthy living educational program designed to stop the rapid escalation of HIV infections in the country, especially among youths who are at a higher risk of exposure.

Launched five years ago in Kiev, the program was introduced last year in Zaporozhye, where it is taught in 11 of the 110 public schools.

"I'm convinced it should start in Grade 1," says Starastenkova, emphasizing that education is the key to supporting those living with HIV, stopping the transmission of the disease, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Through a series of 36 lessons, trained volunteers teach a program approved by the government for use in public schools. This is one of several programs related to AIDS supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Generations at Risk program provided grants of \$12,500 to support HIV prevention programs in Ukraine.



Photo by Elmer Heinrichs



Anton and Eliena, both 16, say an HIV prevention program supported by Mennonite Central Committee helps them understand the risk of HIV infection and the long-term benefits of sexual health.

The rapid spread of HIV is one of the most pressing social, economic and political issues facing Ukraine today. In the early 1990s, shortly after Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union, the World Health Organization estimated about 1,500 people in Ukraine were infected with HIV. Today, the rate is nearly

400,000, or 1 per cent of the adult population.

Two Grade 11 students—Eliena and Anton—say the program helps them understand the influence of the public media, the power of peer pressure and the consequences of the decisions they make.

“A person is created to live, not to die from AIDS,” says Eliena. “These

lessons challenge us to think if it pays to taste all these things that life offers young people. Young people have to think of the consequences of the choices we make.”

They say youths are influenced by television programs, music, advertisements and billboards that promote sexual activities.

“Everyone is shouting the message of sex—free sex—to taste life while you are young,” says Anton. “If the government doesn’t put limitations on the public media, it will be difficult for young people to make good choices.”

The lessons also help youths understand that it is important to choose friends who have shared values.

“You can choose your own group of people who can support you in these situations,” says Eliena.

—MCC release by **Gladys Terichow**

Kamuli, Uganda

Teenage clubs help prevent the spread of HIV

“**A**IDS, AIDS, AIDS—the greatest human destroyer,” says a girl, alone in front of an audience of about 50 adults and students. Down on her knees, she is on the verge of weeping; she stares with arms stretched up towards the sky.

The young actress is one of 30 students at Bugabula Secondary School who perform songs, speeches, dramatic monologues, a mock news report and a skit to bring awareness about AIDS to a country with a 7 per cent adult HIV prevalence rate. HIV prevention is profoundly important, especially among teens, since it is during their late teens when most Ugandans become sexually active.

With support from Mennonite Central Committee, a Ugandan organization—AIDS Education Group for Youth—is training hundreds of young people to serve as “peer

educators” at high schools in the rural Kamuli District in eastern Uganda.

The education group puts peer educators through a five-day training course. The organization also trains teachers to be club advisors and provides materials such as flipcharts and handouts. In the process, students learn how to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases along with such life skills as self-esteem, negotiation tactics and assertiveness.

The trained students then perform monthly at schools, health clinics, village centres and anywhere else they can gather a crowd willing to listen. The peer educators are also encouraged to take their message about the dangers of AIDS to other young people in informal settings.

“A fundamental change has happened in people’s behaviour and attitudes because of the students’ work,” says Bugabula deputy headmaster Robert Johnson Waiswa.

The peer educators, aged between 12 and 20, are proud to be part of their clubs. Sixteen-year-old Lydia Kisuuto has organized meetings in her village that have attracted up to 35 adults. “I wasn’t nervous in front of all those people because I’ve been educated to talk about HIV/AIDS,” she says.

Twelve-year-old Aidah Namwase says that the life skills have been especially helpful. “There was a certain boy who asked me to be his girlfriend.

Without fear, I told him, ‘No, I am still young,’” Namwase says. “I was able to do that because of the training.”

Namwase has already spoken up at a village meeting about HIV/AIDS and tells adults she knows to be faithful to their partners and to get tested.

Eve Munwemoko believes many of her peers are now abstaining or using condoms because of what her club has taught them.

Charles Balyegisawa, the school’s music teacher, serves as an advisor to the peer educators club and composes songs about AIDS for their performances. He says it is sometimes challenging to take the club’s message to the community because of competing needs. “Parents often ask their children to do domestic work even when we have planned a performance or when we are supposed to be meeting,” Balyegisawa says. “Sometimes the kids just don’t show up because the parents need them.”

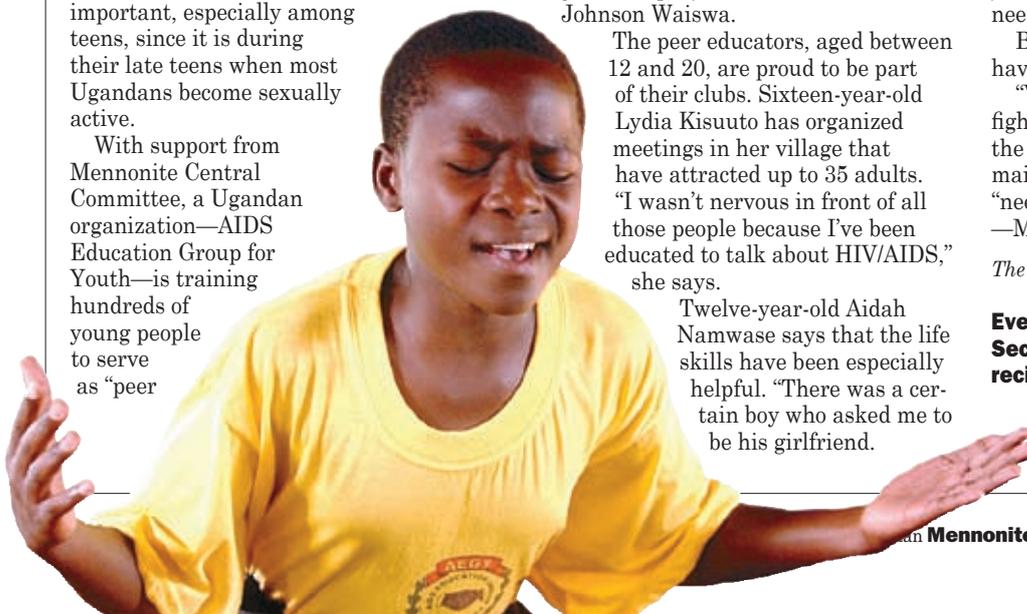
But he’s extremely proud of what they have accomplished.

“Very few community-based groups fighting against HIV/AIDS have risen to the level that we have,” Balyegisawa says, maintaining that the education group “needs to continue its work.”

—MCC release by **Justin Moresco**

The author is a freelance writer from Ghana.

Eve Munwemoko, a student at Bugabula Secondary School in eastern Uganda, recites a poem about AIDS. Munwemoko and other students are speaking out in their community about the dangers of AIDS.



Tori Bossito, Benin

Kids' energy plus Bible study ignite camp

Sparking energy from 115 wired children combined with the well-laid plans of the staff of La Casa Grande children's home to ignite passions for following Jesus during this year's summer camp in the West African village of Tori-Bossito. Campers gathered to learn, worship, play and discover the theme, "The secret of success lies in Jesus."

Based on the first six chapters of Joshua, the children were divided into six groups named for characteristics of spiritual success—certainty, firmness, hope, punctuality, sanctity and victory. They competed with an almost alarming intensity throughout the week to gain points in relay races, games, performances based on the daily lessons, and Bible trivia contests. Hours of Bible study and worship sessions that lasted two hours or more served only to fuel their enthusiasm.

La Casa Grande, the organization that sponsors the annual summer camp, serves as an example of what is possible when people follow Jesus' call. From a dream in the hearts of

two people and the support of a small congregation in Spain, the home has grown into a family for 24 children who have been separated from their biological parents through death or because of health or financial hardships.

La Casa Grande organizes the summer camp with three goals in mind:

- Provide a change of scenery and new friends for these children who don't have parents to take them on vacation;
- Create a context in which children's faith can be strengthened through discipleship training; and,
- Offer a Christian alternative to the secular singing and dancing competitions organized by Beninese television stations during school holidays.

La Casa Grande is expanding its facilities to accommodate the growing number of children needing a loving home and to begin to realize its long-

term vision of becoming a more viable Christian community with a school, health centre and training opportunities in agriculture, crafts and technical vocations.

In addition to Burgos Mennonite Church in Spain, St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church is working with Mennonite Church Canada Witness to assist La Casa Grande. The relationship between MC Canada and La Casa Grande grew stronger this year when Burgos Mennonite Church pastor Augustine Melguizo spent two weeks at MC Canada's International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together (IMPACT) program in Manitoba.

—Mimi Hollinger-Janzen

The author, who grew up in Benin, served as a volunteer at La Casa Grande from May to July during her summer holidays.

Cotonou, Benin

Leaders trained for fast-growing West African churches

Paulin and Esther Bossou, co-directors of La Casa Grande children's home, packed their bags and travelled with their infant son every four weeks to attend weekend seminars at Benin Bible Institute (BBI).

"Whenever I leave to take a class at BBI, I never return the same person," Paulin says.

The Bossous and 128 others received their Bible institute diplomas in a four-and-a-half-hour ceremony on July 1. Theirs was the fourth graduating class since the institute began a systematic teaching program in 1994.

Mennonites have worked with the churches of Benin in leadership training for more than three decades, promoting inter-denominational cooperation among the plethora of denominations that flourish along the Gulf of Guinea. Originally oriented to the needs of African-Initiated Churches, the quality of biblical teaching now attracts evangelical, Pentecostal and mainline Protestant churches as well. Students from 74 denominations have studied at the institute.

Both Mennonite Church Canada Witness and its Mennonite Mission Network partner support the ministry of Bruce Yoder and his wife, Nancy Frey, who have served the churches of West Africa through the Bible institute since 2000.

The Benin Bible Institute avoids training "ivory tower" theologians by organizing classes for one week each month. This rhythm permits church leaders to remain in their communities while pursuing further education. The sessions are translated for African church leaders, many of whom have little formal schooling.

"We praise God for the 500-plus students who have graduated from BBI over the past 12 years," says Frey. "May BBI continue to provide good biblically based teaching for leaders, so that the church in Benin might be stronger tomorrow."

Two years ago, BBI began a more academically challenging program in which 10 students are currently enrolled.

Frey is a member of St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Yoder has membership at Martinsburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church. La Casa Grande, run by the Bossous, is a ministry of the Burgos (Spain) Mennonite Church.

—MC Canada release
by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen



Photo by Kristine Bouman

Chanel Cressman of Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church; Esther Bossou, mother of La Casa Grande children; Anne-Laure Zingbé and Mimi Hollinger-Janzen, a second-year student at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., take a break during a soccer game between staff and campers during summer camp in Benin.

Winnipeg

North American church summit proposed for 2008

Mennonite Church Canada moderator Henry Krause is “quite excited” about one of the recommendations made by the Joint Executive Committee of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA (JEC) at its bi-yearly meeting here recently.

The recommendation, which still needs to be ratified by the respective boards, states that “a North American summit jointly authorized and sponsored by MC Canada and MC USA on the basic theme of living faithfully as a contrast community in a global reality...[be] tentatively scheduled for July 2 to 3, 2008, immediately prior to the MC Canada annual assembly, likely in Winnipeg...[and that] MC Canada will take the lead in planning this event, inviting input broadly in Canada and the United States.”

“From our perspective,” Krause said, “there is a lot of potential for such a gathering. It will offer MC Canada and MC USA the opportunity to talk about issues we hold in common as a North American church in a global context.” It will also bring “two national churches in North America together for shared worship, study and fellowship, and allow for people to get to know each other better.”

Krause explained that the recommendation—which had already been approved in principle by the MC Canada General Board prior to an announcement of the proposal at Assembly 2006—was to be discussed further at Canadian board meetings in November, and by the MC USA board in January, then reported to JEC in April for implementation as directed.

Other agenda items at the JEC meetings included reports on developments from both church bodies.

MC Canada general secretary Jack Suderman gave an Assembly 2006 update and shared experiences from visiting all MC Canada congregations in six months.

MC USA reported that it has begun

planning for a six-year review of its new structures and organization, and that a task force of the Constituency Leaders Council has issued a report about the role of area conferences in the church-wide system.

“We had a very good time together at the meetings,” concluded Krause, “listening to each other’s reports, clarifying relationships, discussing issues, even curling one evening, and worshipping together at Bethel Mennonite Church, where Roy Williams, MC USA moderator, gave the sermon. It was much appreciated.”

—**Leona Dueck Penner**, with files from **Ron Byler**

Winnipeg

Need for money often disguised

Representatives of the Mennonite, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United churches gathered on common ground here recently to reflect on the pastoral task of stewardship ministry.

The theme, “Giving to need, needing to give,” drew 125 participants to the late October event planned by the Winnipeg Interchurch Stewardship Link. The group shares a common desire to walk in faith by broadening one another’s understanding of stewardship and fundraising as a ministry.

Keynote speaker Chris Levan engaged participants by asking, “If you want money, why do you ask for prayer?” Fear of asking, he said, is often disguised as a prayer request. The ministry of fundraising is a pastoral care issue that needs the same care and attention as ministries like hospital visitation, said Levan, yet asking for money to support the work of the church has too often been reduced to an announcement.

The stewardship link was founded in 2002 when staff from several Winnipeg denominational offices met for an ecumenical prayer service. Over soup, the group members compared ministries and realized that they were all involved in similar work. They continued to meet to share their similar challenges and successes.

—MC Canada release by **Al Rempel**

The author is MC Canada’s director of development.

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Winnipeg

Jewish-Mennonite interaction in Winkler recalled

In the 1930s an evangelistic crusade came to Winkler, Man. During the course of this crusade, so many Mennonites came to a prominent Jewish merchant's general store to settle up differences that it prompted him to visit the crusade. This was one of the stories shared during a lecture by Hans Werner, history professor at the University of Winnipeg, who spoke on the topic "More than just business: A historical overview of Jewish-Mennonite relations in Winkler."

The event, organized by the Jewish Heritage Centre and the Mennonite Historical Society, took place Oct. 10.

In 1892, 10 years after the railroad came through Winkler, the lives of Mennonites and Jews began to intersect in unique ways. Mennonites had settled in villages with the government's promise of exemption from military service and the freedom to worship and educate as they wished.

Harold Buchwald, an honorary member of the Jewish Heritage Centre, told the story of how his grandfather fled persecution in Ukraine with the promise of free land in Canada. His trip to Saskatchewan was sidetracked when he was encouraged to go to Winkler instead and do business with the Mennonites "whose leaders think commerce is evil."

Between 1892 and 1920, a mutually satisfactory relationship existed between the rural group of Mennonites and the local Jewish peddlers. The peddlers developed a business acumen for the Mennonite women's needs; often in exchange for chickens, eggs or produce, the women received the goods they needed.

Werner said the relationship succeeded because this conservative Mennonite group "was not mission-oriented. They would not challenge the Jews in matters of faith."

The Mennonite Brethren and Bergthaler groups were neighbours and competitors of the Jewish merchants, however. Their relationship during

that same time period was one of competitiveness. "The Jewish merchants devised the 'sale.' Mennonite merchants were quick to raise the stakes. Their sales would often coincide with Jewish holidays," said Werner.

"Up to the 1920s there is little evidence of any problems between Jewish and Mennonite families. Competition was keen although maybe at times unethical," said Werner.

"At the offspring level it was a different story," added Buchwald. "There were problems of hostility and conflict on the school yard."

During the 1920s and into the next decade, Jewish activity reached its peak in this community. But the successful partnership that existed between the Jewish merchants and more conservative Mennonites was broken as many Mennonites emigrated to Mexico and South America when the government began to impose changes on their education system.

A new wave of Mennonites began to arrive from Ukraine in the mid-1920s,

and "they brought a more edgy component to the relationship," said Werner.

By the start of World War II, very few Jews were still living in Winkler, although some retained investments in the community.

"Just as Mennonites did not want to marry outside their group, so too with Jews. Many moved to Winnipeg to find a husband for their daughters. Also, the quest for a higher quality and level of education prompted the move away," said Buchwald. When Jewish merchant Ernest Sirluck, eventual president of the University of Manitoba, left for Winnipeg in 1935 to pursue a higher education, only two Jewish families remained in Winkler.

John R. Friesen, professor at Canadian Mennonite University, noted that the shared experience of both groups helped draw them together in a new land: "They needed each other not only for business relations, but also they provided a platform for each group to realize their own potential."

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**

Winnipeg

Mennonite, Catholic congregations learn from each other

It's not often that a mid-week church discussion group ends with participants begging for more time to finish their conversations. But that's what happened at Charleswood Mennonite Church recently when a congregationally based 12-member Mennonite-Catholic dialogue group (comprising six people each from St. Ignatius Catholic Church and Charleswood) met to get better acquainted and learn more about each other's statements of faith.

Jointly organized by Helmut Harder (Mennonite) and Richard Lebrun (Catholic), who have both been involved in the broader Catholic-Mennonite dia-

logue for several years, this new congregation-to-congregation initiative includes four inter-church meetings in Winnipeg this year to "seek understanding and respect for one another's traditions within the Christian heritage..."

Items that sparked significant response and discussion included:

- Catholic understandings of the church such as sacrament, mystery and apostolic succession.

- Mennonite understandings of sainthood of all believers through the grace of Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit in the body of believers, the church as a servant community, the age of accountability, church membership and baptism.

Harder, who chaired the meeting, concluded by noting that he appreciated the "honesty and willingness to be vulnerable" that participants brought to the dialogue, which resulted in "a rewarding and fruitful evening."

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Saskatoon

Three former choir leaders honoured

About 300 people packed Bethany Manor on a snowy November evening to remember and celebrate the lives of three church choir leaders who served in the Saskatchewan Mennonite community. The event was organized and hosted by the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan.

David Paetkau, Jacob Schroeder and Albert Wiens gave of their time and resources to enrich the lives of many in their communities. Together, their lives spanned almost a century.

Albert Wiens, who lived and worked in the Herschel area, spent 50 years conducting church choirs. He passed away four years ago. Speaking of their father's work of farming and music, his children Joanne and Tim told how their lives revolved around their father's love of music and ministry in the church. Each Sunday, the family was the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Wiens would spend lots of time going over choir music to choose the

perfect song for the Sunday service. Sometimes, he would even change his mind mid-service and signal to the back corner of the choir loft, where extra music was kept, which would then be quietly passed out to the choir.

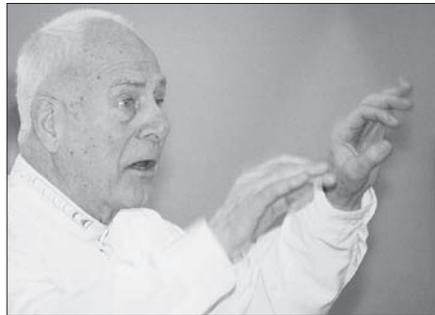


Photo by Karin Fehderau

Alfred Dahl, former Nutana Park Mennonite Church choir leader, conducted a choir of about 100 singers who came to honour the work of David Paetkau, Jacob Schroeder and Albert Wiens, who gave of their time and resources to enrich the lives of many in their communities.

"The resulting musical offering," said daughter Joanne, "fit beautifully into a thematic flow of music."

After coming to First Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, he also helped organize and establish the Saskatchewan Music Library kept at the church, securing a large donation of sheet music from the Swift Current Bible Institute (SCBI) when it closed.

In Mennonite Brethren circles, Jacob K. Schroeder, who died in 1993, was known as "Mr. Music." His years of service to Bethany Bible College were given largely on a volunteer basis while he farmed to keep his family fed. Schroeder took every chance he could to study music and these opportunities took him to places like Moody Bible Institute, the Royal Conservatory of Music and Goshen College. After 30 years in Hepburn, he served at SCBI and later at Winkler Bible Institute.

"He imparted his own heart of worship to those who sang under him," said Wes Schroeder, his son.

In his tribute, Elmer Andres, who often went on deputation with Schroeder for the school, also spoke of his deep sensitivity to the music.

David Paetkau, perhaps, had the fewest resources of the three and walked the most challenging road. Living during the first half of the last century, he contributed much to the new and struggling Mennonite community through his life and work. He died in 1972.

Having no formal musical training, he taught himself to read music with the number system and eventually took a job at the German-English academy teaching music appreciation, music history and theory classes, as well as conducting several choirs at the school.

Unwilling to let anything keep him from fulfilling his musical destiny, Paetkau put together a songbook when there was no sheet music to be had. In the 1940s he published a two-volume *Liederalbum* for his choirs, which was then picked up and used by other Mennonite choirs. He also helped to assemble the German hymnal, *Gesangbuch der Mennoniten*, while serving on the Music Committee for the General Conference Mennonite Church of North America.

—Karin Fehderau

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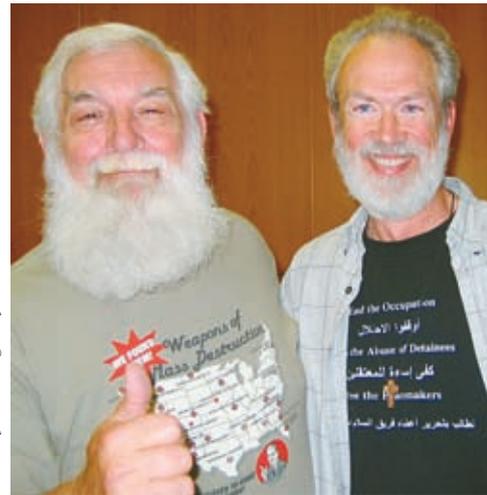
Mennonite
Central
Committee

Photo courtesy of Rob Konrad



Darrell and Loretta Fast, right, were honoured for their 36 years of active ministry at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church with an all-day celebration on Oct. 1. The event included the morning worship service, at which the Fasts chose their favourite hymns and choir selections and at which Waldemar Regier spoke about “The promise of tradition”; a potluck lunch; and an afternoon event that included congratulations from MC Eastern Canada conference minister Muriel Bechtel and representatives from Bethel College Mennonite Church in Kansas. The Fasts are pictured with their children, Larissa and Doug, left, and the congregational gift of an original watercolour by a local Leamington area artist.

Photo by Dave Rogalsky



Around 200 people—representing 21 Mennonite churches and related ministries in the Toronto area—gathered at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church on Oct. 21 to hear stories about how God’s Spirit has been experienced in their life together. Pictured, Paul Mo, pastor of Markham Chinese Mennonite Church, centre, and daughter Fiona join in communion with Earl Smith and others from neighbouring churches.



Eastern Cana

The congregation at Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank, Ont., planted a linden tree beside the church on Sept. 24 in memory of their pastor Clive Ollies (inset upper right), who passed away on Aug. 1 as he was beginning a second five-year term. Pictured from left to right, foreground: Ron Clemmer, Cathy Krabbe, Emerson Kuepfer and Kayla Streicher; and background: interim minister Sue Steiner and Jessie Frey. Shovels and trowels of different sizes were passed from person to person until the tree was planted. The leaves of the linden tree are heart-shaped and the tree has been known throughout history as a symbol of faithfulness; Ollie’s ministry produced fruit, planted many seeds in people’s hearts, and he remained faithful as God’s servant until the end.



Photo courtesy of Sheryl Frey

Gene Stoltzfus and Doug Pritchard of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) spoke to Peace and Conflict Studies students and members of the public at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., recently. During a question-and-answer session at the end of their presentation, which focused primarily on Iraq, where four CPT team members were kidnapped and held hostage for four months, a crowd member tried to provoke them with the comment, "So the hostages in Iraq were freed by the military. That goes to show that non-violence doesn't work, doesn't it?" Pritchard's patient retelling of the event, it's non-violent ending, the humanity of the captors, and the hostages' recurring requests that no violent means be used to free them, showed, he said, that the incident was a clear example of the CPT team practising what it preached.



Photo by Joanna Reesor-McDowell



Leamington Mennonite Home raised \$34,500 at its recent gala and silent auction, enabling the seniors residence to install a new Lifeline emergency response system for its residents. Nearly 300 guests noshed on appetizers and a Napoleantorte dessert at the annual gala that has become a major community event supporting the home's eldercare ministry.

Leamington Mennonite Home photo

nda Photo Album



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

Five on the Floor members Jim Reimer, Henry Schmidt, Ron Harder and Bob Janzen entertained at the Church Theatre in St. Jacobs, Ont., on Nov. 4. The concert was a combined CD release party for *Flying with the King* and a fundraiser for the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre.

Waterloo, Ont.

Conrad Grebel considering spirituality and aging program

Canadians over the age of 80 represent the fastest growing segment of the population and, as a whole, this generation is living longer than any previous generation in human history, according to Marianne Mellinger.

As supervisor of the master of theological studies program's ministry option at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Mellinger has been exploring the feasibility of developing a new spiritual care for seniors program at Conrad Grebel in conjunction with the Schlegel/University of Waterloo Research Institute on Aging (RIA). In addition to spiritual care, there are six other areas in the institute related to the care of seniors.

The RIA spirituality and aging program's two-fold purpose is to promote research in the field of spirituality and aging that will enhance the wellbeing of older adults, and to be a resource to students, clergy, chaplains and

caregivers through university classes, public lectures, and workshops.

Says Mellinger, "Spirituality and aging seems to be an underdeveloped area of focus in the academic community. In addition, faith communities are signalling that this is an area needing increased attention. While many organizations recognize the value of spirituality in the aging process, few are giving it primary attention."

Mellinger spent the last year talking with chaplains and residents in long-term care facilities and their families, teaching undergraduate and graduate students, and educating pastors and lay leaders who visit residents in long-term care facilities. These experiences have convinced her that such



Mellinger

a program on aging "with a focus on research and education could make a significant and immediate contribution in the lives of residents currently living in long-term care residences, in faith communities and, in the longer-term, in the education of chaplains, students and caregivers."

Conrad Grebel and the RIA hope to meet this need by establishing an ongoing spirituality and aging program that will consist of long-term research, academic courses, community education and professional development. A certificate program in spiritual care is under consideration.

According to Mellinger, the seniors of this generation are "truly pioneers in aging and it is essential that we hear their stories, that we understand their experience, and that we find suitable ways to sustain and nurture their spiritual life on this journey."

—Conrad Grebel release by **Jennifer Konkle**

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Winkler, Man.

Trustees survive Human Rights Commission scrutiny

Trustees of the Garden Valley School Division, which oversees public education in and around the predominantly Mennonite community of Winkler, do not appear to have been hurt by Manitoba Human Rights Commission (HRC) allegations that their schools were fostering “a poisoned environment” because they embrace Christian principles. All incumbent school division representatives were re-elected on Oct. 25.

Winnipeg *Free Press* reporter Nick Martin wrote in August that commission chair Janet Baldwin had given the Garden Valley School Division “a little lecture” regarding its mission statement and warned it about creating “a poisoned environment” in its schools.

Apparently, the commission took exception to the phrase “partnership with...church,” and the reference to “Christian principles” in the school division’s mission statement. It also asked the school board to ensure that religious exercises were being conducted in compliance with the Human Rights Code that stipulates religious exercises are voluntary upon the request of parents.

“Nearly 100 percent of the parents requested religious exercises at the elementary school level,” said Garden Valley School Division superintendent Domino Wilkins. “Religious exercises are conducted outside of instruction time. At the high school they are conducted in the gym before school.”

“We have received strong community support for religious exercises in the school and also ongoing support for having Christian principles in our mission statement,” said Wilkins. “It is something we will have to look at—making our world more inclusive and tolerant of all faiths—but also maintaining what we are doing.”

At one point, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada entered the fray, asking the commission to apologize to Manitoba’s Christian community for its anti-Christian comments.

—**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**



Photo by Dave Rogalsky

Hippolyto Tshimanga, Mennonite Church Canada Mission Partnership facilitator for Africa and Europe, centre, talked with Mimi Hollinger-Janzen, left, a “missionary kid” born in Benin, and Ellie Hueber, pastor of Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., at the Africa Missions partnership night at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church earlier this fall, attended by around 100 people. Other participating congregations included Cassel, Waterloo North and Listowel Mennonite; all four spoke of how they have been enriched and challenged by their relationships with Christians in the African context.

Kitchener, Ont.

MennoHomes receives two housing awards

On National Housing Day in November, MennoHomes Inc. received two 2006 housing awards from the Waterloo Region Housing Coalition.

Martin and Pauline Buhr were presented with an Outstanding Housing Creators Award. This award is given to an individual or group which has “measurably contributed to the creation of new affordable housing or to the sustainability of existing stock within Waterloo Region.” As chair of the MennoHomes board, Martin was instrumental in creating 92 affordable housing units since 2000—16 family units, 25 single units, one refugee home and 50 senior units. Without Pauline’s secretarial support, it would not have happened.

Dorene Rudy-Snyder was presented with the Outstanding Volunteer Housing Champion Award. This award is given to an individual or group who, “through volunteer work, has significantly increased the community’s awareness of affordable housing

issues...or has measurably contributed to the creation of new affordable housing or to the sustainability of existing stock within Waterloo Region.” Snyder has been on assignment from Mennonite Central Committee Ontario to the MennoHomes Village Road family housing project as a community worker.

MennoHomes is a non-profit charitable organization founded in 2001 under the sponsorship of MCC Ontario, as a response to the need for affordable housing. The organization bases its biblical reason for existence on Jeremiah 29:4-14.

MennoHomes is currently constructing 50 units for seniors 55 and over at 1420 King St. East, Kitchener. Rockway Gardens is planned for completion by April 2007.

—MennoHomes release

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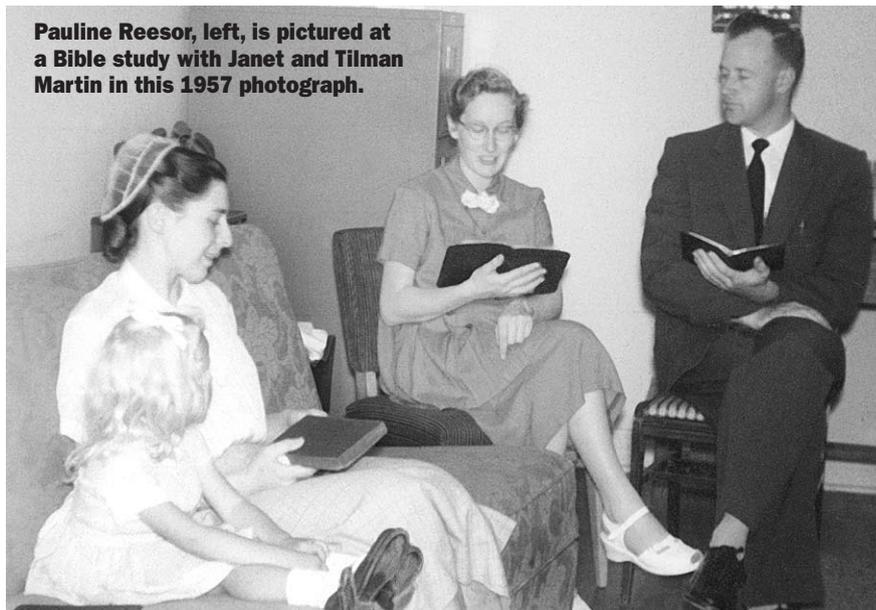
Quebec ministry now a half-century old

The 50th anniversary of the Mennonite Church's presence in Quebec slipped by quietly in September.

In 1956, two young couples—Tilman and Janet Martin and Harold and Pauline Reesor—moved from Ontario to Quebec under the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities based in Elkhart, Ind. Leaders in the Mennonite Church in Ontario, including Bishop J.B. Martin, had heard the call from a number of French-speaking Protestant evangelicals to send missionaries, and had sent delegations to visit in 1954 and 1955.

In those years, before the Quiet Revolution, the French population was staunchly Catholic. Later, Janet Martin wrote that although the Catholic believers in the period before Vatican II showed “strong outward piety, it had more form than life.” She reflected that the “thrust of the evangelical movement in Quebec at that time was to spread the gospel of salvation by faith and to make the Bible available to as many as possible, as knowledge of the Bible was woefully lacking, even among the clergy.”

After language study, the Martins



Pauline Reesor, left, is pictured at a Bible study with Janet and Tilman Martin in this 1957 photograph.

moved to a growing suburb in Montreal North, while the Reesors chose a more traditional community in Joliette. Mel and Leeta Horst moved to Joliette in 1961 to join them in their work.

The work with the French-speaking people in Joliette was challenging; the workers encountered suspicion and resistance. Clyde and Elizabeth

Shannon continued the outreach as church workers after the Reesors moved to Mascouch in 1964. It was not until 1969 that the first baptisms took place, and 1972 until a congregation was formally established. In spite of the difficulties, many lives were touched.

Lynne Dufresne, now attending a Mennonite Brethren church, became a Christian when she was 18 through outreach at the Mennonite church in Joliette and was active as a member for 30 years. She says, “Learning to know Christ changed my whole life.... I was looking for answers to my spiritual questions since childhood.” Her lifestyle was shaped through the “Mennonite influences and values of living simply, taking care of people and nature, and being a peaceful person.”

The work in Montreal originally centred on the planting of a French-speaking congregation in Montreal North. By the mid-1970s, however, it became focused on the development of service ministries through the House of Friendship and the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, an English-speaking congregation that shared its facilities. The fellowship, formally established in 1978, grew out of earlier house church-style meetings of the “sons and daughters of Menno” from

Montreal

‘Adult baptism’ lecture inaugurates Mennonite Historical Society in Quebec

The Mennonite Historical Society now has a new chapter and an active presence in Quebec.

On Oct. 27, Richard Lougheed presented a lecture to interested listeners on the history of adult baptism. Organized by both the société historique Mennonite du Québec and Mennonite Central Committee Quebec, the event took place at Ecole de théologie évangélique de Montreal in its new facility near the University of Montreal.

Lougheed, a member of the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, is a professor of church history at the Faculté de théolo-

gie évangélique and is an expert on the history of Protestantism in Quebec.

Entitled “From Zurich (1525) to Montreal (2006),” Lougheed’s talk presented four episodes in the history of adult baptism and explored the consequences resulting from each. The talk explored the activity of Conrad Grebel in 16th century Switzerland, Roger Williams in 17th century Massachusetts, and 19th and 20th century Anabaptists in Quebec.

According to Lougheed, adult baptism has generally led to division within families and communities, but it has also required that believers assert their religious freedom and that they evangelize more than churches that practise infant baptism.

The Mennonite Historical Society is planning to host other events in Quebec in the near future.

—Société historique Mennonite du Québec release

Montreal

Curing the 'terrible disease of loneliness'

Author Kurt Vonnegut Jr. has said, "What should young people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured."

This fall, La Maison de L'amitié (House of Friendship Montreal) has embarked on a daring new venture—to create a community for young adults as they journey through university. But the aim is more than curing the disease of loneliness. The student residence program seeks to provide an environment for students to explore community living and volunteerism while working towards creating a

various conferences in North America who found themselves working or studying in Montreal.

House of Friendship was established in 1973 in a low income area of Montreal. Over the years, the ministry has served a diverse multicultural community, with services such as language classes and settlement support for refugees and recent immigrants, a day-care and prison ministries. Changes in government policies affecting the number of refugees in Montreal and the "gentrification" of the neighbourhood have made it necessary for the organization to adapt its programs.

Luke Martin, a second-generation Quebec Mennonite and the current director of House of Friendship, sees many fruits of the pioneers' work in Quebec. He observes that the first generation also set the tone by "working in partnership with other evangelical groups and building bridges to Catholics even before it was common practice." This has made it possible for Mennonites to have influence and make a contribution to the Christian Church in Quebec beyond what one would expect from a small denomination.

—**Joanna Reesor-McDowell**



Photo courtesy of Suzanne Bender

Residents at La Maison de L'amitié (House of Friendship Montreal) enjoyed a Thanksgiving meal together.

culture of peace.

Maison de L'amitié, a community centre located in the "Plateau" area in Montreal, seeks to create a space for people in the community to interact with one another, fostering peace-building through cultural learning. We offer programs in second language learning, cultural events, community kitchens, a guestroom for short-term visitors, and a student residence.

The student residence is now home to seven young people, both anglophone and francophone, all bringing their own unique voices to conversations. We are fortunate to have such an engaged and enthusiastic group of students participating in the life of Maison de L'amitié. Together, we work through the challenges and rewards of living together in an intentional way.

The year began with a group seminar on conflict resolution, and many discussions on how community life is to function. Living in community is not always easy. As Vonnegut writes, at times it feels as though we have entered into something quite "daring." But as the transitions of autumn move into more stable patterns of life, our little community is finding its rhythm and relationships are passing beyond "housemate" to "friend."

A number of people worked tirelessly on Maison de L'amitié's renovations, painting and decorating in preparation for the students' arrival, while others help keep the residence going. A special thank you goes out to Dave Brubacher, Nick Hamm, Walter Friesen, Bob and Gladys Bender, and the groups from East Zorra and

Steinmann Mennonite churches from Ontario.

Participating in the life of the community at Maison de L'amitié has already enriched the residence experience so much for participants, and there is no doubt that the presence of the residents will positively impact our mission to be a peaceful influence in the city.

—**Suzanne Bender**, Maison de L'amitié residence coordinator

A sower went forth

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Saskatoon

Congregational nurse a first at First

First Mennonite Church has hired a congregational nurse. It is the first Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregation to do so, although the practice has been around for nearly 40 years in the United States and for more than 15 years in parts of Canada.

In Saskatchewan, the practice of hiring nurses for churches has had a slower start. At present, there are only five congregational nurses, mostly in mainline Saskatoon churches. Three years ago, Forest Grove Mennonite Brethren Church agreed to a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) pilot project to place a congregational nurse in its congregation for a year.

A grant from the Mennonite Foundation specifically tailored to begin a new church program made it possible for First Mennonite to hire someone. The church asked member Heidi Bartsch to consider the position. Bartsch has been working as a nurse since 1989, and having elderly parents has made her sensitive to the issues involved in congregational nursing.

Congregational—or parish—nursing combines faith with health. It is, according to First Mennonite's newsletter, a chance to "create healthcare structures that actively care for persons within their own congregation." This may be accomplished by promoting healthy practices, conducting health counselling, and by referring members to existing services.

Reasons for considering a parish nurse for First Mennonite are many and varied. The 75-year-old congregation, one of the first Mennonite churches to begin holding services when the city was in its infancy, now has a high number of retirees and elderly. Health issues can be the main topic of conversation in the church foyer after a Sunday service, while the names of hospitalized church members are announced from the pulpit and posted in the foyer.

For many church members, there is no close family living nearby. Others are single, with no hope of dependents

stepping in to care for them should their health deteriorate. All of this translates into having no one to monitor their medications, explain what is involved in a diagnosis, offer support for living with a sick relative, or advocating within the health system for a sick member.

At First Mennonite, the intent is to augment and enhance what is already being done by the pastor and deacons.

"I can see where it is important," says Bartsch, who took congregational nurse training, along with

other interested people from First Mennonite, at Saskatoon's Lutheran Theological Seminary in September.

"We can tie it in with the hospital deacons. It's all related."

One of the first things the church plans to do in establishing the congregational nursing program is set up a separate and confidential phone line that members can use to call and leave messages about specific health concerns.

—**Karin Fehderau**



Bartsch

Abbotsford, B.C.

'Waging peace' at Fraser Valley arts festival

The week before Remembrance Day brought red poppies to many lapels in remembrance of war, and local Mennonites and others to the annual Fraser Valley Arts and Peace Festival.

The festival, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, Fraser Valley Ploughshares, Langley Mennonite Fellowship and Columbia Bible College (CBC), began with a panel discussion on "Waging peace: Mennonite voices on international security and militarism in Canada." About 150 people gathered in the CBC chapel to hear different views from a panel consisting of local Mennonites from different perspectives: local MP Ed Fast; CBC professor of theology GayLynn Voth; and Greg Rollins, a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

Fast began by affirming his overall allegiance to God, while claiming the church and the state are both agents of God—with different authorities. "Jesus says the use of force in the secular world is to be expected," Fast said. "Force is not ideal, but God grants government coercive power in order to prevent anarchy." Thus, Christians cannot expect the state to function with Christian values such

as nonresistance. In closing, he said that the Old Testament does contain accounts of military actions, but added, "There is always accountability. As much as we deplore the loss of life, these conflicts are a painful part of our lives."

Voth referred to current events and touched on Canada's efforts in the way of international peace and development. She cited the United States' launch of a campaign of terror in the Middle East in response to terror. "Why have Christians become a people of fear as much as a people of faith?" she asked. Her advice to the Christian community: "May we not be so overcome by the voice of fear that we forget to hear the voice of the One we follow."

Rollins, who has served with CPT in several locations, including Iraq, explained his organization's purpose. "Our job is to get in the way of military pursuits," he said. "I've seen these things firsthand, what soldiers do firsthand." He described several situations in which he potentially was at peril, but acted in a manner consistent with his Christian faith in order to witness to Jesus' way of nonviolence. "The myth of nonviolence is that it's very peaceful," he said. "That's wrong. People do get hurt because they're in the way of violence."

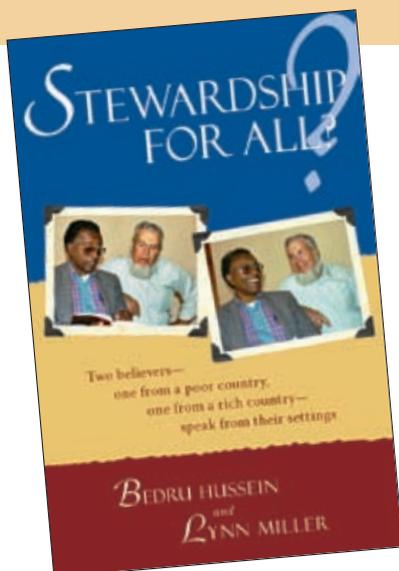
The week ended with the Valley Festival Singers giving a Remembrance Day concert: "For the fallen: Remembering those we have loved and lost."

—**Amy Dueckman**

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Purpose of the Shelf

The Global Anabaptist/Mennonite Shelf of Literature envisions a new book selection each year, encouraging the fellowships around the world to translate it into their own languages. The book or booklet of the year may have been published first in any one of the languages spoken within the Anabaptist-related fellowships found in 75 countries around the world. For more information, email General Secretary Larry Miller at LarryMiller@MWC-cmm.org.

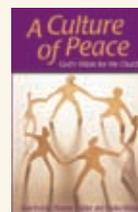
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of Faith*, by Pakisa K.
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by C. Arnold Snyder
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Schools Directory



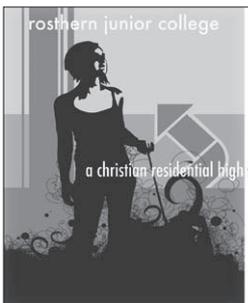
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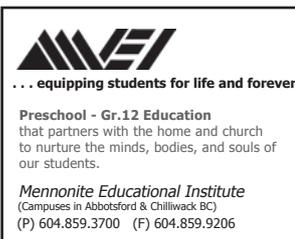
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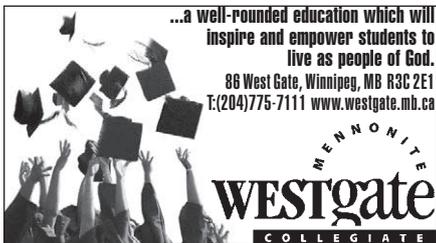
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AMBS photo Mary E. Klassen

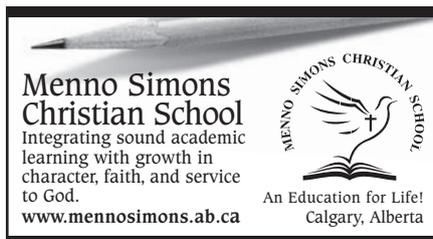
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) student Jenifer Eriksen-Morales, left, showed photos of her children to two of her scholarship contributors—Freida and Myrl Sauder of Archbold, Ohio—at a dinner recognizing AMBS donors on Oct. 20. Eriksen-Morales explained how the scholarship makes it possible for her to be both mother and full-time student.



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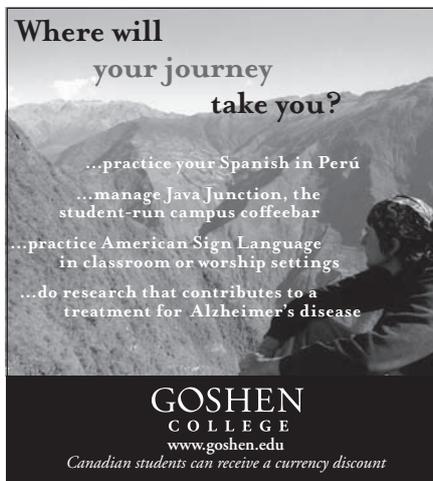
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Transitions

Births/Adoptions

Albrecht—to Katharine and Scott, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., a daughter, Anna Funk, Oct. 17.

Bauman—to Sharon Tiessen and Nevin (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.), a son, Jeremy Kenneth, in Toronto, Nov. 12.

Bergman—to Julie and Dustin, Springstein Mennonite, Man., a son, Eli Andrew, May 23.

Borne—to Brandee and Robert, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Zenon Leonard, in Sherwood Park, Alta., Oct. 31.

Clark—to Fawndel Fisher and Aaron, Carrot River Mennonite, Sask., a daughter, Alexis Breanna, Oct. 11.

Cornies—to Karen and Ron, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., a daughter, Kara Eden Viola, Nov. 14.

Epp—to Wendy (Froese) and Mike, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Lucas David, June 6.

Giesbrecht—to Natalie and Trent, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Alexis Marie, Nov. 10.

Klassen—to Sara and Jake, Altona Mennonite, Man., a son, Jakob Joel, Oct. 4.

Krahn—to Kara and Aaron, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Daniel Levi, Sept. 26.

Ogilvie—to Rachele (Reimer) and Greg, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Easton Robert, May 16.

Penner—to Lisa and Weldon, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Aliyah Gillian, Nov. 11.

Remillard—to Christina and Chris, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, twin daughters, Sydney Elodie and Olivia Suzanna, Nov. 9.

Siemens—to Tony (Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon) and Asunta, a son, Joshua Alexander, in Altona, Man., Nov. 14.

Toews—to Heidi and Lyndon, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite,

Man., a daughter, Celina Marie, Nov. 24.

Torres Meyer—to Marion Meyer and Ricardo Torres, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, a daughter, Ana Isabel, in South Africa, Nov. 26.

Wiens—to Cara (Kruger) and Brennan, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, a son, Mitchel Abram, June 26.

Zacharias—to Andrea and Sheldon, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., a son, Logan Jack, Nov. 24.

Marriages

Driedger-Leis—Joel and Karen, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sept. 3.

Friesen-Fioleau—Ryan (Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.) and Deanne, in Duck Lake, Sask., Oct. 14.

Friesen-Penner—Kyle (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Melissa, at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Nov. 18.

Jansen-Huard—Kurt (North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Jessika, in Lac Blanc, Que., Oct. 14.

Kuttshrutter-Martin—John and Nicole, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Nov. 4.

Neufeldt-Bergen—Marty and Krista, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Aug. 9.

Robins-Patkau—Loren and Heidi, Hanley Mennonite, Sask., Oct. 7.

Rodda-Neufeldt—Chris and Andrea, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 15.

Siemens-Huckaby—Jake and Regina (Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.), Nov. 12.

Tiessen-Janzen—Derek and Kim, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sept. 2.

Van Dam-Froese—Leo and Kathryn, Hanley Mennonite, Sask., Nov. 18.

Deaths

Dick—Rudolph, 93 (b. Nov. 10, 1912), Carman Mennonite, Man., Nov. 5.

Driedger—Annie (nee Janzen), 79, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., Nov. 9.

Enns—Frank F., 91 (b. Feb. 20, 1915), Glenlea Mennonite, Man., Nov. 19.

Entz—Luke, 11, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Nov. 17.

Friesen—Helen Ruby, 93, Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask., Nov. 26.

Friesen—Ted, 49, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., in Saskatoon, Oct. 13.

Funk—Jacob, 68, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Nov. 16.

Harder—Walter, 73, Sargent Ave. Mennonite, Winnipeg, Oct. 31.

Hiebert—Henry, 84, Morden Mennonite, Man., Nov. 3.

Hildebrandt—Peter, 68 (b. Feb. 9, 1938), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 12.

Horrman—Wendy (nee Parr), 59, Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 8.

Kroeger—Victor D., 75 (b. June 15, 1931), Springstein Mennonite, Man., Aug. 22.

Klassen—Nettie (Ed), 86, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., Oct. 9.

Loeppky—Philip, 88, First Mennonite, Calgary, Nov. 12.

Martens—Mary, 88, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Nov. 25.

Martens—Ruth, 75 (b. July 13, 1931) Springstein Mennonite, Man., Nov. 21.

Plenert—Rudolph (Rudy) Jacob, 78 (b. Sept. 7, 1928), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Oct. 19.

Rempel—Sam, 73, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Nov. 9.

Ruby—Roy, 86, First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., Nov. 2.

Schellenberg—David, 86 (b. April 6, 1920), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Nov. 14.

Stauffer—Herta, 95 (b. April 1, 1911), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont., Nov. 16.

Wiens—Jacob K., 82, (b. Aug. 8, 1924), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 3.

Baptisms

Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg—Zachary Peters, Nov. 5.

Nutana Park, Mennonite, Saskatoon—Alina Balzer-

Peters, June 4.

Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C.—Vicky Ng, Jeff Symons, Dec. 3.

Springstein Mennonite, Man.—Tim Coughlan, Stephanie Ens, Chelsea Froese, June 4.

Stirling Ave. Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.—Kristina Martin, Jillian Ruesser, Catie-Jo Ruesser, Reuben Musselman, Suah Kim, Dec. 3.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Transitions announcements within four months of the event. Please send 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.

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Columbia's Board of Directors is launching its search for Columbia's next President. Columbia is an accredited four-year evangelical Anabaptist Bible College on Canada's west coast with about 500 students. The president's role exists in order to lead the Columbia team in the fulfilment of its mission, to prepare people for a life of discipleship, service, and ministry. It is a full-time administrative faculty post with an initial two-year term.

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Applications will be processed starting Dec. 31, 2006. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Rembrandt:

Portrait of the artist as a young Mennonite?

Despite the huge flow of news from around the world, as well as national and local news reports by the mass media, it can hardly be missed—at least in the Netherlands—that this year, 2006, the 400th anniversary of Rembrandt's birth, is abundantly celebrated.

It is the irony of history that the poor artist—Rembrandt was always short of money and was buried in an anonymous rented grave in the Amsterdam Westerkerk—has become the subject of commercial exploitation. Of course, this all began with the appreciation of his great skills and unique talents, which were rediscovered in the 19th century. Since then, Rembrandt sells.

In contrast to his overwhelming exposure, and regardless of his impressive production of paintings and etchings that can be found in museums all over the world, Rembrandt's own life and thought, his contacts and whereabouts, are poorly documented. This lack of sources has given rise to a variety of interpretations and speculation about the artist's religious convictions. Assumptions have been primarily based on the interpretation of his art work, ranging from his preference for specific biblical scenes to the identification of the religious backgrounds of the people he portrayed.

And so Rembrandt has not only been considered a Protestant but even a convert to Judaism. And it has also been asserted that Rembrandt might have been a Mennonite. Hints at this particularly include the way he depicted scenes from the Gospels, concentrating more on Christ's life and teachings rather

than his birth or death.

As early as 1906, these opinions were promoted by some Dutch Mennonite pastors and historians. In a still relevant article in the July 1953 *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Harold Bender reflects his awareness of the ambiguity of the topic, expressing both his scholarly hesitation and pastoral enthusiasm: "It has sometimes been asserted that the greatest of all Dutch painters, Rembrandt van Rijn... was a Mennonite.... However, the best and most recent scholarship hesitates to claim this with finality.... [But] in any case Rembrandt's religion was in its deepest essence Mennonite, formed by Mennonite influences, and his essential spirit and expression were Mennonite in character."

Like so many intellectuals and artists of the time, Rembrandt must have disliked the theologically quarrelsome practice and nature of contemporary Dutch Protestantism in general, including those of the divided Reformed Church and the still more divided Mennonite denominations.

There is speculation that Rembrandt might have shared beliefs with the so-called Waterlander Mennonites, one of the most liberal branches of Dutch Anabaptism/Mennonitism at the time. Waterlanders allowed their members to hold administrative and political positions, such as city counsellor or *burgomaster*, although they

opposed taking justice-related jobs like bailiff or sheriff; they also stressed inner spirituality over outer religious customs and traditions, and as a consequence they quite easily assimilated into Dutch society.

In 1631, when Rembrandt left

his native town Leiden to settle in Amsterdam, mainly for economic reasons—this booming centre of world trade offered far better opportunities for commissions as a painter—he would immediately enter the Waterlander way of life. The first four years of his Amsterdam career would be marked by his partnership with Hendrick Uylenburgh, a famous art dealer who was a member of the Waterlander church, and whose older brother Rombout had married a Mennonite woman.

A feature of Dutch Mennonitism at the time was its rather liberal view of works of art. Unlike the Dutch Calvinist orthodoxy, which opposed the arts in general—especially painting and the making of images, in line with the second commandment—such restrictions among Dutch Mennonites were unknown. Mennonites, especially those living in urban areas, considered the production of art—whether paintings or poems—primarily as an honest handicraft.

During this period, Rembrandt was not only lodged in the Uylenburgh house but he also entered the Uylenburgh firm as both an independent painter and as the head of Uylenburgh's painting school. Supervised by Rembrandt, young painters were trained as apprentices to produce paintings on demand, while the art dealer also acted as Rembrandt's private commissioner.

The earliest document linking Hendrick Uylenburgh's name with Rembrandt's dates from 1631, when the artist lent Hendrick a thousand guilders. Few documents have survived of their actual cooperation; however, there are entries of both of them in a book of friendship owned by German scholar Burchard Grossman, who visited the Uylenburgh workshop in June 1634.



Rembrandt: "Self Portrait as a Beggar," 1630



“The Mennonite Minister Cornelis Claesz Anso in Conversation with his Wife, Aaltje” by Rembrandt, 1641

In this art shop Rembrandt would also meet Saskia Uylenburgh, who likely did some work as a model for Rembrandt and who would become his wife in 1634. In 1639, the young couple bought the premises next door to Uylenburgh’s art shop, which now houses the Rembrandt House Museum. In many respects, the Mennonite Uylenburgh network appeared to be most profitable for the artist.

During his preceding Leiden period, Rembrandt had never painted portraits. However, the first paintings he made in Amsterdam were three male portraits, two of them of Mennonites Nicoales Ruts and Marten Looten, both members of the Waterlander Toorn congregation.

While generally tolerant of works of art, it is interesting to note that Waterlander preacher Jan Philipsz Schabaelje criticized the increasing luxury among his people in general, stating in an early edition of *Martyrs Mirror*: “Simplicity has turned into pomp and splendour. Material wealth has impoverished the soul. Outer dress has become rich and shiny, but the inner jewel has gone.” Schabaelje explicitly detested the new trend of making and displaying portraits of ancestors and family members, which he considered to be nothing but vanity.

The type of edifying art that truly could be appreciated by Schabaelje and his contemporaries, was, of course, biblical stories, which during these early years Rembrandt produced in

high numbers—mainly etchings—which were relatively cheap to buy at the time. It is now assumed that Rembrandt made these etchings especially for the Mennonite market. He produced several episodes from the life and teachings of Christ, including such paintings as the “Incredulity of Thomas,” whose first owner was Waterlander merchant Ameldonck Leeuw.

As soon as Rembrandt left the Uylenburgh business in 1635, it was a Mennonite artist who became his successor as head of the painter’s academy. Govert Flinck arrived in the Uylenburgh workshop in 1633, where he completed his apprenticeship under Rembrandt. The effects of Rembrandt’s lessons are evident in several of Flinck’s early works, and soon Flinck became Rembrandt’s most serious competitor, gaining far more commissions than Rembrandt, whose shadowy style and his conduct were becoming the subject of criticism.

Uylenburgh’s art business occasionally suffered from cash flow problems. Like any business, the constant buying and selling of paintings was strongly dependent on the demand of the market. One loan—from a trust fund set up for the poor of the Waterlander congregation—was unique in that the deacons required a security of “125 copper plates,” probably made by Rembrandt, that were handed over as collateral. The loan was arranged by Cornelis Claesz Anso, a pastor of the Waterlander

congregation; earlier, Rembrandt made several etchings of Anso before doing a portrait of the pastor and his wife Aaltje.

Although Rembrandt was certainly not a member of any Mennonite congregation, his profound interest in Mennonite practices, traditions and beliefs was more than merely an important source of income. The best proof for this is the painting of Anso and his wife (at left).

Today, art historians generally agree that Rembrandt did more than just an accurate painted reproduction of this sympathetic husband and wife. He has caught the pious couple in the intimacy of an admonition. Pointing with a rhetorical gesture, Anso explains the words of the open book, most likely the Bible, to his wife; through his hand, her attention is fully concentrated on the Word of God, surrounded by the ever mysterious Rembrandtesque light.

The theme of an admonition is also subtly expressed by the candle snuffer on the drip plate under the candle. The pair of scissors was used to clip the wick when the flame became too high and the candle would drip excessively. This symbolizes the so-called *correctio fraterna*—the brotherly correction or admonition—for which the faithful must guard the soul.

This interpretation, this hidden meaning, so relevant for Dutch art in general, which in this case appears to be a specific Mennonite message, is confirmed in a way by the Waterlander Mennonite poet Joost van den Vondel, who wrote the following lines in admiration of both Anso and Rembrandt:

*Ay, Rembrandt, paint Cornelis’s voice.
The visible part is the least of him.
The invisible one knows only through the ears.
Who desires to see Anso, must hear him.*

—Piet Visser

The author is professor of Anabaptist/Mennonite history at the Mennonite Seminary, Vrije University, Amsterdam. Adapted from his presentation to the Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Historical Society on Oct. 24 entitled “Amsterdam Mennonites in the light and shadow of Rembrandt: New findings on their mutual relations.”



Eyebrow, Sask.

Mennonite poet wins Remembrance Day contest

A young Saskatchewan Mennonite—whose grandfather served as a conscientious objector (CO) during the Second World War—travelled last month to Ottawa. There, she participated in Remembrance Day services after winning a nationwide contest sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion.

Rachel Bueckert's odyssey began when her Grade 12 English teacher at the Eyebrow School handed the class an assignment. The students were to write a poem or essay about Remembrance Day. If they wanted to, they could also submit it to the annual contest sponsored by the Legion.

According to the teen, the inspiration for her poem, "Only Sixteen," came after learning about the underage boys who signed up for the war looking for adventure. The legal age to enlist was 18, but somehow these teenage boys were able to sneak in, she noted. "I was thinking about the younger soldiers who wanted to go but weren't old enough. I hadn't heard any stories about that" before beginning her research, she said.

Bueckert set to work, wanting to do well on her assignment, but with no intention of submitting anything for the Legion contest. To her surprise, though, the teacher sent in her poem and she won the local Legion event.

Awards for the Legion's contest were given out in four categories: black and white poster, colour poster, essay and poem. In recognition of her achievement, she was honoured in front of the whole school with a plaque and a cheque.

Bueckert considered the matter finished—until she got a phone call a while later. Unbeknownst to her, the local Legion branch had sent her poem to the national committee to be considered for the cross-country competition. And the judges liked what they saw. This led to her invitation to attend Remembrance Day ceremonies in Ottawa on Nov. 11.

Together with her parents, Bueckert



Photo by Orlando Bueckert

Rachel Bueckert of Eyebrow, Sask., left, and other winners of a national Remembrance Day poetry, essay writing and poster art contest sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, joined Prime Minister Stephen Harper on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Nov. 11. The four contest winners laid a wreath in memory of Canadian armed forces personnel and peacekeepers who died between World War I and the current conflict in Afghanistan.

flew to the nation's capital. The trip included laying a wreath together with the three other competition winners and having tea with the Governor General.

"It was awesome," Bueckert said of her trip, noting that it was especially interesting in light of the fact that her maternal grandfather worked as a CO during World War II.

"He was called a coward," said Jane Bueckert, Rachel's mother, who admittedly went with mixed feelings. "I have no problem giving credit to those who felt this is what they had to do," she said, but she doesn't agree with what she calls the Legion's philosophy that "sometimes you have to have war to have peace."

—**Karin Fehderau**

Only sixteen

A soldier too young
He shouldn't have seen
All the things that he saw
He was only sixteen
He wasn't prepared
For the horror or stench
That came from the bodies
Piled high in the trench
Or the fright and despair
That hung in the air
He couldn't escape it
This real life nightmare
He never imagined
There could be this much pain
Why had he done it?
What did he gain?
It wasn't the adventure
He thought it would be
He wasn't so brave
He just wanted to leave
But he fought with the rest
Day after day
Watched his friends die
Watched them fade away
Then one day he watched
Yet another bomb fall
This time close to him
He heard someone call
It's the last thing he heard
The last thing he'd seen
He shouldn't have died
He was only sixteen

—**Rachel Bueckert**

Winnipeg

New book of sermons aids pastoral training fund

What's unique about *A Sower Went Forth*, a book of 50 sermons by long-time pastor and church leader Jake F. Pauls, is that it celebrates 50 years of ministry without drawing undue attention to the writer.

Instead, "it praises and honours God," said Mennonite Church Manitoba executive secretary Edgar Rempel at a recent book launch.

Pauls responded modestly by saying he'd "never dreamed" that he would ever publish a book of sermons. In fact, he said preaching was what he "dreaded most" when he began pastoral ministry in 1954. But over the years his conviction grew that "it wasn't what I have to say, but what God has to say through me," that counted.

And so with the encouragement of a "book advisory committee," comprised of representatives from Bethel, Morden and Altona Bergthaler Mennonite churches where Pauls had ministered in Manitoba, he took on the "difficult and time-consuming" task of reading through and changing sermons "prepared for preaching" into

a readable manuscript.

Reflecting on that experience, Pauls noted that often while he was working on the project, "I felt like I was preaching the sermon again, reliving the spiritual experience.... It was like the Saturday night before Sunday!"

"The good part of a book of sermons," joked Pauls, "is that if you

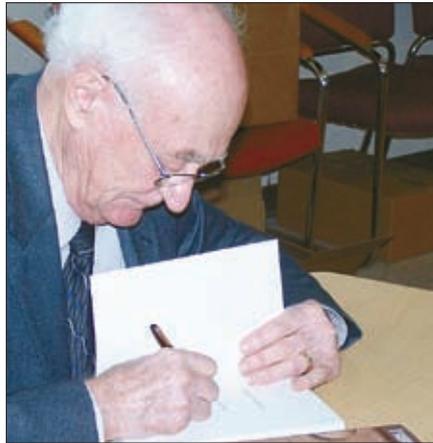


Photo by Darryl Neustaedter Berg

Jake F. Pauls took time to autograph copies of his book of sermons, *A Sower Went Forth*, at a book launch in Winnipeg recently.

don't like one, try another."

And there is a lot of sermon variety—short, long, weddings, funerals—which are presented "not with a consistent point in mind," although the book begins with a cluster of sermons that follow the church year. The book includes a cross-section of sermons, mostly from his latter years, because for the first 20 years Pauls preached in German from notes which are now indecipherable and forgotten.

The 316-page book, which includes a CD of Pauls preaching three sermons, is dedicated to "the One who empowered me to speak."

A Sower Went Forth is published by MC Manitoba. Proceeds from the sale of the book and donations—about \$25,000 to date—are going towards the establishment of the Jake and Dorothy Pauls Pastoral Leadership Training Fund, which has an Anabaptist/Mennonite focus. The goal is to raise \$50,000 for the fund. To purchase Pauls' book or to make a donation to the fund, contact office@mennochurch.mb.ca.

—**Leona Dueck Penner**

Manitoba Mennonite war experiences recalled

When Canada Called: Manitoba Mennonites and World War II. Ron Friesen. Self-published. Printed by Derksen Printers, Steinbach, Man. 353 pages. Available at the *Mennonite Post*, Steinbach.

With at least one Mennonite Church Manitoba member presently serving with the Canadian forces, we have the arrival of a book that details the travails of Manitoba Mennonites during the Second World War.

What consumed the Mennonites of Manitoba some 60 years ago—how to cope with the intense nationalism, the enormous pressures of the war effort and their own consciences and patriotism—appears largely to have become a non-issue today.

This is an important book, not only for Mennonites of faith who hold onto their

pacifism today, but for all who care about Canadian justice and what happens to related issues in a country at war. Author Ron Friesen's law degree helps throw a bright light on judicial and historical issues and agreements, and how Canadian justice was thwarted and Mennonites and Hutterites were subjected to official discrimination.

Friesen has also provided valuable personal accounts of some of the Mennonite servicemen (approximately 38 percent of the eligible men in the Mennonite community joined the armed forces) and the 3,000 men who served as conscientious objectors (COs).

When the drums of war started beating, Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his Cabinet invoked the War Measures Act on Sept. 1, 1939, and all Canadians aged 16 to 38 were ordered to register. Mennonites, who in World War One had not been called up because of the special privileges given their forefathers in 1873, were now, according to Friesen, up against federal government lawyers who were looking for loopholes in that agreement.

The main content of the book details the great efforts made by Mennonite leaders to assist those who had applied for conscientious objector status and how they served in places like Riding Mountain National Park, planting more than 17 million trees and contributing \$2 million to the Canadian Red Cross.

Most touching are the personal accounts of both servicemen and COs. Despite some very bad treatment—in one extremely disturbing case, that of Frank Peters, where beatings and torture were his daily lot alternated with solitary confinement—there has been an inclination to excuse and exonerate, if not praise, the persecutors by the COs.

The stories of the Manitoba Mennonite servicemen who died overseas include that of Flying Officer Nicholas Peters of Steinbach and Grande Pointe, who was shot down after a bombing run over Hamburg. He was awarded five medals. His mother received the Silver Cross but her obituary made no mention of her son.

—**Abe Warkentin**

Christmas sneak preview: *Children of Men* A bleak view of a childless future

Children of Men. Universal Pictures. Director: Alfonso Cuarón. Written by Alfonso Cuarón and Timothy J. Sexton. Canadian release date: Dec. 25.

The year is 2027. One fine day 18 years before, women stopped being able to conceive—whether the result of infertility in men or women is not stated—leaving the planet truly in its last days. Crime and anarchy are rampant, and the British government (the last functioning government in the world) thinks the “short-term” solution lies in keeping its borders closed and hunting down illegal immigrants. But what if one of those immigrants is pregnant?

Clive Owen plays Theo, a low-ranking government employee who is still depressed about the death of his child 20 years before. His former partner, played by Julianne Moore, is part of a radical terrorist group called the Fishes that enlists Theo’s help. He’s reluctant until he understands what is at stake. Then he becomes the action hero—although he has no gun—as he tries to regain some hope in the future and maybe even save the world.

The film’s atmosphere, aided by outstanding cinematography, is perfect, presenting us with a gritty, grim-looking London and a very bleak United Kingdom. Alfonso Cuarón is an excellent director and he gets good performances from his actors here. Not being an action film fan, I was disappointed that the film, based on a novel by P.D. James, was not more intelligent, with a deeper plot and better dialogue. There is not a lot to chew on and the film succeeds better as escapist fare than it does as a thoughtful vision of the future, as opposed to the future London of *V for Vendetta*.

Nevertheless, the film does have some brilliant scenes. In one of these, Theo visits a wealthy and powerful friend of his to ask for a favour. During their discussion, Theo asks his friend how he can live with what’s going on in the city, to which the friend replies that he just doesn’t think about it. I believe this is exactly how most

of us go on living day to day in a world heading for destruction.

I do not share the pessimistic outlook of *Children of Men*, which, like many films of its kind, shows us a few good people struggling in the midst of a violent, selfish and apathetic humanity. I happen to believe that people are innately good and that the response to a global crisis—once revealed as true—would be one of love and the creation of a better world.

Children of Men does offer some hope, teasing us with references to the Human Project, a group that is supposedly trying to make the world a better place. As followers of Jesus, we must lead the way in that Human Project,



exposing the truth and suggesting options for change, as Jesus did.

We must also lead the way in recognizing that we are part of one human family, and that every human on this planet is our brother or sister; Jesus broke down the dividing wall of enmity to create one new humanity, it says in Ephesians 2:14. Only then can we envision a future for our children—while we are still able to have them—without violence or poverty.

—Vic Thiessen

The reviewer is the director of the London (England) Mennonite Centre. The film opened in England earlier this year.

Akron, Pa.

MCC introduces *Simply in Season Children's Cookbook*

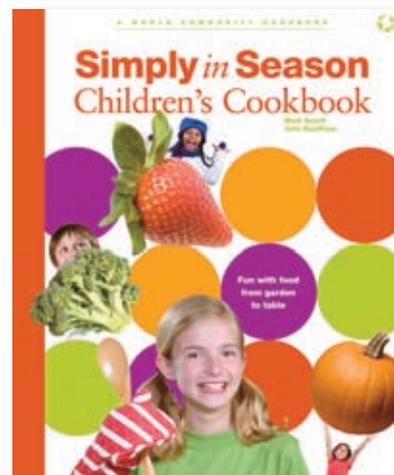
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has released a children’s cookbook inspired by *Simply in Season*, the popular cookbook that features seasonal, locally grown ingredients.

The *Simply in Season Children's Cookbook* makes cooking and gardening accessible to children, with easy recipes, lots of photographs and fun facts about each ingredient.

The cookbook encourages parents and children to join together in growing, preparing and eating food together. Each seasonal section ends with mealtime prayers that could be used when the family joins around the table for a meal.

Like the original, the *Simply in Season Children's Cookbook* offers recipes for each season, with fruits, herbs and vegetables that can be grown in a home garden.

Mary Beth Lind, a co-author of *Simply in Season*, wrote in a brief foreword that the children’s cookbook is fun to use and serves a larger purpose. “Today, faced as we are with an epidemic of overweight children whose



idea of vegetables is often french fries and ketchup, it is time we redeem food from the hands of multinational corporations and cartoon commercials,” Lind wrote. “It is time to put food, real food, into the hands of children and let them play.”

The *Simply in Season Children's Cookbook* is by Mark Beach and Julie Kauffman, and is published by Herald Press. It may be ordered online at mcstore.org.

—MCC release by **Tim Shenk**

Mennonite Church Canada

Prayer requests

In the midst of Christmas and New Year's celebrations, remember:

- Witness worker families who will be separated from each other during this Christmas season as a result of teens or adult children studying or working in various locations in Canada. These include the Houmphans serving in Thailand, the Ramsays in Mongolia, the Thiessens in London, England, and the Entzes in Burkina Faso. Please pray that God will comfort separated families and that they would experience the peace of the Christmas season.

- About 350 Isaan children and youths who attended three different English camps in Thailand in October. These camps were run by Pat and Rad Houmphans, Witness workers in Thailand, together with a short-term team from Bethesda Mennonite Church in Nebraska. The Houmphans report, "The kids really enjoyed their teachers and their activities. We were able to share the Good News with them; good connections were made between the church and these children." You can read more and view pictures at the Houmphans' Thailand Tidings website: houmphans.blogspot.com.

- Bruce and Nancy Yoder/Frey, Witness partners in Benin, who report that the Benin Bible Institute has received a record number of applications for its seminary program while the full-time program is faltering in enrolment. Pray that God will give wisdom to the leaders of the institute as they adapt their programs to meet the needs of the churches.

—**Hinke Loewen-Rudgers**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

VBS troupers, churches sought

It may be December, but MC Eastern Canada is accepting applications for next summer's Vacation Bible School (VBS) troupe.

Tubs of crafts and costumes, suitcases, backpacks and five excited young adults arrived at eight MC Eastern Canada congregations this past summer. They were eager to deliver a VBS program for children within the MC Eastern Canada community of congregations. Faith became more meaningful through the stories about a friend named Jesus as the troupe watched children's lives transformed before their eyes.

Maria Steinman, one of the troupe members, found it to be a rewarding summer. She says, "It was much more than a summer job. As a group, we learned so much together and also had lots of fun."

MC Eastern Canada is offering the VBS program again in 2007. The theme, "Be bold! God is with you," tells the stories of Jeremiah, Ruth, Mary and Joseph, Peter, and Ananias, who all found themselves in fearful situations. They all made the choice to do what God asked them to do—in spite of their fears. "Be bold! God is with you" teaches children that it is okay to have fears and that they have choices in how to respond to those fears.

Congregational applications will be received until Jan. 17. Applications for troupe members will be received until March 9. Both can be downloaded at mcec.ca (follow the "Congregational Ministries link") or by calling the MC Eastern Canada office toll-free at 1-800-206-9356.

—**Joan Schooley**, MC Eastern Canada

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Quilting retreats popular, productive

Every fall for the past eight years, Val Hoepfner has organized quilting retreats for Camps with Meaning. Ever since the popularity of the first quilting retreat, there have been two retreats each year. This year, three retreats were offered.

The Nov. 10 to 12 retreat at Camp Moose Lake brought together 21 enthusiastic quilters. Last year, the quilting group suggested making quilted bags for this year's project. Hoepfner approached Kathy Fast of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), who had a collection of donated upholstery fabric. Several boxes of this fabric were brought to camp for the weekend. Quilters could choose from these fabrics to make a bag for themselves as well as a bag for MCC, or make a donation to MCC.

"It was unbelievable," said Hoepfner. "They started pulling out fabrics right away. By Friday night we had our first bag. It was a creating frenzy."

Thirty tote and hand/shoulder bags were completed that weekend. Twelve were sold at the recent MCC craft sale in Winnipeg and \$320 was donated to MCC by the quilters.

Rose Campbell from Arnes was the resource person. Lois Friesen Wiebe of Winnipeg provided spiritual input.

"I work pretty hard at making [the quilting retreats] refreshing and rejuvenating, as well as productive," said Hoepfner. "I guarantee at least one good belly laugh."

The growing interest and the number of repeat participants are strong indicators that Hoepfner is succeeding at this.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

Learning about aboriginal healing

On Nov. 29, members of the MC Saskatchewan executive and Ministries Commission joined together for a trip to Willow Cree Healing Lodge near Duck Lake. Calling it a learning tour, the group spent the day at the local minimum-security institution to meet with First Nations people and begin friendships.

"One of the mandates from the MC Canada sessions was that we needed to be more intentional with regards to relationships with First Nations people," said commission chair Claire Ewert Fisher.

The lodge is home to 32 men who are working on emotional stability and spiritual healing. A group of buildings forms a circle on the compound. Each building houses eight men.

"They are there because they're able to manage their emotions," said Ewert Fisher, noting an absence of guards, fences and guns. "It was a very hopeful place," she explained.

There is meaningful work for the inmates, some of whom will be released soon, and there is an Alcoholics Anonymous program in place to help. The two First Nations elders on staff use different aboriginal traditions, such as the talking stick, to help with healing.

Mennonite Church Alberta

Boom times hurting new immigrants

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers is hearing the boom of Alberta's economy. The centre, which provides support and training opportunities for new immigrants, is experiencing

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difficulties in helping refugees find adequate housing.

"Staff are stressed to the maximum with the problem of keeping refugee families housed," says Jim Gurnett, executive director of the centre. "Staff tell me about absolutely unacceptable places where families are living because that's all there is."

With vacancy rates extremely low and rents rising, many low income families and individuals have no place to live, or they are spending an inordinate amount of their earnings on housing.

"I am struck, over and over, that it's such an ironic time when part of Edmonton is doing unimaginably better than ever, while the people with very little money are in worse shape than they were even in less prosperous times," Gurnett says.

The centre, which rents office facilities downtown, is looking toward its future. This past April, the centre's board of directors came to the conclusion that the organization should have a long-range plan to own some of its own facilities. Gurnett and the board are currently exploring possibilities for making this happen.

**Mennonite Church
British Columbia**

**Interim director
for Squeah named**

The MC B.C. executive has hired Rob Tiessen as interim executive director of Camp Squeah until the 2009 annual general meeting; the decision followed a recommendation from the Camp Committee. Tiessen has been full-time camp program director for nearly 10 years. He is a member of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver. He lives in Hope with his wife Kim and sons Josiah and Eli.

**Greendale turned 75
in October**

First Mennonite Church of Greendale celebrated its 75th birthday on Oct. 29 with a celebratory worship service followed by a fellowship lunch. The morning service included the showing of a video presentation of pictures and church events over the years, and Sunday school singing and special choir selections. Former pastor Philip Wheaton brought the message.

At the church luncheon following, members and former members reminisced and shared memories at an open

mike time. Bulletin boards in the lower auditorium displayed photos of all former pastors and of past church life.

Currently, George Hoepfner is pastor at Greendale, along with youth pastor Darren Derhousoff.

**New piano
at Peace Mennonite**

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond celebrated its 26th anniversary on Nov. 19 with a special evening concert highlighted by the dedication of a new sanctuary piano. The piano, donated by some members of the church, is the first grand piano the church has had. The musical program

included a piece played by eight hands on two pianos, one piece with six hands on one piano, and five degree-level pianists and a youngster who has just had six piano lessons, along with a five-year old violinist. The church choir also sang a newly written hymn for the occasion.

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

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Jan. 22	Jan. 9 (Focus on Post-Secondary Education)
Feb. 5	Jan. 23 (Focus on Camps and Summer Christian Education)
Feb. 19	Feb. 6
March 5	Feb. 20 (Focus on Summer Travel, Food and Events)
March 19	March 6
April 2	March 20 (Focus on Elementary and Secondary Education)
April 16	April 3
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- Changes will be made immediately but may take four to six weeks to take effect because of printing schedules.

Contact information:

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Calendar

British Columbia

Jan. 19-20: “The mind of Christ” learning weekend for Vancouver area Mennonite churches, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond. Speakers: John J. Friesen, Gary Yamasaki, Tim Rogalsky and Chris Huebner.

Feb. 10: B.C. Women in Mission special business session at Bethel Mennonite Church, Aldergrove, 2 p.m.

Feb. 17: Mennonite Historical Society presents “Passing on the comfort: The MCC story,” at Garden Park Tower, Abbotsford. Quilt show and stories, 1 to 5 p.m.; lecture by Ron Matthies, 7 p.m.

Feb. 23-24: MC B.C. annual delegate session, at Eden Mennonite Church, Chilliwack.

March 16-17: Youth workers conference at CBC.

March 24,25: Lenten vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (24); Knox United Church, Vancouver (25). Donations to Menno Simons Centre.

Alberta

Jan. 19-21: Junior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua.

Jan. 27: Camp Valaqua fellowship banquet at Edmonton First Mennonite Church.

Feb. 17: Winter fun day at Camp Valaqua. Call Jon Olfert at 403-637-2510 for more information.

Feb. 23-25: Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua.

March 10: Camp Valaqua fellowship banquet at Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary.

March 23-24: MC Alberta annual delegate sessions in Lethbridge.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 5-6: RJC alumni Tournament of Memories (basketball, curling, hockey).

Jan. 26-28: Senior high retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre. Speaker: Roland Martinson.

Feb. 5-12: Mid-year conference for MCC IVEP participants at Mount Royal Mennonite.

Feb. 10-11: Winter Fun Days for youths at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Feb. 16-26: Ethiopian storyteller Tesfa Dalellew is visiting Saskatchewan.

Feb. 23-24: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at Western Christian College, Regina.

Feb. 25: Evening of Quartets—an MCC fundraiser—at Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon.

March 23-24: MC Saskatchewan Songfest at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

March 31: Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising banquet and silent auction.

Manitoba

Jan. 5-7: MMYO young adult retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Jan. 13: “New lenses? A Mennonite look at human rights” consultation, at south campus of CMU, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sponsored by Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, MCC, Canadian Foodgrains Bank and CMU. To register, e-mail Anna Ens at aaens@mts.net.

Jan. 13: “Dealing with bullies in the church” workshop, at CMU. For more information, or to register, visit cmu.ca or call 204-487-3300.

Jan. 18-20: CMU Refreshing Winds conference on worship and music. Keynote speaker: Marva Dawn, author of *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship For This Urgent Time*. Visit cmu.ca for more information.

Jan. 19-21: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Jan. 29: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house.

Feb. 2-4: MMYO senior youth retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 9-11: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Feb. 20-21: CMU winter lectures with Robert Russell, professor of theology, Graduate Theological Union. Topic: “Science and theology.” Visit cmu.ca for more information.

Feb. 23-24: MC Manitoba annual delegate sessions at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

March 4-7: “Sharing the faith in a pluralistic and post-Christian society” conference at CMU. Speaker: Joe Boot of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries Canada.

March 8-10: MCI musical production of *Les Miserables*.

March 9-11: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

March 23-25: MMYO junior youth retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Ontario

Jan. 13: MC Eastern Canada pastors chaplains and congregational leaders event—“Young adults and the Church,” at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Jan. 18, 22: MEDA breakfast meetings, 7:30 a.m. at the Stone Crock, St. Jacobs. Speakers: Gloria Eby (18), Bob Nally (22).

Jan. 27: MC Eastern Canada young adult volleyball at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

Feb. 2-4: MC Eastern Canada Youth Winter Retreat 1 at Countryside Camp and Conference Centre, Cambridge.

Feb. 9-10: MDS all unit meeting at South Ridge Community Church, St. Catharines. For more information, call Rudy Thiessen at 905-562-4324.

Feb. 9-11: MC Eastern Canada Youth Winter Retreat

2 at Countryside Camp and Conference Centre, Cambridge.

Feb. 20-22: School for Ministers with Reginald Bibby—“The Role of the Church in Contemporary Canadian Culture,” at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Feb. 21: Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Lecture with Reginald Bibby, at Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, 7 p.m.

March 2-3: Engaged workshop at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. For more information, e-mail denise_bender@yahoo.com.

March 4: Menno Singers present “By the Babylonian Waters: Bach and Lalande,” at Zion United Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

March 15-16: Bechtel Lectures with Sandra Birdsell at Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, 7:30 p.m. each evening.

March 17: MC Eastern Canada “Before the Wedding: Providing Pre-marital Counselling with Integrity” workshop at Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

U.S.A.

Jan. 15-18: School of Leadership Training at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. Theme: “Practising life abundant in the congregation and daily life.” Keynote speaker: Dorothy Bass. For more information, call 540-432-4698.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements EIGHT WEEKS in advance of the event date by e-mail to: calendar@canadianmennonite.org



WMES photo

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools (WMES) held their second annual Toonies for Terry Fox 24-hour relay fundraiser this fall. All 440 students from the Agassiz and Bedson campuses, along with staff and some parents, raised \$2,100 for cancer research, surpassing their goal by \$400.

Toonies for Terry

