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Volume 14 Number 19

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Find God

The gospel
according to Google

pg. 4

inside

Building community 13

Declining giving a concern in Manitoba 18

Focus on Education 29

EDITORIAL

Discerning the 'liturgical core'

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

With music being so much a part of the Mennonite DNA, is it any wonder that the spectre of a new hymnal brings some trepidation to the congregational scene?

Amid a growing diversity in music styles, it can at the same time trigger a wearisome debate or provide an opportunity to discover our "liturgical core," as Dave Bergen, one of three Canadians on the binational Mennonite Church Canada/MC U.S.A. worship council, puts it. Not to mention that our struggling denominational publishing agency, the leader and producer of the project, is trying to find its legs in a new electronic age.

The question, as posed by our counterpart in the U.S., "Do we need a new hymnal?"—to which respondents to an American poll said "no" by a margin of 2 to 1—is far too narrow in approaching this complex issue, as Bergen insists.

First, a new hymnal should be the outcome of a broader study of our worship resource needs, not the driving force to shape our worship styles for the next 25 years (the expected shelf life of our binational singing book). If discerned necessary, a hymnal wouldn't be published until 2017.

Taking this long to deliberate is not unusual. The present hymnal, published in 1992 as a joint venture of what was then

the General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren, was nine years in the making. And that was during a time of fairly universal musical tastes and styles, with most of our music sung in four-part harmony with little instrumental accompaniment.

Today, that seems to be a time warp away, as evidenced by some 354 respondents to a 2008 survey conducted by an ad hoc committee appointed by Mennonite Publishing Network and sent to all 1,085 congregations in the U.S. and Canada. A total of 285 said yes, they use our latest hymnal (the blue-bound *Hymnal: A Worship Book*), but 346 said they also use piano, 301 use guitars, 228 use percussion, 159 use stringed instruments other than guitar, 149 use wind instruments and 128 use organ accompaniment.

Use of electronic technologies showed that 253 congregations use amplification of instruments or singing voices, 147 use recorded music, 223 use projected music or texts, and 144 use projected images in their worship services.

Of the 285 congregations saying they purchased the latest hymnal, 156 also purchased *Sing the Journey* and 48 purchased *Sing the Story*—the two supplements to *Hymnal* published in 2005 and 2007, respectively—while 265 use a music licence from Church Copyright

License International (CCLI), for re-printing songs of a praise and worship style, a source outside the denomination with no particular hymnody roots.

All of which is to say that the Mennonite church on both sides of the border is in serious transition in how we express ourselves musically. To find some semblance of universality in a worship resource is the unenviable task of the eight-member binational worship council. Its goal is commendable, as stated by Bergen: "To capture something of a liturgical core that continues to unite us, while also giving room and attention to the diverse cultures and traditions that comprise the Mennonite church today."

Reaching this goal will not be as simple as compiling another 700 selections and more than 200 "worship resources" into a hardcover book representing that "liturgical core." Some 174 of those same survey respondents want, in addition to the printed hymnal, an electronic version for PowerPoint projection, 185 want a hymnal companion (information about each hymn), 292 want an accompaniment resource for keyboard and instruments, and 174 are asking for music CDs.

And what texts shall we use? The growing number of us not of European origin are not necessarily inspired by the sometimes slow-moving rhythms of a 16th-century hymn with its medieval parlance. I have experienced, with some fascination, a congregation wanting to appeal to both young and old, clumsily moving through the first part of the worship with traditional hymns, only to have the young people literally come alive with the transition to praise and worship selections. With hands raised, feet tapping, hips swaying, they get into the groove instantly!

Please pray for our binational worship council as it discerns our "liturgical core!"



ABOUT THE COVER:

Can you find God online at the press of a keyboard key or the click of mouse? Maybe not, but congregations of all denominations—including Mennonite Church Canada—are using the Internet as one way of 'doing church' today. See Will Braun's critique of web-based faith communities on page 4.

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Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, and news and analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

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contents



The gospel according to Google 4

Mennonite Church Canada congregations across the country are increasingly embracing the Internet as one way to 'do church' in the 21st century. **WILL BRAUN** looks at their varying degrees of success while offering a clarion call to look deeper at the technology itself and what it may be doing to us individually and collectively.



Reports from Bolivia 14-15

Low German radio host **HELEN FUNK** reports on 'good things' happening in Bolivia. Plus, MCC Bolivia announces a new rehab centre for men with alcohol and drug addiction problems.

Census reforms will hurt Canada's poor 21

Mennonite economist **DAVID JOHNSON** calls the federal government's plan to replace the mandatory long-form census with a voluntary survey 'an ignorant, stupid decision' that will hurt those most vulnerable.

'Prayer always works' 25

Bloomingdale Mennonite's **TWILA LEBOLD** chooses to undergo controversial multiple sclerosis treatment in India.

A bleak picture of organized religion 27

Organized religion is bad, is the central message of *Agora*, a film that pits pagan philosophers against the Christian church in fourth-century Alexandria, according to reviewer **DAVID ROGALSKY**.

Regular features:

For discussion **7** Readers write **8** Milestones **11**
Pontius' Puddle **11** Yellow Pages **36** Calendar **38**
Classifieds **38**

Discerning the 'liturgical core' 2

DICK BENNER

Are they worth it? 8

KEVIN DAVIDSON

Forming pastors, together 9

KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY

Divinity detectives listen for the soul 10

MELISSA MILLER

New blog postings

[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

Siemens-Brunk Christianity: **WILL LOEWEN**
Positively separate - Creation: **PAUL LOEWEN**
School of caring: **CHERYL WOELK**

DOING CHURCH IN AN ONLINE WORLD

The gospel according to Google

By Will Braun

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

We can use the Internet to promote peace and justice, but we might be indirectly putting money into the pockets of some of the worst warmongers in the world when we buy our peace-promoting techno-gadgets.

Just over 50 percent of Mennonite Church Canada congregations have their own websites. Next year that number will be higher. Guaranteed. And the year after it will be higher again.

As will be the number of congregations that use so-called social media avenues like YouTube, Twitter, Flickr and Facebook. Just a handful use these now.

Similarly, the number of congregations that allow web surfers to listen to sermons online will also rise steadily from the current 12 percent. It seems we Mennonites—like so many around us—are asking how can we make Internet-based technology work for us.

Reaching out online

Leading the way are churches like Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., where Google maps of the Holy Land are projected onscreen to illustrate sermons, and Seeds of Life Community Church, Altona, Man., which has an “iPray” ministry blog. At Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., pastor Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen says “a good part of [her] pastoral care happens on Facebook.”

Beyond Mennonite Church Canada are examples of churches that are even more technologically inclined. The Meeting House—a Brethren in Christ mega-church in Ontario—has three staff devoted to technological aspects of its ministry. That ministry involves recording

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



After more than a decade of living without a computer—he hauled his old one to the dump—Ralph Lebold of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., is back online. He now calls himself a ‘converted Luddite.’

services at a “central production site,” then re-broadcasting those services in theatres at eight locations across the province. Congregants at the original service can send questions to the preacher via text message while he’s speaking. Some get responses as part of the service; the rest get an e-mail later.

Even further out into cyberspace, the good Reverend Google will gladly welcome you to Cyber-Church.com, sing with you at CyberHymnal.org, or pray with you at CyberPrayerWall.com.

Questioning the technology

But is the challenge for our churches in this Internet age simply that of catching up with the most web-savvy among us? Given our tradition as a people of simplicity, community, peace, practical faith and cultural non-compliance, should we not also analyze how technology changes us for the better or worse? Should we not ask questions like:

- How does web-based technology enhance or alter our Mennonite identity?
- How does it build or erode community?
- Does it widen or narrow the genera-

tion gap?

- Do less wealthy congregations end up at a disadvantage?

Arthur Paul Boers laments the lack of consideration given to the implications of technological change. A former Mennonite pastor, he is currently a professor at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ont., and probably the leading Anabaptist thinker on questions of faith and current technology. Boers’ upcoming book, *Focused Living in an Era of Distraction*, will consider how current communication technology shapes us as individuals and communities.

He told me he is not calling for the abolition of technology—he’s no stranger to the Internet, as you’ll see if you look him up online—but simply for a careful consideration of “how our engagement with technology forms us.” For him, the baseline question is, “What really is church?” Is church primarily about delivery of content, maximizing exchange of information, entertainment, accommodating the online generation, or “incarnational relationships,” to use his term?

Mennonites online

To get at these larger questions, it’s worth first considering the extent and nature of the Mennonite presence online. The 116 MC Canada church websites I visited range from slick to amateurish. Most are designed both to attract newcomers and inform members. A typical site includes service times, a map, upcoming events, profiles of pastors, an explanation of beliefs, contact information, and links to organizations ranging from Christian Peacemaker Teams to Focus on the Family.

The snazzier sites might also have bulletins, photo galleries, pastoral blogs, and sections with titles like “What is a Mennonite?,” “What to expect?” or “Why church?” Many sites also have “members” sections for which a password is required (although I expect these sections will dwindle as churches realize that having these closed doors on websites appears uninviting and insider-ish to the public).

The majority of the sites I visited look like they were developed some time ago and receive minimal maintenance. This is understandable given the fact that the

cost to develop a decent site is between \$2,000 and \$3,000, and could be much more. And it takes time to keep a site current. The Level Ground staff spend up to five hours a week working on its site. The money and effort show. Some sites immediately make you want to spend time looking around; others don't.

While it's hard to get a clear picture of how much the 116 church websites are used, and by whom, Dan Loewen—Level Ground's worship and creative arts pastor—says its site averages more than 700 visits per month and online sermons are listened to by up to 20 people, depending on the sermon.

The sermons posted on Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite Church's top-notch site, kingsfieldcommon.ca, are listened to by between 30 and 100 people per month. Given that these are two of the better sites, many church sites presumably receive nominal traffic.

The conference also has its own site, which features, among other things, the monthly Church Matters podcast. According to Dan Dyck, MC Canada's director of communications, these online programs—which are similar to the conference's radio programs—have been listened to a total of almost 4,600 times since they began in 2007. That compares to about 20,000 people who tune in for each Sunday morning radio program, which is broadcast only in southern Manitoba.

Running the Internet race

But neither podcasts nor radio broadcasts are for everyone. Dyck says one of

the biggest challenges is that some people prefer texting, while others use standard e-mail, Facebook or none of the above. It's difficult to re-package content to cater to each preference. So the national conference is testing the techno waters in a few ways. In addition to the podcasts, it has a Facebook presence and a YouTube channel.

The YouTube channel has short videos that explain what Mennonites are. These include light-hearted explanations of what we eat and drive. Dyck says part of the intent is to counteract the prevailing disinformation about Mennonites on YouTube. For instance, search for "Mennonites" on YouTube and the list is topped by "Cornie the Mennonite," a minor YouTube sensation whose sometimes off-colour parodies of southern Manitoba Mennonites have been viewed more than 200,000 times—about 10 times more than MC Canada's videos.

Dyck says of the conference's forays into cyberspace, "in a lot of ways, these

demand," says Rick Fast, who heads MCC Canada's communications department. The decisions are complicated by the fact that these technologies can be "here today and gone tomorrow," he notes.

Can the web hold us together?

Overall, it would probably be accurate to say that, when it comes to the technology race, we Mennonites are trying fairly hard, although still lagging behind despite a few exceptions. But that doesn't answer the deeper questions about what Internet technologies are doing to the character of the church.

First, consider the generational issue. While I expect that the mere mention of social media intimidates and distances a certain percentage of Mennonites, the people I spoke with did not express concern about older Mennonites being left in the dark. Some churches with older populations simply don't rely on technology. Others manage to keep the older members in the loop even if most of the

It seems we Mennonites—like so many around us—are asking how can we make Internet-based technology work for us.

are experiments." Their effectiveness will be evaluated over time and Dyck is eager for feedback from church members. "If you appreciate them and use them," he says, "let us know."

Among Mennonite organizations, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) website is probably the most used, with an impressive 40,000-plus visits per month, including about 15,000 visits from Canadians. Even The Meeting House is far behind, with 6,000 monthly visits. MCC's thorough and user-friendly site is loaded with current and ever-changing content, ranging from updates on MCC involvement in current crises and photo galleries, to resources for engaging children and a donation section (almost 11,000 people donated to MCC's Haiti relief online).

Like MC Canada, the challenge for MCC is "deciding which web-based technology to embrace . . . because of the amount of time and energy they often

congregation is online.

Waterloo North Mennonite Church makes use of e-mail for communication among members, but 76-year-old Ralph Lebold, who hauled his old computer to the dump more than a decade ago, doesn't feel left out of the loop. "I usually find out what's going on," he says.

And both MCC and the national conference remain committed to print communication in order to ensure no one gets left behind.

That is always a danger with technology: that some will get excluded. Technology costs money and that means that bigger players are able to adopt it sooner, and increase their advantage over others. Technology, by nature, tends to increase the gap between rich and poor. So we could ask whether people who cannot afford a computer feel fully included in our churches? And we could ask whether technology results in larger churches out-competing smaller ones for members.



Boers says that when he was a pastor he found the pressure to compete with the better-equipped churches “demoralizing.” Dyck has heard angst from pastors who feel they need to compete with The Meeting House.

That raises the broader question of whether the Internet builds or erodes community. The answer is surely both. While the online photos taken by a fellow church member in Iraq made me feel connected, and I appreciated listening

to look at both sides of the tech equation.

Costs and benefits

Boers says “we can all think of great examples of where the Internet helps us,” but we must also talk about “what gets displaced.” While this conversation is happening outside the church, Boers says, “I don’t see it happening in the church at all.”

In talking to Mennonites about the web, I heard some consideration of pros and cons, but no talk of the subtler

Boers believes we should be aware of the hazards of the Internet, discerning in our use of it, and willing to accept some limits. He does not say we should abandon it.

Indeed, web-based communication is here to stay. And there is an air of inevitability about the church’s continued march into cyberspace. Even Ralph Lebold, the self-confessed “converted Luddite,” has gotten a computer again.

And tiny Emmaus Mennonite Church, Wymark, Sask., with its 35 members—if the MC Saskatchewan website is up to date—has its sights set on cyberspace. I thought pastor Ray Friesen would tell me that in such a small, tight-knit community Internet communication was not necessary, but he says the congregation is looking to get a site and post sermons online.

As we proceed then, we must ask good questions. And ultimately we must ask, “What really is church? Who are we to be? How can we best incarnate God’s love? How can web-based technologies facilitate this, and when do we need to get up from the computer, roll up our sleeves and live out that simple, practical, caring faith of our pre-Internet Anabaptist forebears? ☛

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[B]oth MCC and the national conference remain committed to print communication in order to ensure no one gets left behind.

to the online version of a sermon my dad gave at a church I don’t attend, I also agree with Lebold when he says “the heart of the life of the church” is found in the “quality of relationships that people have one-on-one or in small groups.”

The Internet can connect us—at least some of us—in certain ways, but, as Dyck says, ultimately, “community happens best face to face.” Boers believes online communication makes most sense in the context of existing, in-the-flesh relationships, but is generally ill-suited to communication of things like prayer requests. He tells of a case in which a switch to e-mail communication of prayer concerns displaced valuable personal communication that had taken place previously within a church community.

Use of web-based technologies also raises questions about community on an international level. The tech sector, like most industries, has a dark side. The environmental and social hazards of so-called e-waste are well-documented. As are the deadly impacts of the wars to control access to tech-related minerals in eastern Congo (just type “coltan” in the search box at mcc.org).

We can use the Internet to promote peace and justice, but we might be indirectly putting money into the pockets of some of the worst warmongers in the world when we buy our peace-promoting techno-gadgets. That doesn’t necessarily mean we should make a collective trip to the dump, but it does mean that we need

shifts that Boers articulates. He says the Internet “changes the way we pay attention, the way we are aware.” He experiences an e-mailed prayer concern as a contribution to “information overload” and the “continuous partial attention” that plagues our spirituality. In his view, “the Internet encourages distracted attention, hopping from here to there.” (The MCC homepage has more than 100 entry points to other material.)

While the flitting-about mode of being is commonplace for so many these days, it is contrary to the contemplative spiritual tradition—in which Boers is steeped—which values being present to the moment and aware of God’s presence in every moment.

/// For discussion

1. What types of web-based technology does your congregation use? In your experience, how has the Internet benefited your church? Are there ways in which it has harmed the sense of community?
2. Will Braun quotes Ralph Lebold as saying that “the heart of the life of the church” is in “the quality of relationships.” If this is true, how important is web-based technology for churches? Would you feel comfortable receiving pastoral care via Facebook? Does the use of technology change who we are?
3. How much time and money should churches invest in Internet technology? Is it worth the cost to try to stay up to date? Is it more important for Mennonite institutions than for congregations to have the latest technology?
4. Does Internet-based technology control us, or do we control it? What would Jesus do with web technology?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ Department of Peace won't put an end to peace groups

AT THE INVITATION of Project Peacemakers, the local Winnipeg chapter of Project Ploughshares, Bill Siksay, NDP MP from Burnaby-Douglas, B.C., visited Winnipeg this summer. Siksay introduced legislation in the House of Commons in 2009 that seeks to establish a Canadian Department of Peace.

Siksay took the time to chat with each of the 25 people gathered at the Project Peacemaker's office and then addressed the group. He pointed out that the bill in its present form is unlikely to become law for a number of reasons, but that should not prevent citizens from advocating for it. The legislation represents a paradigm shift for our politicians to deal with conflict and work for peace, and will have to be discussed broadly. Even if we should get a Department of Peace,

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Are they worth it?

KEVIN DAVIDSON

Life insurance considers their jobs more dangerous than munitions workers. Their profession has the second-highest divorce rate. Fifteen hundred of them leave their jobs each month. Their work has a negative impact on their families. If they work less than 50 hours per week, their chances of termination increase by 35 percent. And the list goes on and on. Who are they? Pastors!

Do we have a subconscious expectation today that our pastor not only be our spiritual mentor, but the church chief executive officer as well? With advances in technology, we want our pastor to be accessible to us 24/7.

After all, we own them, right? We are paying their salary!

Dr. Gwen Wagstrom Halas, a family physician who is married to a minister, says, "[Ministers] think that taking care of themselves is selfish, and serving God means never saying 'no.'"

Amazingly, a recent survey reports that 87 percent of pastors are very satisfied in

their work, compared with 47 percent of the rest of us.

Is there a disconnect between our pastor's "calling" and our affirming that calling? It's kind of like telling someone who has no food or clothing, "Have a great day," and then doing nothing about it (James 2:15, 16).

I recently asked a church board mem-

*Do we pray for our pastors?*

ber if he would take on the same level of responsibility and salary as his pastor, and his reply was, "No way!"

Of course, we need to recognize a number of factors when considering pastoral salaries, including congregational size—most congregations have fewer than 200 people—and the economic status of the region. But let's not forget that not everyone gives to their church either. Just ask your treasurer.

But are we regularly and intentionally tending to the holistic health of our pastors?

• **SPIRITUAL:** Do we pray for our pastors? Do we extend love and respect to them,

remembering they are held to a higher account? (I Thessalonians 5: 12, 13; James 3:1)

• **FINANCIAL:** Do we pay our pastors generously, recognizing that we also appreciate and expect the same for our honest and hard day's work? Remember, we're only paying them with what God has paid us. (I Timothy 5:17, 18; I Corinthians 9:14; I Chronicles 29:14)

• **EMOTIONAL:** Do we regularly extend affirmation and appreciation to our pastors? (Ephesians 4:29)

• **PHYSICAL/MENTAL:** Do we encourage spontaneous time off work for our pastors to spend with God, their spouse, family members and others?

And when we encourage our pastors, do we do it with a grateful heart, not expecting anything in return?

If you're like me, it has been very easy to take my pastor for granted. So please join me in showing our pastors how much we appreciate them.

Kevin Davidson is a stewardship consultant at the Calgary, Alta., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

he noted that peace groups such as ours will always be needed to keep politicians focused and accountable.

Later in the evening, he was the keynote speaker at the annual event commemorating the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. That historic reality illustrates the need for us to be ever vigilant, and never waver in our work for peace.

GERHARD NEUFELD, WINNIPEG, MAN.

✉ Greater competition now for congregational giving

RE: "FINANCIAL TRENDS: Healthy or worrisome?" and "From \$200,000 shortfall to \$430,000 surplus," Aug. 2, page 8.

There are many questions about church giving and where it is being used or sent. It seems to be that there have been a number of social and cultural shifts in how our people and churches operate and give.

There are also major shifts in the demographics of

FROM OUR LEADERS

Forming pastors, together

KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY

A young adult in her last semester of college and considering pastoral ministry takes the initiative to invite each pastor in her community for coffee so that she can learn from their wisdom and experience.

A middle-aged man, well-established in his career, volunteers in a seniors home to test a new call to ministry.

Despite a continuing passion for her calling, an experienced pastor feels unfulfilled in her career and joins a network of other pastors.

Although classroom instruction and spiritual disciplines are the more familiar approaches to pastoral formation, these examples illustrate that peer mentoring, congregational encouragement and continuing education are also important factors in the process of developing those who lead our congregations to live out God's call in the world.

The master of divinity degree continues to be recognized as the standard level of preparation for pastoral ministry, but we recognize that within Mennonite Church Canada pastors enter ministry from diverse paths. In the rapidly changing dynamics of the 21st century, the important foundation laid by schools needs to be sustained with continuing

education, formation and spiritual growth.

In light of these challenges we have developed a binational document with MC U.S.A.—"Ministerial credentialing, competencies and education"—that names a standard of six core competencies for effectiveness in ministry, yet provides a flexible framework for pastoral

When specific abilities require strengthening, a plan of action and accountability will be developed.

leadership development:

- Know the biblical story in content and formation; where the life, death, resurrection and teachings of Jesus become the keys to interpreting the Bible with the congregation.
- Know the Anabaptist/Mennonite story, history and theology in light of the wider church, so that the congregation is formed by its values and practice.
- Grow in Christian spirituality and discipleship that nurtures a relationship with God and contributes to the spiritual formation of individuals, the faith community and those beyond.
- Healthy self-awareness as a leader so that one can help the congregation live with healthy diversity, express differences and welcome new people.

- Contextual awareness that interprets the many cultural, faith, ecological and global dynamics impacting the congregation's local context and call to mission in God's world.

- Leadership that equips the congregation for transformation and to fulfil its calling through worship and rituals, organizational change and connection with the larger church.

This tool will now guide credentialing bodies within each area church as they assist pastors in the process of moving towards ordination. When specific abilities require strengthening, a plan of action

and accountability will be developed.

Growing in each of these core areas is a lifelong pursuit. No single body, whether the pastor, the local congregation, post-secondary schools, the area church or the denomination, can provide everything that is necessary. We must work together!

Let's thank God for pastoral leaders who continue to hear God's calling to ministry and let's engage in the network that equips them to lead us as communities of grace, joy and peace, through whom healing and hope flows to the world.

Karen Martens Zimmerly is the denominational minister and director of leadership development for Mennonite Church Canada.



Mennonite Church Canada. The average age in many of our churches is getting older. While many of these older members are good givers, what will this mean to future budgets?

I believe many churches have made the same shifts in their operating and budgets as our local church has. Thirty to 40 years ago, we had one pastor and a volunteer secretary for a congregation of 300. We also took turns doing janitorial and yard work. Over the years, we went to a lead pastor, a youth pastor, a paid secretary and a paid janitor. All this with a decreasing

congregation size. With reduced congregation size and higher overhead costs, there is less money to send to our conferences.

Years ago, our congregation did not get involved in local committee service projects. Although these projects are valuable, they may also cut into conference giving. Unfortunately, but inevitably, there seems to be ever-increasing competition for our giving dollar.

KEN WARKENTIN, SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

Ken Warkentin is finance chair for MC Saskatchewan.

FAMILY TIES

Divinity detectives listen for the soul

BY MELISSA MILLER

These are golden days on the Prairies as summer melds into autumn. Everywhere the eye gazes, it touches on gold. Fields of grain, cut or standing, are pale gold. The dust of harvest glows rose-golden in the sun's rays. The yellow-gold of changing leaves adds another hue. And in the ditches, yellow flowers contrast brightly with the dull gold grasses.

At such a golden feast, we are drawn to the beauty of creation and the work of the Creator. On beautiful days, it is easy to be a "detective of divinity," as we are surrounded by God's abundant gifts in nature. "Detectives of divinity" was a phrase used by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary professor David Miller at a workshop he led at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly this past summer. He urged us to be like detectives, alert and curious about God's activity in the world. Once we've detected God-at-work, he added, we join in, partnering with God. According to Miller, that's what it means to be missional.

"Listening for the soul" is another way to describe our partnership in God's work. That's the one used by United

Church minister Jean Stairs in her book *Listening for the Soul: Pastoral Care and Spiritual Direction*. She says that listening for the soul means "being aware and open to the wondrous spirit of God and hearing the ways God invites and reveals on all levels of our being." Stairs states that our listening is not to make God present. Rather, "we open our ears as a way of responding to the presence of



How are we detecting the divine presence in our midst?

God, who is already and always present in our lives."

In particular, she notes how God is at work in the lives of children. She reminds us that the nurture of children's faith must include an awareness of how God is present in them; we have much to learn of God and God's grace through children.

Like the Sunday school teacher who delighted in one student's answer to her question, "What do you think God looked like when God was making the world?" The child promptly answered, "Like a fairy godmother!" Fairy godmother isn't the first thing I think of to

describe God, but a child's imagination certainly opens up new possibilities of glimpsing God's playful, mysterious self.

How are we listening for the soul in our lives and in the lives of those around us? How are we detecting the divine presence in our midst? How might we tune our ears to such listening, and focus our eyes more keenly to see God's activity among us? Beautiful scenes in nature are one way we see God. How about the beauty that enfolds in human relationships, especially in difficult times?

Perhaps we've detected the divine at the bedside of a loved one who is dying. Maybe we are witnesses to an injured friend extending an olive branch in a gesture of peace. Maybe it's hearing the voice of a victim of abuse naming the harm that has been done and crying out for justice.

Or sometimes it occurs when a marriage has ended, and former spouses are able to forgive each other and find release from the hurts of the past.

God's presence among us is like "treasure in clay jars" (II Corinthians 4:7a). We are privileged to be eager detectives of divinity and keen listeners for the soul. Let's grab our magnifying glasses, adjust our hearing aids and go treasure-hunting!

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, where she ponders family relationships as a pastor, counsellor and author.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Klippenstein—Johnathan Aaron (b. July 22, 2010), to Jerry Klippenstein and Lisa D'Sena, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Reis—Cecelia Shantz (b. Aug. 28, 2010), to Marcos Reis and Julia Shantz, Mennonite Fellowship, Montreal, Que.

Toews—Brayden Reuben (b. June 14, 2010), to Fabian and Lucy Toews, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Wall—Amy Sarah (b. Aug. 30, 2010), to Daniel and Sarah Wall, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.

Weber—Jaxon Alexander (b. Aug. 16, 2010), to Amie and Alex Weber, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Daniel Paetkau, Stefan Froese, Debbie Cowan, Lucas Froese, Nick Jansens—Jubilee Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., April 4, 2010.

David Epp, Kelly Enns, Ruth Utz—Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Glenbush, Sask., Aug. 29, 2010.

Colin Reimer—Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain Man., Aug. 21, 2010.

Marriages

Cressman/Duerrstein—Mark Cressman and Katy Duerrstein, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., Sept. 11, 2010.

Heidebrecht/Jones—Adam Heidebrecht and Andrea Jones, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Sept. 5, 2010.

Hildebrand/Rouw—John Hildebrand and Arleen Rouw, Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask., at Telkwa, B.C., July 31, 2010.

Hildebrandt/Wiebe—Kara Hildebrandt (Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite, Sask.) and Tyler Wiebe, at Melville, Sask., July 24, 2010.

Janzen/Patkau—Jasmine Janzen and Darren Patkau, at Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Sept. 3, 2010.

Kent/Wiebe—Rachel Kent (Herschel Ebenfeld Mennonite, Sask.) and Jesse Wiebe, at Saskatoon, Sask., July 31, 2010.

Loewen/Palmerton—Laura Loewen and John Palmerton, at North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., July 17, 2010.

Lyman/Tiessen—Maylin Lyman and Darren Tiessen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 31, 2010.

Martin/Sibbick—Marjorie Martin and Douglas Sibbick, at Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Sept. 11, 2010.

Oulahen/Shantz—Laura Oulahen and Daniel Shantz, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., July 24, 2010.

Deaths

Funk—Rev. Henry, 87 (b. May 23, 1923; d. Sept. 11, 2010), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Heinrichs—Aganeta, 92, (b. Jan. 15, 1918; d. May 3, 2010), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask.

Kehler—Jacob K., 87 (b. April 1, 1923; d. Aug. 29, 2010), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Frances (nee Sawatzky), 74 (b. Aug. 25, 1936; d. Sept. 1, 2010), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Martin—Onias, 89 (b. Feb. 4, 1921; d. Sept. 9, 2010), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Peter, 80 (d. July 13, 2010), Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man.

Penner—Waldemar, 91 (d. July 22, 2010), Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.

Poettcker—Peter, 88 (b. Sept. 19, 1921; d. June 30, 2010), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Wagler—Alvin, 86 (b. Dec. 27, 1923; d. Sept. 18, 2010), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.

Pontius' Puddle



THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

Taking it to the streets

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

On a Saturday morning last spring on King Street in St. Catharines, Ont., I witnessed a street preacher, preaching to a virtually empty street. There were only a small number of cars negotiating the nearby intersection, and a few—I counted seven—people within earshot. The preacher had a Bible in his hand and only two supporters standing behind him. Why preach when there are so few to hear? At least on a bustling street in Vancouver or Montreal there may be sidewalk crowds to attract. Why preach to seven people who are quick to escape the scene?

Street preachers have been around since the prophets of old. Jeremiah and Jesus preached in public places. In the Middle Ages the local carnival featured preachers who were often competing for crowds with clowns, a touring drama troupe and a local politician or two.

In 18th-century England preachers would often go to the town square on market days to preach for an hour or so. It is not uncommon on a city bus in Kingston, Jamaica, for a man or woman, with a few supporters singing gently in the background, to start preaching.

Street sermon topics often depend in part on the motivation for the preacher to be out in public:

- The simple message of salvation is popular: The preacher is motivated to bring people into the Christian fold and perhaps into her own church. Preaching the message of salvation for some is motivated by a desire to concretely prove that they are “not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” If you can preach the gospel in the public square, you must be a strong Christian.
- Some street preachers are motivated by

particular issues which they feel need to be publicly addressed. Key “street preacher” into YouTube and this is what you get. These preachers are against something, like abortion, poverty, Obama, homosexuality or war. Some of these preachers are just plain angry, while others are more gentle and invitational. The outcome of this kind of preaching is not new souls for the kingdom, as much as new recruits for a particular cause.

My congregation’s peace marches would fit into this category—hopefully on the gentle and invitational side. We attract attention with our march, leading bystanders to a particular place where we provide more information, spoken or otherwise, about our cause.

Listening to the street preacher is often optional. One can just keep walking, or, in the case of the bus preacher, one can just get off at the next stop or turn up the iPod. There are forms of street preaching, though, which demand that you stay and listen. Lunch at the soup kitchen may have strings attached—in the form of a sermon. Many street missions, especially in the mid-20th century but even today, make listening to a sermon the price of admission for a meal or a cot.

Street preaching is not limited to fundamentalists, angry partisans, protesters, or the preacher at the street mission, though. I know of more than a few mainline Protestant seminaries in the United States and the United Kingdom where

students are required to preach one sermon on the street. Here, the beginning preacher has to preach “without a net.” The safety of the captive audience is gone, as are all the usual understand-

ings of what worship is, what faith is and how a sermon is normally heard. The first-year student is dared to preach in an environment where she may be pressed in on all sides by a crowd, where she will have to shout, where people will actually answer her rhetorical questions, and where she will likely get verbal responses, angry or otherwise, during and after her sermon.

The challenge of street preaching is that it takes

a practice of the church which is safe and comfortable when in the church, and plunks it into the public square. But in missional language, street preaching is a concrete act confirming that Christ and the Word are not simply for the church, but for the world. We know what it means to say, “*Unto you a child is born,*” or “*I am your God, you shall be my people,*” in the comfort of the church, but what might these words mean if we shouted them on Vancouver’s Eastside, in the financial district of Calgary, Alta., or on a virtually empty street in St. Catharines?

There is a Speakers Corner in downtown Kitchener, Ont., not far from where I live. To some degree it is socially acceptable to go there and protest, sing, perform a short drama or preach. I am tempted to go there and preach sometime. What text would I use? What would it mean to shout, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you*” in downtown Kitchener? I am both scared and exhilarated by the thought. Would you join me? ❧



Allan Rudy-Froese is a student of ethics, grace and preaching at the Toronto School of Theology. He can be reached at allanrf@rogers.com.

The challenge of street preaching is that it takes a practice of the church which is safe and comfortable when in the church, and plunks it into the public square.

VIEWPOINT

Building community

BY JIM LOEPP THIESSEN

At The Gathering Church we believe we are called to bless and serve the community we started our church in, so we have spent a great deal of time doing community-building kinds of events.

We have done free barbecues, neighbourhood parties, movie nights, car washes, hot dog giveaways, pancake breakfasts and an Easter Egg hunt, among many others. We do things for free because, when we did a survey, the community told us that having stuff to do for their kids at no cost would be helpful to them.

However, there is a bigger reason we do stuff for nothing. It creates conversation about the kind of church we are, and we feel like servants of Jesus when we aren't making payment an issue.

Inevitably, church people ask if our activities have brought new people to our church. The answer to that has been mostly—but certainly not entirely—no. But there are a number of reasons to do community-building events even if no one comes to church because of it. (In fact, getting people to come to church should definitely not be the motivation for serving others.)

Why do a community-building event?

• AS A SIGN OF THE REIGN OF GOD.

In his book *The Kingdom of God is a Party*, Tony Campolo points out from Numbers 14 the command to put aside part of the tithe for those in the community. For many of the people who come, this will be the only experience of a church community they have, and we want to make it a positive one. It's a picture of the love and grace of God for them.

• BUILDING A SENSE OF TEAM AND COMMUNITY AS A CHURCH.

There is an amazing sense of life that happens when you gather as church folk outside your church walls to serve others.

It's what the church has been wired to do, and when we move away from huddling inside our building, life happens! You feel like you are working together on something that blesses and serves others.

In the early days, these events were critical for us to build relationships with each other. And they are still essential now. A year ago, we had about 2,000 people show up for our annual neighbourhood party. The sense of joy and accomplishment was amazing among our volunteers, as we finished the afternoon feeling like we had made a positive difference for folks in our community.

• A SENSE OF INTEGRITY AND TRUST IS BUILT IN THE COMMUNITY.

We have been doing these events since we started as a church, and people know us as a church for that.

One man approached me after our Easter egg hunt one year. "I've been to a number of these events since you started as a church, and I notice that you are building trust with us when you do these," he said. It's great to shake hands with people in the area and see people saying things like, "Oh, you are the folks who put on that great pancake breakfast!"

A while ago at our neighbourhood party, one man from the community was so touched by what we did that he volunteered to help cook at our Thanksgiving pancake breakfast. Offers like that make my day because we are also building relationships with those in our community through our serving.

• OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY

COME OUR WAY.

These include a number of quality conversations I have had about church over pancakes, prayer for someone who asked for prayer while we washed her boyfriend's gigantic pick-up truck, huge interest expressed in who we are because we have handed someone a free hotdog on a cold winter day, and the opportunity to welcome those who have become part of our church because of their coming to a free event.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GATHERING CHURCH



A volunteer, right, at The Gathering Church, Kitchener, Ont., distributes popcorn to local residents at one of the congregation's many community events.

Money always there

How do you pay for these events? I get asked that question often.

Spending money in this way is simply a priority for our church. When we started, and money was really tight, I noticed that when we served the community in this way, money came in.

"Random" donations seemed to arrive during those times when we were paying for community events. I sensed God's longing for us to bless and serve others in a small way that demonstrates the tangible reality of the kingdom of God. ☯

Jim Loep Thiesen is a pastor at The Gathering Church, a five-year-old church plant of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in Kitchener, Ont.

REPORTS FROM BOLIVIA

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Good things happening among Bolivia's Old Colony Mennonites

BY LEONA DUECK PENNER

Despite tragic reports of sexual assault, alcoholism and drug use among Old Colony Mennonite communities in Bolivia this past year, there are many good things happening there, which offer hope for a better future.

That's the opinion of Helen Funk, a Winnipeg-based Low German radio host for Family Life Network who spent two weeks on a ministry-related trip to listeners there earlier this year.

The Mariposa Women and Children's Shelter at Pailon is now open and offering counsel and support for victims of abuse.

"We were very encouraged by what is happening there," says Funk, noting that "it was a joy to meet some of them, to look into their eyes and tell them how much we here in North America care about them. At the same time, my heart was crumbling to the ground at times, hearing what had happened to mothers and girls [and] about what they now have to deal with in their lives."

Also encouraging are plans to build an alcohol treatment centre for men this year (see "Bolivian Mennonites support services for addictions, abuse," page 15), and upgrading the school at Villa Nueva Colony to Grade 12, so that graduates will meet university entry-level requirements.

Perhaps most inspiring of all, in Funk's opinion, is the deep hunger for spiritual learning combined with a yearning to reconnect with other Mennonites after years of isolation. This was evident, she says, as "many" girls and women came out and asked for the Low German cookbook, *Met Helen en de Kjääkjl With Helen in the Kitchen*, that she wrote at the request of colony listeners, with printing costs covered by North American Mennonites. The cookbook includes not only recipes, but prayers and meditations as well. Some women had heard about these books while listening to Funk's radio broadcast

in secret—such "learning" is frowned on by some colony elders—then came out after dark to greet Funk and pick up the materials.

"Those 100 donated cookbooks were gone the first week," says Funk in exultation, expressing thanks to those who helped defray the cookbook costs.

Around 2,000 Low German daily devotionals and 100 MP3 "gospel players" were also distributed and eagerly received.

A two-week Bible school for adults and children also reflected an eagerness to learn; up to 310 students attended and 500 came for the closing program.

"For the first time, 50 students, including whole families, from the Tress Cruces Colony, attended," Funk says. "We hired a grain truck to bring them in. . . . They

all had to stand, but they didn't mind at all. For many, it was the first ride ever on rubber tires. And then to come to meetings where a nutritious supper was served for everyone! Plus all the exciting stories, crafts, songs and Bible verses that were learned, were just like heaven to many!"

One man, Jacob K., his wife and nine children, came to the Bible school on the truck every other day, even though he told Funk that colony bishops said he must repent of this sin or he would be dismissed from their church. However, Funk says that this "very smart young man," who she feels is a potential leader of colony people, "is eager to do God's will and obey God more than people," so he kept coming. She was later saddened to learn that he was, in fact, excommunicated.

But, concludes Funk, "there are at least seven evangelical churches with whom we work closely whenever we go to Bolivia, who are working diligently to walk with people like Jacob, to teach and train them to walk in the way of our Lord. Pray for the present generation. We have great hope for the next, because so many good things are happening here now." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF HELEN FUNK



During a trip to Bolivia earlier this year, Helen Funk, a Winnipeg-based Low German radio host, distributes her Low German cookbook, *Met Helen en de Kjääkjl With Helen in the Kitchen*, that she wrote at the request of Bolivian colony listeners.

REPORTS FROM BOLIVIA

Bolivian Mennonites support services for addictions, abuse

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release
CHIHUAHUA COLONY, BOLIVIA

As the criminal investigation continues into allegations of gang rape in some Mennonite colonies in Bolivia, many local congregations see a need to reach out to people dealing with addictions, sexual abuse and violence against women.

A shelter for women opened in April and 7.5 hectares of land are being purchased for a rehabilitation centre that will offer treatment programs for men seeking freedom from alcohol and drug addictions. Both facilities are located near Pailon, 60 kilometres east of Santa Cruz.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Bolivia is working with the Mennonite churches that are developing the rehabilitation centre and is supportive of the efforts to provide a safe environment for women.

"Churches can look at this in two ways: Churches can't do anything and churches can do a lot," says Klaus Rempel, who represents the Chihuahua Colony on a seven-

member planning committee to develop the 20-bed rehab centre. The Chihuahua Colony, located about 140 kilometres northeast of Santa Cruz, is a community of about 160 families who have left the Old Colony Mennonite Church.

Construction of the rehab centre will begin as soon as land transactions are completed.

"When the doors open, people will come," says Rempel, who is also a founding member of MCC Canada's Low German Mennonite Advisory Committee. "I've been getting lots of phone calls about when we will open," he adds.

In Bolivia, the Low German Mennonite population has grown to 50,000 people living in 63 colonies and communities. The first colony was formed in 1953 by Mennonites from Paraguay.

Alcohol and substance abuse, family violence, teen pregnancies and sexual abuse are symptoms of low self-esteem,

MCC PHOTO BY SILAS CREWS



'When the doors open, people will come,' says Klaus Rempel, who is part of a committee developing a rehabilitation centre that will provide addiction treatment services for Bolivian men.

says Rempel, describing low self-esteem as a "spiritual sickness" that is prevalent in many Mennonite colonies and communities in Bolivia. The emphasis on finding self-worth will be part of the addiction treatment program when the rehab centre opens, he notes.

"We could see that people in Bolivia need help and that something should be done about it," he says. "The person with alcohol addiction has a hard life, and his family also has a very hard life because of the addiction."

Quoting Isaiah 61:1-2, Rempel says churches are stepping up to the challenge of serving God through "binding up the brokenhearted" and comforting people who are hurting. "That is my motivation for doing this and that is also the goal of our committee," says Rempel.

The rehab centre in Bolivia will offer the same treatment program used in Luz en mi Camino (Light on my Way), a cooperative venture of Mennonite churches in Chihuahua, Mexico, that is supported by MCC Canada. It will include medical assessments, classroom instruction, Bible studies, a full range of individual and family counselling, and recovery plans in the event of a relapse. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Paraguayan Mennonite conferences appreciate MWC gift

Presidents of the eight Mennonite conferences that jointly hosted Paraguay 2009 have decided to share equally a \$50,000 gift from Mennonite World Conference (MWC). The eight leaders, from very diverse conferences, had different ideas. In the end, they agreed to split the money equally, with each conference receiving \$6,250. Five of the conferences decided to use half of their shares for their own projects and pool the other half to support Rancho Alegre, a camp about 50 kilometres east of Asunción; it is the one institution that the five conferences own jointly. Spanish-speaking churches in East Paraguay use the camp for retreats and church-related events. Each of the three participating indigenous conferences, which were particularly moved by the gift, will use their \$6,250 shares for their own projects, as yet to be announced. "We want to say thank you for the good gesture of MWC for sending this gift to the Paraguayan conferences. It is a recognition for the work and effort that the churches and conferences put into planning and preparing for the [global] assembly," said Theodor Unruh of the Vereinigung der Mennoniten Brüdergemeinden Paraguays, on behalf of the eight conference leaders.

—Mennonite World Conference Release

MENNONITE SCHOLARSHIP

Academic papers, personal testimonies bring to light life in Soviet Russia

BY AILEEN FRIESEN
OMSK, RUSSIA

New scholarship on the history and culture of Mennonites in Siberia was showcased at a recent conference in Omsk earlier this year.

Participants from Russia, Canada, the United States, Germany and Kazakhstan presented papers primarily addressing the experiences of Mennonites during the Soviet period. A number of Russian scholars utilized archival sources from the Soviet secret police, the NKVD, to uncover the treatment and the responses of Mennonites to the state's repressive policies. One spoke

about how Mennonites took on leadership roles in inter-confessional organizations, which brought them to the attention of the Soviet authorities. Repression followed, resulting in Mennonites losing their homes, employment and freedom.

The atmosphere of repression and uncertainty influenced the relationship between Mennonites, Baptists and Evangelicals in Siberia. Presenter Iraida Nam described how the loss of religious leaders during the Stalinist repression created religious bonds

and responded to the Soviet regime in the same way, the interest of scholars from the former Soviet Union in Mennonites as an ethno-confessional community confirms the historical significance of this story to a wider audience.

Scholars from the former Soviet territories have made more widely known the existence of archival sources, which in some cases are the only remaining record of events and people targeted by the Soviet regime. However, due to changes in the

Religious leaders such as [Rev. N.M.] Dikman confirmed for participants that the persecution of religious communities lasted into the 1980s, with many leaders being arrested numerous times throughout their lives.



Rev N.M. Dikman, left, preached in the village of Miroljubovka, Omsk region, Russia, during a recent historical conference. Walter Sawatsky, right, translated.

and cooperation between different religious groups. In the case of the Tomsk region, the release of Mennonite ministers from prison after Stalin's death in 1953 revitalized Mennonite identity briefly. However, an anti-religious campaign by Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, resulted in the exile of their leaders once again.

The cultural part of the conference included a visit to a number of Mennonite communities west of Omsk. Rev. N.M. Dikman (Dueckman) gave an emotional account of the persecution he experienced for his religious beliefs, in which he called the Soviet Gulag "his Bible study." Religious leaders such as Dikman confirmed for participants that the persecution of religious communities lasted into the 1980s, with many leaders being arrested numerous times throughout their lives.

In spite of this persecution, Mennonite religious and cultural life survives in Siberia. In villages such as Apollonovka, children still speak *Plautdietsch* to their playmates.

While not all Mennonites experienced

political climate in Russia, some archival files that previously were available, are now no longer accessible to scholars. At the conference, a resolution was proposed to protest against this trend.

There were also presentations on Mennonite settlement in Siberia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These challenged the dominant image of Siberia as a place of exile and suffering, suggesting that the first Mennonite settlers, such as Peter J. Wiens, arrived in Siberia with great hope for themselves, their families and their communities.

These papers also showed the commonalities between Mennonite settler life in Siberia and in other parts of the world. Weather, land, gender roles, families and faith shaped how Mennonites envisioned and experienced Siberia, which parallels Mennonite resettlement in places such as the Canadian Prairies.

The conference was co-sponsored by the F.M Dostoevsky Omsk State University, the University of Winnipeg, Man., and Fresno Pacific University, Calif. ☞

MENNONITE SCHOLARSHIP

Exploring new ground in Mennonite history

BY MELANIE ZUERCHER

Bethel College Release
NORTH NEWTON, KAN.

When it comes to religious history, the standard college textbook for “western civilization” draws a blank on Anabaptists, but a summer conference at Bethel College helped to begin filling in those blanks.

After more than 50 years of scholarly study of the Anabaptists, such a text nowadays will cover the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement in 16th-century Europe, with references to Menno Simons, the kingdom of Münster and the Peasants’ War, says Mark Jantzen, Bethel associate professor of history. “But after 1550, [the Anabaptists] disappear.”

Jantzen and his colleague Mary Sprunger, professor of history at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., were co-planners for “Marginal or mainstream? Anabaptists, Mennonites and modernity in European society,” a conference held on the Bethel campus in late June. The thesis of the conference was that Mennonites—far from retreating into obscurity as textbooks suggest—were an important influence on European economics, politics, religion and other areas of society over the next centuries known as the “modern era.”

Jantzen noted that it was keynote speaker Thomas Brady, a well-known Reformation historian from the University of California-Berkeley, who suggested that “Mennonites as a religious minority helped to create and spread modernity, especially in Eastern Europe. Mennonites introduced new models for doing business—capitalism—and new methods of agriculture, and pushed the discussion of religious tolerance. In the Dutch setting, they [modelled] a radical liberal democracy.”

“I was interested in [Brady’s statement that] we need to be prepared for the consequences of putting Mennonites into the centre of European history,” Sprunger said. “It might not always be what we expect or

hope for. We need to be prepared for the stories to change.”

After two days of presentations by scholars from the United States, Canada and Europe, the conference wrapped up with a time to state “initial conclusions,” which arose mostly in the form of questions.

One of the most hotly debated was how to define “modernity.”

“The question was, ‘Is modernity negative or positive?’” Sprunger said. “We [in the West are] all beneficiaries, in terms of educational opportunities and personal choice in many areas. On the other hand, there’s the fact of the secularization process and leaving behind of cherished traditions. There was a broad range of opinion [at the conference].”

Another issue raised in the wrap-up, she said, was that of “the role of the state, also in terms of positive or negative, which is a

common theme in European history of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Mennonites benefited from growing tolerance, but also lost much of their autonomy.”

Other issues included:

- The negative and positive aspects of Mennonite participation in European economies, as well as the growing need to face issues of wealth and privilege;
- The particular experience of Dutch Mennonites, who experienced societal tolerance much earlier and therefore assimilated faster;
- The complex relationship between theology and culture, and whether to speak of theology was even appropriate; and
- The extent to which European Mennonites set their own agenda or had it set by the state or “the world.”

Both planners said they felt satisfied their goals for the conference were met. “We want to create awareness, particularly in North America, of European Mennonite history after the 16th century,” Sprunger said. “We also wanted to get scholars working in the period from different geographical areas together.”

“We had a goal of getting non-Mennonites to look at Mennonite history, and apparently, they are,” Jantzen said. ☼

PHOTO BY VADA SNIDER



Mark Jantzen, right, a professor in the history department at Bethel College, one of the co-planners of the ‘Mennonites and modernity’ conference held at Bethel in late June, talks with conference attendee Hans Werner from the University of Winnipeg.

Declining giving, lack of executive director to top Manitoba fall meeting

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

When Mennonite Church Manitoba gathers for its annual fall delegate meeting on Oct. 21 at Camp Assiniboia, the budget will again be the focus of attention. Meeting before churches finalize their budgets gives MC Manitoba a chance to figure into those budget discussions as well as allowing the area church to shape its own budget expectations according to congregational giving.

“We are experiencing the same pattern as Mennonite Church Canada reported on this summer at assembly,” says Hans Werner, MC Manitoba board chair. “The amount of giving to our member churches is going up, even faster than inflation, but giving to the conference is going down. We face those same realities in Manitoba.”

Although the two-hour meeting will focus primarily on budget discussions, other realities loom.

MC Manitoba has been without an executive director since the end of June, when Edgar Rempel left the post.

“It’s now becoming critical, the need for an executive director,” says Werner. “The job description has been under discussion for awhile. We anticipate some changes in how the position will look, but we will want to tailor it to who we get.”

“It’s a different process than in the business world. It is more like a pastoral search, where you discern one at a time. It would be nice to have a person in place. It is difficult as chair and you second guess yourself as a board a lot.”

In the interim, the three ministry directors—Norm Voth (evangelism and service), Henry Kliewer (leadership) and Pam Peters-Pries (camping)—are assuming some of the responsibilities of the position, while Voth liaises between staff and the board.

At the MC Manitoba gathering in February, the board presented a “New Directions” document that resulted from visits with 22 member congregations. The paper highlighted the need for improved communication between MC Manitoba and the congregations. “The board’s aim is to develop effective ways of sharing with each other the work we do together,” the report stated.

To that end, the board has enlisted outside help in completing an audit of current systems and flow of communication in MC Manitoba and working with the staff to “get a clear sense of how we are communicating,” Werner notes.

The board has also been working with the camp planning committee, and the October gathering will include a report on that process. ❧



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PHOTO BY RAYMOND CHAN

Peace among all people

Markham Chinese Mennonite holds 20th anniversary service jointly with Hagerman Mennonite

BY JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
MARKHAM, ONT.

Jenny, a Grade 7 student who attended the 20th anniversary celebration of Markham Chinese Mennonite Church on Sept. 12, wrote a story about how the congregation profoundly touched her and her family through its love and encouragement when they came to Canada as immigrants. She came to believe that God is real when she saw how God was caring for them through the people in the church.

She recounted how they helped her mother find a job, gave her tutoring so she could keep up at school, and how pastor Paul Mo comforted her parents when her brother was very sick. Jenny said she is so “thankful to God to be able to grow up in this family: Markham Chinese Mennonite Church.”

Mo was called from within the congregation to serve as pastor five years ago when former pastor Winfred Soong retired. Mo said he has felt a special calling to serve the “grassroots people” coming from China or developing countries, as was the case with Jenny’s family. Most speak Mandarin or “non-proper” Cantonese. “Thank God,” Mo said, “he has empowered me to serve them with great love. I work with them to face the toughness in their daily lives.”

In 1990, Soong, then with Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, asked for space at Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham, to do outreach to the many new Chinese-speaking immigrants in that community. The Hagerman congregation had felt unsure about how to respond to all the changes in the area, as the language and cultural barriers made it difficult to reach out to its new neighbours. Hagerman Mennonite members voted unanimously



Pastor Paul Mo, second from right, joins Markham Chinese Mennonite Church youths Clement Mo, left, Daniel Li and Fiona Mo as they share memories and pictures of growing up in the church during 20th anniversary celebrations on Sept. 12.

to share space with the new ministry, and Markham Chinese Mennonite was formally recognized as an emerging congregation within Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in 1993.

The anniversary celebration was a joint one, with Markham Chinese and Hagerman worshipping together. The partnership between the two churches has been close. The Sunday school program for children and youths is done together. The two congregations hold worship services at the same time in different parts of the building, one in Chinese, the other in English. As children from Markham Chinese reach their teens, some have chosen to attend the English worship service offered by Hagerman.

Fiona Mo, a Grade 12 student, shared in the service about what the close partnership between the two churches has meant to her: “One of the things that is so unique about both Hagerman Mennonite Church and Markham Chinese Mennonite Church is that not only are these two churches worshipping under one roof, but we are a family. . . . I strongly believe that this unified body is an example as well as a witness to other Mennonite churches and the rest of the world that, yes, two very different groups and cultures of people can actually come together as one and worship and praise God! This truly is the miracle of God, and these two churches embody what Jesus talks about: Peace among all people, no matter how different they are.” ☛

Zoar remembers 100 years of blessing

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
LANGHAM, SASK.

This past summer in Saskatchewan a number of anniversaries highlighted the start of Mennonites in this province. A total of five churches held centennial celebrations.

Zoar Mennonite in Langham was one of those, and its special weekend happened from July 16 to 18. Not just a time of inward gazing, it was rather a chance to rejoice in God’s faithfulness along with the

church's community.

Abe Buhler, pastor of Zoar, spoke of the congregation's reputation in the town. "We're seen as a friendly church towards the community and other churches," he said.

Those relationships came into play during the celebration weekend as the church cheerfully invited friends and neighbours to join in all the activities, including a pie and coffee social, a beef dinner and auction.

"The community was invited to everything," said Buhler, who also noticed non-church members in the choir on Sunday morning.

Val Wiebe, a member of Zoar, was one of the organizers. She found the worship service meaningful, especially during hymn "No. 606." "It was a powerful moment, a recognition that God still takes care of us," she said.

A history of the Langham congregation was printed in a recent issue of the *Historian*, a publication of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan. According to that history, the name for

the church, Zoar, was chosen from a passage in Genesis: Zoar was the town where Lot and his family found refuge as Sodom was destroyed. "Zoar Mennonite Church of Langham has been a place of refuge and comfort to many," wrote Elmer Balzar.

When a group of Mennonites migrated to Saskatchewan from Mountain Lake, Minn., in the early 1900s, a congregation was formed. Putting down roots in the area between the towns of Langham and Waldheim, the first baptism and communion service took place in December 1910. About five months later, work was started on a church building. A dedication service for the completed church happened on Aug. 16, 1911.

Three years later, the Zoar congregation joined the national conference when the sessions were held in Rosthern, Sask. However, the group did not have paid leadership until 1923, when John G. Rempel began his work there.

In 1948, a group of people from Bethesda Mennonite Church joined the congregation

after their own church shut down. The original settlers that began Bethesda came from Nebraska, the Dakotas and Kansas, and built a church four years before the Zoar group. Descendants of that group can be found in the Zoar congregation today.

A house fire in 1920 destroyed some church records, so it is unclear exactly when the Ladies Aid group began at the first Zoar church.

As Zoar plans for the future, it must acknowledge the changes in the congregation, admitted Buhler, who spoke of the reality of "more people over 50 than under 50."

"We are intentional in looking at new ways of being the church," Buhler said. People are stepping away from thinking that the church must bring the community through its doors. Rather, he explained, they want to reverse that and bring Zoar to the community, specifically to be involved in the needs of the town. "We want to find practical ways of being the church," he said. ☿

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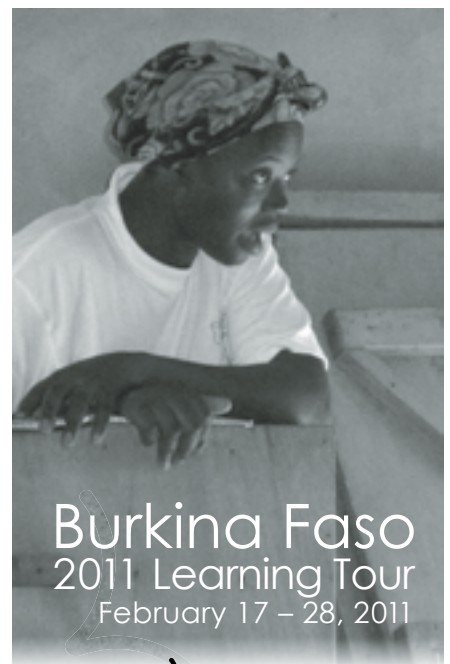
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Census reforms will hurt Canada's poor, claims Mennonite economic professor

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent

While Vic Thiessen, Mennonite Church Canada's chief operating officer, says "executive staff . . . are not aware of any concerns raised by MC Canada churches or constituents on census reforms," economist David Johnson, a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., says there is every reason to be worried, as the Canadian government makes plans to scrap the mandatory long-form census and replace it with a voluntary survey.

Johnson, an economics professor and graduate director in the School of Business and Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., believes that the proposed census reforms will negatively affect poorer, less educated Canadians.

When people see 'voluntary survey,' they will just toss it in the [garbage] bin," Johnson says, making those most reliant on government support invisible to the government.

This viewpoint is shared by Rick Hiemstra, director for research and Canadian evangelism with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), of which MC Canada is a member.

"The political reality of how money gets allocated is that if you're not visible, you're less likely to have funds allocated to meeting your needs. If you don't show up in the census, there is the risk the government will ignore you when they're developing their social services and programs," Hiemstra told *Christian Week* newspaper recently. He believes that language barriers or historical experiences with persecution



Thiessen

may cause immigrants and minority groups not to participate in voluntary surveys.

For some, the issue of the threatening nature of the long-form census and the intrusive questions are a problem, as well as the reason why there are reforms in the works. In principle, people who

do not complete long-form census forms can be fined or sent to jail.

However, Johnson says that there is not one case of someone being sent to jail for this.

And he states that "privacy is not an issue. . . . I'm not aware of any instance where someone has been able to get individual records on someone because of a census. . . . It's far more likely for me to find someone's individual medical records," he suggests.

The real issue, according to Johnson, is that the government is spending \$300 million more for poorer information and is completely unwilling to be involved in a dialogue to discuss the shortcomings of its census reforms. The government proposes switching from a mandatory long-form census that is sent to 20 percent of Canadians, to a voluntary national household survey that is sent to 30 percent of the population.

"It is an ignorant, stupid decision," Johnson declares, claiming that the information will be poorer because the people who tend to respond to voluntary surveys are richer and better educated. This will result in an inaccurate depiction of Canada's population demographics and an inaccurate way to look back on how Canada has changed between 2005 and 2010.

Immigrants, poorer people and less educated Canadians will be caught in the fray of this "destructive decision" for a long time, Johnson maintains.

Hiemstra is also worried about the influence of the church in the public square if it doesn't show up in StatsCan's numbers. He wonders if "their influence will potentially go unnoticed." ❧

'Because God has called us'

Mission congregation ministers in Guatemala

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent

Building houses, leading Vacation Bible School (VBS) and learning about how God is moving in a needy country were among the activities for 17 members of Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission, B.C., who spent 18 days this summer in Guatemala. It was the seventh ministry team trip and became known as "GtX."

In the village of Santa Maria de Jesus, the group was able to build two houses to replace those swept away by a volcanic landslide, and taught VBS to some 150 children.

Members shared at a men's rehabilitation centre in Parramos and helped at Kairos House in Guatemala City, that primarily serves children and their families affected by cancer. They also handed out health kits to people living in Guatemala City's inner city. Other activities included

distributing much-needed supplies to a home for abused girls, playing soccer with the local children of San Lucas.

CEDAR VALLEY MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



Ashton Neustaeter distributes health kits to local residents at the Guatemala City dump.

“Certainly, there is a need for many different ministries here at home, but we are oftentimes complacent and blinded to them by the busyness of our lives and the idols of this world,” says team member

Wendell Martens. “Stepping out of our comfort zone and visiting people so obviously in need can do nothing less than to compel us to act.” ❧

❧ Staff change

J. Ron Byler named transitional executive director of MCC U.S.

AKRON, PA.— J. Ron Byler has been named transitional executive director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. He succeeds Rolando Santiago, who resigned in August when his six-year term was completed. For the next three years, Byler, of Goshen, Ind., will lead MCC U.S. while a long-term executive director is sought. He will be instrumental in guiding MCC U.S. through New Wineskins, an MCC-wide restructuring process. In addition, he will oversee all MCC programs in the United States, coordinating four regional offices as well as the Washington Office and the Akron-based national peace and justice staff. He will continue the priority of working closely with the supporting church denominations of MCC U.S. During the past 13 years, Byler worked in leadership roles in Mennonite Church U.S.A. and one of its predecessors. Most recently, he was interim executive director for MC U.S.A. Earlier vocational experience includes stints with Mennonite Media Ministries and American Friends Service Committee.

—Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Release

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Feast commemorates church's work on Manitoba hydro issues

BY MARCUS REMPEL

Interfaith Task Force on Northern Hydro Development Release
WINNIPEG, MAN.

On the first day of the residential school Truth and Reconciliation hearings in Winnipeg this summer, there was a gathering of aboriginal elders and church representatives to give ear to another legacy of trauma and displacement, and to celebrate the journey towards healing.

The legacy remembered at this event was the flooding of Cree lands and subsequent harm to traditional Cree ways of life by massive hydro projects in northern Manitoba.

The elders feast marked 35-plus years of church involvement in hydro issues in Manitoba. It was hosted by the Interfaith Task Force on Northern Hydro Development, of which Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba is a member. About 60 people attended the event, including representatives from various denominations and aboriginal people from northern Manitoba.

Menno Wiebe, long-time native concerns director for MCC Canada, whose involvement in hydro issues dates back to 1973, underlined the historic significance of the public inquiry that the churches convened in 1975. "It was the first public inquiry ever to be called by a private body," he said, "an event that has never been repeated in this country, nor, to my knowledge, in any other."

When the government of the day shut its doors to northern concerns over flooding, aboriginal parishioners turned to their southern church brothers and sisters. "The churches said, 'We run Sunday schools, not public inquiries,'" recalled Wiebe, "but with fear and trembling we entered into the breach."

Retired United Church minister Jack McLachlan recalled how the elders of South Indian Lake took him from his "European mindset and into their history.

When my society discovered wealth in the rivers," McLachlan said, "the treaties became inconsequential and the people became inconsequential."

He also recalled early meetings that led to the coming together of five hydro-affected Cree bands to form the Northern Flood Committee, which strengthened the negotiating position of northerners.

Ivan Monias was moved to be invited to read the words of his father, Walter Monias, the chief of the Cross Lake Pimicikamak Cree in 1975, who expressed "deep appreciation for the ear of the churches," and promised not to "sit idly by and allow our way of life and our lands to be desecrated or taken away." Monias said of his father, "He taught me a lot. I can hear his voice as I read his words here today."

Muriel Smith, former deputy premier of Manitoba and daughter-in-law of Justice C. Rhodes Smith, the judge who chaired the 1975 inquiry, read an excerpt of testimony

on a point that has become significant for the task force. The government of the day emphasized that even after the concrete was poured and the dams were in place, their operations could be modified to reduce negative impacts. Smith stated that she remembered lobbying for this very thing, but failed to gain sufficient support in the legislature.

Stella Neff, an elder from Misipawistik Cree Nation and wife of a local Evangelical Mennonite Church missionary, read from the testimony of Walter Mink, a trapper and elder she remembers well. She emphasized that the harm to moose, beaver and waterfowl on hydro-regulated Cedar Lake described by Mink in 1975 continues to this day.

The task force continues the work inherited from those involved in the 1970s. Currently it is pushing for a public review of the "environmental flow requirements" of hydro-affected waterways, giving first priority to the health of lake and river life, rather than to maximum exports. ❧

Marcus Rempel is hydro justice coordinator of the Interfaith Task Force on Northern Hydro Development. Photographer Richard Grover is a volunteer member of the task force.

PHOTO BY RICHARD GROVER



Wiebe



Artwork inspired by the hydro-flooding in northern Manitoba by Bob Haverluck.

New developments for war resisters in Canada

By ESTHER EPP-TIESSEN

Mennonite Central Committee Ottawa Release
OTTAWA, ONT.

Over the summer months, there were several new developments for war resisters seeking permanent residency in Canada.

In June, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled in favour of Jeremy Hinzman, a U.S. war resister and conscientious objector, whose application for residency on humanitarian and compassionate grounds had been denied earlier by an immigration official. In its ruling, the appeals court noted that the officer dealing with Hinzman's case had neglected to examine his religious, moral and political beliefs, including beliefs of conscientious objection,

and that Hinzman deserved another opportunity to make his case.

However, on July 22, Canada's Department of Citizenship and Immigration issued a new directive related to war resisters. It indicates an intention to declare military deserters who seek refuge in Canada "criminally inadmissible" because they have deserted the military of their country of origin. And where applicants are deemed criminally inadmissible, they will likely become ineligible for permanent residency. The War Resisters Campaign, a network of volunteers working together to provide assistance to

members of the U.S. military seeking asylum in Canada, is currently researching the full meaning and impact of this directive.

Bill C-440 was to undergo an hour of debate on Sept. 27, with a second-reading vote to take place a few days later. This private member's bill, introduced by Members of Parliament Gerard Kennedy and Bill Siksay in the fall of 2009, calls for the government to stop deportation proceedings against resisters to wars not sanctioned by the United Nations, including the Iraq War, and to allow them to apply for permanent residency.

In a recent op ed piece, Kennedy noted that Bill C-440 is all about how Canadians view the role of conscience. After World War II, the Nuremberg Trials affirmed the principle that soldiers are expected to act morally, rather than simply follow orders. In a similar way, this bill supports the convictions of those who voluntarily enlisted for military service in Iraq but who, due to conscience, came to resist participation in the war. ✎

The image is a screenshot of a web browser displaying the Canadian Mennonite Magazine website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.canadianmennonite.org>. The website's header features the title "CANADIAN MENNONITE" in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background. To the right of the title is a search bar with a "Search" button. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Articles", "Blogs", "Classifieds", "Yellow Pages", "Church Events Calendar", and "Past Issues". At the top right of the page, there are links for "About", "Contact", "Submissions", "Subscriptions", "Editorial/Ad Calendar", and "Donate". The main content area of the page features a large, bold, black text announcement: "Did you know you can post a comment on any article on our redesigned website?". Below this announcement, it says "check it out at www.canadianmennonite.org".

GOD AT WORK IN US

'Prayer always works'

Bloomingtondale Mennonite woman undergoes controversial MS treatment in India

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

“Did the prayers work?” was Twila Lebold’s first question after her liberation treatment in India to relieve her multiple sclerosis (MS).

“Prayer always works,” was the response of Dr. Kumar, her Hindu surgeon.

Prayer, faith and community are themes that run through Lebold’s story. Twenty years ago she was diagnosed with the relapsing-remitting form of MS. Her symptoms then included blindness and balance problems, which cleared up under treatment. In the ensuing years she married, had a family and began her career as a Kindergarten teacher.

According to the MS Society of Canada, up to 70 percent of people originally diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS will develop secondary progressive MS, “and

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research wrote in August that “there was unanimous agreement from the scientific experts that it is premature to support pan-Canadian clinical trials on the proposed liberation procedure. There is an overwhelming lack of scientific evidence on the safety and efficacy of the procedure, or even that there is any link between blocked veins and MS.”

This has not stopped many Canadians from going to other countries, including India, to seek the treatment.

As Lebold puts it, she had nothing to lose except the money: \$12,500 plus plane tickets for her and her husband Ray Boehm, a teacher at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.

While she was in India, prayer was

Lebold credits her daily contemplative prayer discipline . . . for helping her to be centred and have a positive attitude.

will slowly accumulate disability.”

In 2007, Lebold relapsed, showing decreased energy levels, and increased balance and mobility problems. In March of this year her doctors here told her there was nothing to be done but live with increasing disability.

Dr. Paolo Zamboni of Italy has theorized that MS is due to chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, which can be corrected by stretching various veins in the neck and throat to renew blood flow from the brain. He coined the term “liberation treatment” for the procedure that is now performed all over the world, although not in Canada.

offered up for her at Bloomingtondale Mennonite Church, near Kitchener, where Lebold is the Sunday school superintendent; at her parents’ congregation, Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.; and at Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., where her sister-in-law is pastor. Many friends and family members also prayed for her treatment.

Lebold credits her daily contemplative prayer discipline, learned as part of the Lenten month of guided prayer run by the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Ontario, for helping her to be centred and have a positive attitude.

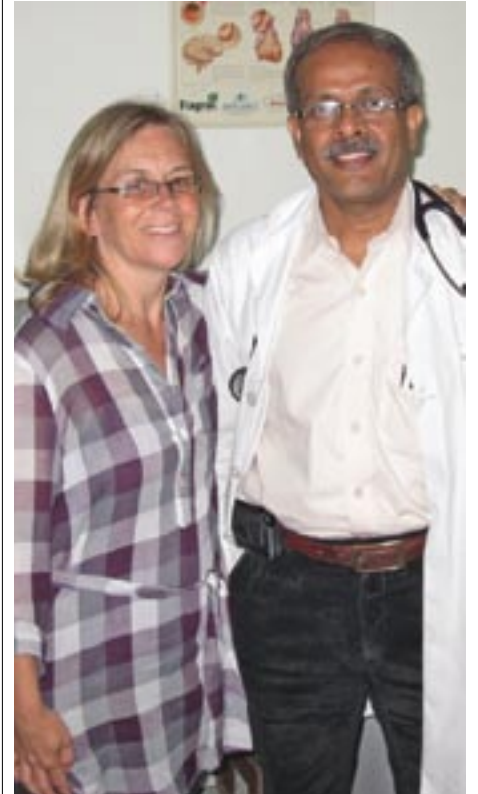
“Did the prayer work?”

She believes that it did, even if she is not completely healed and will probably need repeated treatments as the veins can close up again.

While she is not petitioning the government to provide liberation treatment, she notes, “MS patients can’t wait.” The disease is progressive and some of the others in the group of five Canadians who travelled to India with her for the same procedure were—and remain—more disabled than her.

Lebold is still seeing gradual improvement more than a month after her Aug. 6 treatment. She is more mobile, and has better balance and much more energy. Earlier this year, before the treatment, she was considering part-time teaching for the fall, but now is looking forward to full-time work, as she sees her spiritual journey now as one of new life. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF TWILA LEBOLD



Twila Lebold poses with Dr. Kumar, who performed liberation treatment to open blocked veins from her brain in an effort to relieve her MS symptoms. The controversial treatment is currently not available in Canada.

Faith keeps nonagenarian volunteering

STORY AND PHOTO
BY RUTH BOEHM

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

Elizabeth Hoch has as much energy as many people half her age. This may be due to the fact that she can't say no when people ask her for help. At 90, Hoch has celebrated 25 years of volunteering at the local Mennonite Central Committee thrift store—the Et Cetera Shop in downtown Leamington—where she performs a variety of functions and always agrees to work extra shifts when another volunteer can't make it.

This is only the tip of the iceberg of her volunteering career, as she also has put in 15 years at the Leamington Mennonite Home for seniors as a volunteer hairdresser

and also in the home's variety store. Hoch also regularly leads the devotion time in the rest home unit in the morning.

She participated in the home's walk-a-thon fundraiser for three years in a row, raising a total of \$11,800, for which she received a plaque from the home for raising the second largest amount of money.

"People ask me if I live here because I'm there all the time," she says with a smile on her face.

Hoch also enjoys singing and is the oldest member of the heritage choir at Leamington United Mennonite Church, which serves at many funerals and other churches in the area.

Her church and her faith in God allow her to continue to volunteer so actively. "If God wasn't here, I couldn't do all of this," she claims.

Hoch has had many opportunities to sense the presence of God in her life. While growing up in the former Soviet Union, her family was not allowed to worship freely. Her parents faithfully taught her many hymns and Bible verses, which have stayed with her to this day.

She and her husband came to Canada in 1949, relocating to Leamington in southwestern Ontario soon after, where they began working in the Heinz plant in 1952.

In 1984, they were involved in a car accident that left her with a sore neck. Shortly after, she quit at Heinz and her volunteering career began. She is normally occupied four days a week between the Et Cetera Shop and the seniors home.

After her husband's death 15 years ago, she moved to one of the life lease condominiums near Leamington Mennonite Home.

Just prior to her 90th birthday, Hoch's car broke down and needed expensive repairs. This prompted her to voluntarily give up her driver's licence, and now she walks everywhere she needs to go.

She held an open house for her 90th birthday and did all of the baking herself, including 200 *fleish perishky* (meat pies) and several kinds of cookies.

She is a proud and happy mother of three, grandmother of three, and great-grandmother of three. ❧



A sprightly 90-year-old, Elizabeth Hoch of Leamington, Ont., still volunteers four days a week at the local Mennonite Central Committee thrift store and at Leamington Mennonite Home.

ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

A bleak picture of organized religion

Agora.

Directed by Alejandro Amenábar. Starring Rachel Weisz as Hypatia. A Mod Producciones release, 2009.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

I watched them to the very end, but Richard Dawkins was not in *Agora's* list of credits, but he might as well have been. An “evangelical” atheist, Dawkins is known for quipping about Christopher Hitchens’ book *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, suggesting that the main title had one word too many: “Great.” Dawkins and Hitchens both believe that humankind would be better off without religion, that God—or people who believe in God—have been behind much of the great evil in humankind’s history.

Enter the film *Agora*: In ancient times an agora was the open place of assembly, especially in Greek or Greek-influenced cities, where the exchange of ideas took place. In Acts 17, Paul is taken to the agora in Athens, called the Areopagus, to explain his religious and philosophical views, since “*all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.*”

Alexandria, Egypt, was a world-renowned centre of ideas and philosophy. Philosophy was not only about ideas, but about understanding the world and how it worked, much like our sciences today. In fourth-century A.D. Alexandria conflicts between the pagan philosophers of the library and the Christian church grew pointed. The main focus of *Agora* is Hypatia, a female philosopher who refuses to give in to pressure from the church. The movie portrays the slow climb to ascendancy in power by Cyril, later a saint and doctor of the early church. Although he was not involved in Hypatia’s eventual death, the movie portrays his views and influence as leading to it and the deaths of many other

pagans, as well as most of the Jewish population of the city.

There is no redemptive violence in the movie, unless you count the easing of Hypatia’s death in the last scene as such. All religions practise violence, according to *Agora*. None have hands clean from blood. As Cyril stirs up his followers to more and more violence, we are led to dislike him, making his sainthood an irony and a blot on the church.



The film presents us with a perspective held by many in our society: Organized religion is bad. To that end, this would be a useful film with which to begin a discussion of the disdain many hold for the church.

A word of caution: The violence is graphic and there is some nudity, but no sex.

Dave Rogalsky is Canadian Mennonite's Eastern Canada correspondent.

PHOTO BY ALEDA KLASSEN



Nicaraguan singer/songwriter Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy, centre, performed on July 30 at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts, Kitchener, Ont., with two members of Tierra Fétil: Luis Manuel Guadamuz and Edwin Rayo. The benefit concert was held for the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, which offers services to refugee claimants in Waterloo Region. Between songs Godoy shared personal experiences of exile and a poem about solidarity that he had written for the occasion.

What does peace look like for young children?

It looks like laughing, cooking, singing, eating ice cream, says author of Sensing Peace

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Herald Press Release

Can young children understand ideas about peace?

Yes, says Suzana E. Yoder, a Kindergarten teacher from Philadelphia, Pa., who is committed to inspiring children to learn about and act for peace.

"It's not something too large for them to do or understand," says Yoder, currently living in Athens, Ohio, where she is pursuing her master's degree in special education. "I believe they can learn to live out peace in small but meaningful ways. As a teacher, I've seen first-hand the ways they are able to understand and conceptualize peace."

Her classroom experience led Yoder to write *Sensing Peace*, a new book from Herald Press that helps children aged four to seven see what peace looks, sounds, feels, tastes and smells like in their everyday moments—things like laughing, cooking, gardening, singing or sharing ice cream.

Sensing Peace, which is illustrated by Rachel Hoffman-Bayles, "explains peace through experiences that children can relate to," Yoder says, adding that she hopes it will "help them see all the ways they already promote peace in everyday moments."

As a teacher, Yoder found that children



are open to talking about peace. "They often just need someone to help them get started," she says.

Yoder, a member of the West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, drew inspiration for

Sensing Peace from her students in North Philadelphia, Pa., an economically disadvantaged part of the city. "I was always encouraged and humbled by their comments and thoughts when we discussed peace," she says. "Even though many of them live with the reality of violence, they continue to dream and act for peace."

Yoder hopes that *Sensing Peace* will help children realize "they experience and can make peace in many small, but meaningful, ways," she says. "I hope it gives them a starting point to dream and imagine what peace could be in a larger way."

She also hopes it will give parents and teachers a way to effectively teach peace. "As a teacher, I found there are few resources on this subject for adults to use with children—resources that encourage children in what they already do, and that enable adults and kids to dream together of what peace could still be."

And how would she describe peace to a

young child?

"It's the feeling of having a safe place to live and a warm place to rest," she says. "It feels like everyone having enough, no one too little and no one too much. It's the feeling of full tummies for all the world's children, the smell of summer barbecues and picnics, block parties and neighbourhood gatherings wafting through the street—bidding all neighbours to come, eat, share and be together. . . ." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Media merger awaits denominational ratification

The merger of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A., and Third Way Media, a department of Mennonite Mission Network (MMN), was approved on Sept. 23 by the boards of MPN and MMN at a meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. Final ratification, though, is subject to affirmation by MC Canada, part-owner of MPN, whose general board and Christian Formation Council are to meet later this fall, and that of MC U.S.A.'s executive board, which affirmed the general direction of the proposed integration plan at its meetings in Pittsburgh. The integration plan calls for a new name for the organization, and for the consolidation of as many operations as possible into one primary location to help improve efficiency and sustainability. The plan recommends that this location be in Harrisonburg, Va., with an on-site CEO there. On the financial side, the integration will help both organizations work towards sustainability through cost savings, new products and services, and new marketing initiatives. The new organization will relate to both MC Canada and MC U.S.A., and will retain a presence in Canada. At their Sept. 23 meeting, the boards of MPN and MMN also approved the creation of a reference group to "shepherd the integration process."

—From a joint MPN/MMN Release

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Feds, province combine to fund new CMU science lab

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALYSSA REMPEL

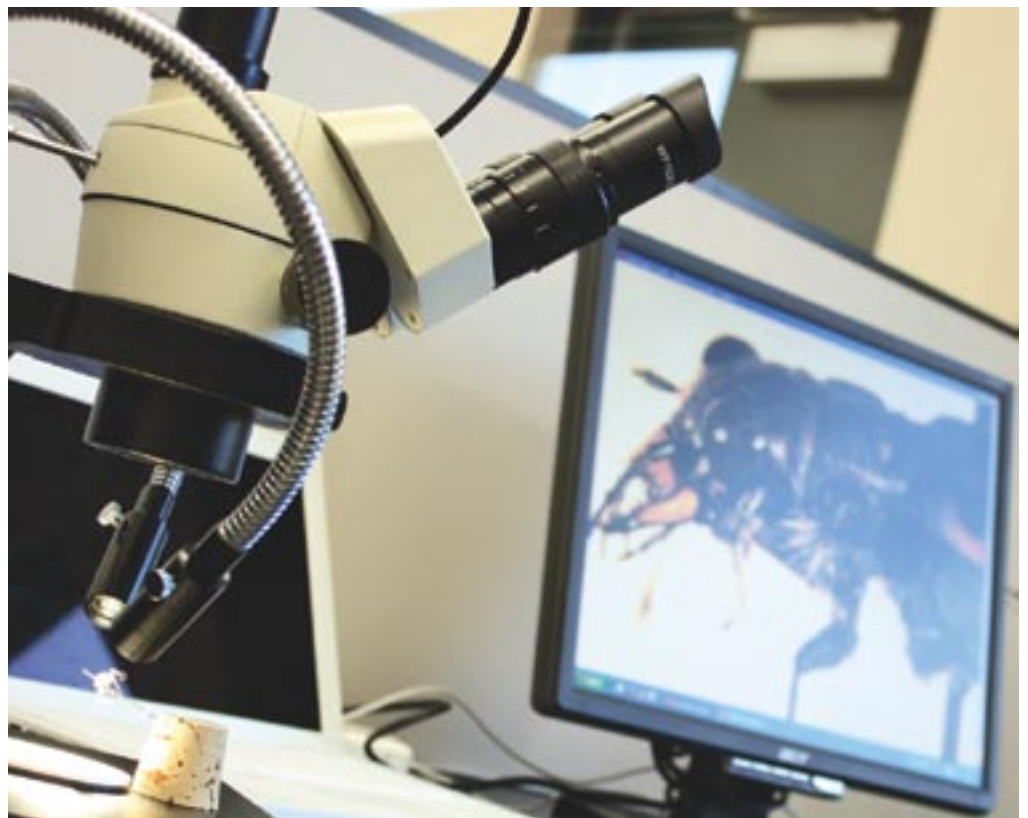
Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students wanting to pursue a career in the field of science are one step closer to that goal thanks to a brand new, fully equipped science lab that was recently unveiled.

The federal and Manitoba governments funded the construction of the lab on CMU's south campus as a part of their Knowledge Infrastructure Program, with Canada providing \$301,500 and the province giving \$150,800. The initiative aims to support infrastructure enhancement at universities and colleges across the country to provide better educational experiences for students. This can certainly be said for current and prospective CMU students who are now able to use the new lab to build a strong foundation for their future professional studies.

CMU's previous science lab was quite small, only able to accommodate approximately 15 students. It did not have gas or distilled water on tap—substances necessary for many experiments—nor did it have many of the newer tools students would normally expect to find in a university science lab, said John Brubacher, an assistant biology professor.

The new facility includes a 111-square-metre teaching laboratory, a preparatory lab and a large storage facility, complete with more safety features, gas and distilled water on tap, and many other modern scientific tools, Brubacher said.

The curriculum of the new science courses at CMU will be fresh and new, Brubacher said. Students will be able to take classes in organic chemistry, biochemistry,



One of CMU's new dissecting microscopes provides students with a close-up view of a tiger beetle on the screen.

genetics, cell biology, physics and microbiology, building an academic base in the sciences within a Christian liberal-arts environment, as a precursor to professional studies in nursing, agriculture, medicine, pharmacy, engineering and education.

"Students seeking a future in science will have a strong foundation to begin that journey," CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt said at the unveiling of the new science lab on Sept. 3.

CMU used the occasion to thank the federal and provincial governments for

their funding, and for the many private donations totalling \$350,000. The event was attended by Premier Greg Selinger and federal MP Steven Fletcher, the minister of democratic reform.

According to Fletcher, this investment in infrastructure at CMU is an investment in the knowledge economy of Canada. "It will strengthen Canada's position as a world leader in science and technology," he is quoted as saying in a provincial government press release. ☛

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Canadian learning institutions see enrolment steady, endowments doing well

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent

Almost two years after a worldwide economic meltdown that affected nearly every sector of society, Mennonite colleges and universities across Canada appear to be persevering incredibly well considering the circumstances.

Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., has held its own, while Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg, Man., and Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C., are experiencing only slightly depleted enrolment compared to last year's statistics.

Columbia's enrolment is down by 7 per cent from 2009; however, some courses are experiencing higher-than-normal enrolment.

CMU is currently instructing about 530 students, compared to 552 students last year. And according to Wesley Toews,

registrar and assistant academic vice-president, Menno Simons College, a subset of CMU, is experiencing virtually the same enrolment statistics as last year, with the equivalent of about 430 full-time students. However, these numbers were still subject to change at press time.

CMU's Outtatown classes are all full, with 32 students per site going to either Guatemala or South Africa.

Numerical gains at Grebel include a record-high enrolment (256 students) in its student services program. However, the number of active students in the master of theological studies program is down from 29 a year ago, to 19 this year.

Endowment figures for the three institutions are also doing well.

Fred Martin, director of development at Grebel, reports that the fair market value

of endowments for 2010 is \$4.3 million, as compared to the 2009 gross value of \$3.6 million. "We are using a draw of 3.5 percent on our endowments and have used some deferred earnings and other donations, so that we are giving out more scholarship support than previous years," he says.

At Columbia, endowments have increased by \$250,000 since 2008, Aaron Roorda, director of enrolment, reports.

/// Briefly noted


Giving to Goshen up despite the economy

GOSHEN, IND.—More Goshen College students will have the opportunity to learn and thrive in the coming year due to the generosity of supporters. During the 2009-10 fiscal year—which ended June 30—the largest amount of donations was given to the Goshen College Fund in 17 years. Jim Caskey, vice-president for institutional advancement, reported the fund reached a total of \$2.14 million US, nearly a quarter-million dollars more than was given last year, which directly supports the college's operating budget. Overall giving to Goshen College also increased slightly from last year, totaling \$3.61 million in contributions. This total includes the Goshen College Fund as well as gifts for specific purposes or the endowment. Contributing towards the overall giving were 4,366 total donor households. The college received a record response of \$341,393 during the year through phone-a-thon gifts. "The generosity of Goshen College supporters is both humbling and very encouraging, especially in these difficult economic times," Caskey said.

—Goshen College Release



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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO

CMU has \$2.4 million in endowments and other long-term investments supporting student awards, and \$1.4 million in endowments and other long-term investments supporting programs. The return on long-term investments in 2009-10 was 10.17 percent, compared to a 7.75 percent loss in 2008-09, according to Gordon Epp-Fransen, vice-president of finance and administration. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

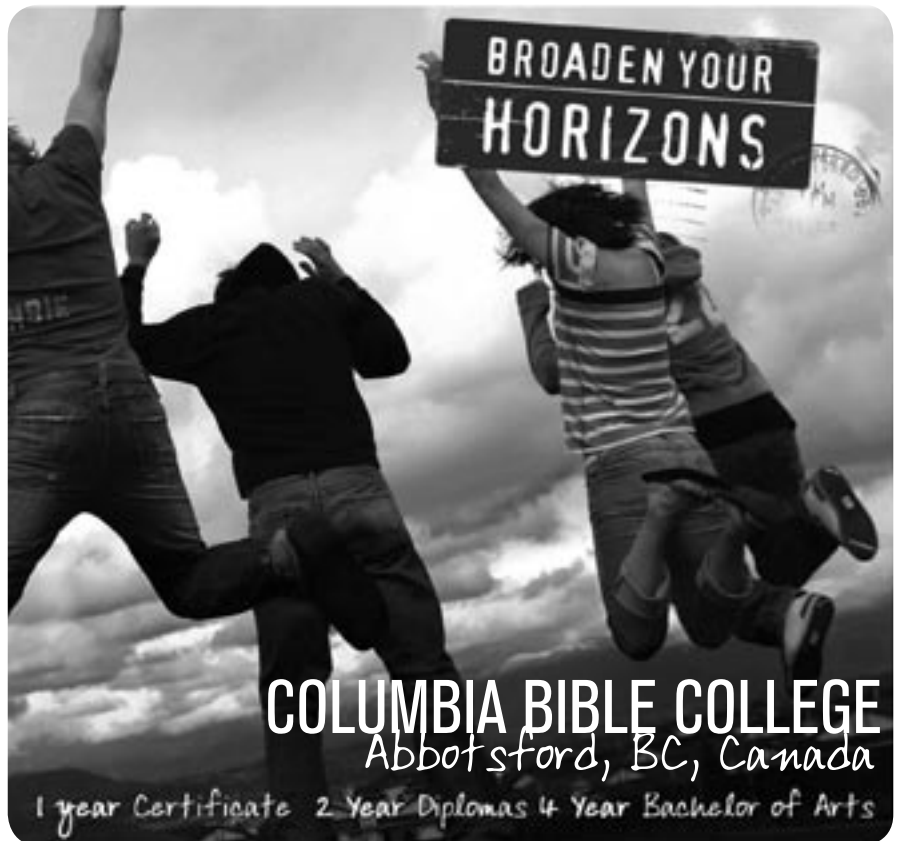
AMBS reports slight dip in giving for 2009-10

ELKHART, IND.—In spite of slightly lower giving to Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) for the 2009-10 fiscal year—compared to the previous year—the seminary expects income to balance expenses when reporting for the year is completed. Overall giving to the seminary's annual fund in 2009-10 was \$1.43 million (all figures in US dollars), compared to \$1.46 million in 2008-09. Increases in giving came from businesses, congregations, conferences and foundations, although total giving missed the goal of \$1.49 million. Contributions from faculty, staff and board members almost doubled from the previous year, in part because employees opted to contribute part of their earnings throughout the year to prevent the need for significant cuts in programs or staff. Income from other sources and less spending than budgeted also helped to offset the slight decline in giving from alumni and individual donors. "We are immensely grateful for a positive financial outcome this year. Said George R. Brunk, interim president. "Given the general economic conditions, the evidence of deep commitment on the part of our donors is all the more encouraging." Because the AMBS student body is smaller than that of Mennonite undergraduate schools, it relies less on tuition and receives 40 percent of its annual income from contributions.

—AMBS Release



Emily Main, left, an upper-year kinesiology student from Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., adds sand to the vase at Conrad Grebel University College's commencement exercises last month, while Pam Bartel, student services administrative assistant, right, looks on. Every student added coloured sand to the vase. Ken Coates, the dean of arts at the University of Waterloo, challenged the Grebel students to feel "the discomfort of a bed of nails" as they understand their place of privilege in the world.



FOCUS ON EDUCATION

REFLECTION

Why I didn't ride a camel this summer

STORY AND PHOTO BY RAMON REMPEL

I had the good fortune this summer to spend five weeks in the Middle East and I didn't ride a camel once. I flew to Istanbul, Turkey, and worked my way—sans camel—overland to Cairo, Egypt, and then back home. Six countries, nine border crossings and seven different currencies. Travelling on foot or by bus, tour bus, ferry, car, private taxi, shared taxi, tram, cable car, but no camel.

Why all the talk of camels, you might wonder.

There are different ways to visit the Middle East. I saw many people who tried to really understand what was happening there, but I also saw many people who went for the religious Disneyland experience. To be honest, I would have to say that I did both. There is something fascinating about walking on the Temple Mount where Jesus once walked; visiting the house of Ananias in Damascus, where Paul came after his conversion; or seeing Joseph and Mary's house in Nazareth.

Still, this is only part of the story the Holy Land has to tell.

If you want to see more, cross the border from Jordan into the West Bank, watch soldiers in the Old City of Jerusalem randomly stop Palestinians or settlers in Hebron attempt to drive out Palestinians through violence and intimidation, discover that in summer Bethlehem gets water maybe one day a week, and see the "security" wall from both sides.

So there are at least two stories to hear.

I watched people looking for the Disneyland experience who got off the tour bus in Bethlehem—at least they came to Bethlehem—just long enough to walk through the Church of the Nativity. I saw the hordes of tourists pay to rent robes to be baptized in the Jordan River.

I watched endless groups rent crosses to mournfully walk the Via Dolarosa.

I saw all this and wondered what Jesus would do if he came back? Would he care about any of the tourism one sees here?

At least this much is clear, if you come to the Middle East and ignore injustice in a search for spirituality, you haven't really seen anything.

So what does this have to do with camels?

Well, in the Middle East, the only places you will see camels are in the tourist areas and the only people who will give you a ride on a camel are those people whose job it is to separate rich tourists from their money. I mostly tried to avoid this. I didn't buy a rug,

I generally only entered shops unsolicited. I didn't buy postcards or guidebooks from people peddling them in the streets.

I tried to find places where the local people shopped. I talked to as many local people as I could, and I tried to understand as much as possible. I left without many tourist trinkets, but came away amazed by the hospitality of the Palestinians, confused as ever regarding Israeli politics, and wishing I could visit Syria every year. Furthermore, I left wondering how to bring what I learned there back home.

This is the main reason to go the Holy Land, or anywhere, for that matter: To understand and learn about the people

there and hopefully use that to bring better awareness of home. For the first two weeks of my return, Canada felt very strange.

I learned much about church history from visits to Chalcedon, Damascus, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. But I learned even more about the church from seeing the "security" wall, talking to refugees, eating in Palestinian homes, seeing the work of Mennonite Central Committee, visiting Tel Aviv, crossing the border from Jordan, and watching people in the streets. I hope and pray to use what I have learned there in my classes at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, my



In the Middle East, the only places you will see camels are in the tourist areas and the only people who will give you a ride on a camel are those people whose job it is to separate rich tourists from their money.

church, and in my daily life.

So go to the Middle East, but make sure you go willing to see, whether you ride a camel or not. Such seeing can be difficult, beautiful, spiritual, challenging and life-changing. If you can't go, help send someone else. In fact, I would hope that every church in Canada would find the resources to send at least one person to the Middle East for at least a couple of weeks. The gifts and sights brought back would more than pay for the trip. ✎

Ramon Rempel teaches mathematics, world religions, church history and Grade 10 computer studies at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Grebel takes the risk for its students

Keeps its residence open to upper-year students despite edict from University of Waterloo to make it first-year only

BY SUSAN FISH

Conrad Grebel University College Release
WATERLOO, ONT.

Conrad Grebel University College has long tried to keep a blend of first-year and returning upper-year students in its residence program, but this year the balancing act became more complicated when the University of Waterloo insisted Grebel reserve 100 percent of its residence beds for first-year students.

Grebel said no.

"This was not who we are," says Mary Brubaker-Zehr, Grebel's director of student services. "Grebel would not be Grebel without a strong contingent of senior students who enhance and impact in profound ways the quality of residence life."

At the same time, Brubaker-Zehr had concerns. She brought the matter before Grebel's board of directors, worried that if Grebel was no longer promoted under the university's housing guarantee, the college might suffer from lower applications. Despite this risk, the board supported the decision to stay true to Grebel's long-time identity of having 50 percent first-year students and half upper-year students along with a variety of programs, ethnicities and faith backgrounds.

As usual, Grebel was promoted through the University Viewbook and University of Waterloo marketing website, but not through the "guaranteed housing" website, where students choose their housing options.

In the end, Grebel received virtually the same number of applicants as other years, far more than it could ever accommodate in its residence. On move-in day, Grebel

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

opened its doors to a blend that included 56 percent first-year students.

Brubaker-Zehr says current literature about academic success for students supports the college's decision to remain a multi-year residence. "This is something we have always emphasized when we interview students for a place in residence," she says. "Grebel is not just a place to eat, drink and sleep, but a place to engage, to balance study and play, to use gifts. The role-modelling that upper years provide is so valuable for younger students."

Upper-year student Ben White says, "I spent my third year in the Grebel apartments and have come back to residence for my fourth year because I realized how vital it is that we as individuals serve others in whatever way we can. Living in a community-oriented setting like Grebel's residence is a catalyst for serving others and allows me to better serve other people and learn from them."

"We are grateful that our residence is as full as ever with a terrific blend of students and we are looking forward to an exciting new year," says Brubaker-Zehr. ❧

Canadians refreshed at EMU summer institute

BY LAURA LEHMAN AMSTUTZ

Eastern Mennonite University Release
HARRISONBURG, VA.

"I see and hear of so many people who are exhausted, befuddled and a little resentful as they sense a growing irrelevance in doing what they've always done," says Barbara Smith-Morrison, transformational pastor at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, Ont. Smith-Morrison felt this way four years ago as she began a six-month sabbatical from a pastoral role.

"I longed for a place where God might both soothe my soul and help me remember and discern my calling as a pastor again," she continues. "Jan Steckley, a good friend and pastoral colleague [at Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.], recommended that I look into the Summer

Institute for Spiritual Formation at Eastern Mennonite Seminary."

The institute is a two-week summer program that offers classes, worship and experiential learning in the area of spiritual formation. It teaches spiritual directors and ministry leaders how to deepen their own faith and lead others in doing the same. Students can receive up to four seminary credits each summer and a certificate from the institute after completing three summers.

"A part of the gift that the summer institute has offered me is simply remembering and orientation," says Smith-Morrison. "I have oftentimes fallen under the sneaky

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❧ Briefly noted

Eleven more students at EMU this year

HARRISONBURG, VA.—Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) has a total enrolment of 1,589 students in its undergraduate, graduate and seminary programs, according to figures released on Sept. 17 by the registrar's office, up 11 over last fall. Perhaps as significant as the modest enrolment increase is the diversity and academic strength represented in the student body make-up. EMU has 111 international students across its academic programs this fall: undergraduate, 42 (4 percent); graduate, 31 (10 percent), seminary, 11 (8 percent) and the intensive English program, 27 (73 percent). Sixty percent of the graduating class of 2014 is female; the class is also ethnically diverse (77 percent white, 23 percent other ethnicities).

—EMU Release

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

'My myriad experiences at the institute have helped me to remember that I am a regular woman who is not responsible for it all. It reminds me that I am created and loved immensely by God and am given grace upon grace in this life.'
 (Barbara Smith-Morrison)

and incorrect perception that I am, or we are, responsible for the life, health, direction and ministries of the church.

"My myriad experiences at the institute have helped me to remember that I am a regular woman who is not responsible for it all. It reminds me that I am created and loved immensely by God and am given grace upon grace in this life."

Sandra Shantz, chair of the leadership council at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., says, "The summer institute gave me the opportunity to explore spirituality on a very personal level, while providing vocabulary and academic structure [that] has allowed my heart and my head to communicate.

"It has helped me to push my comfort zone in spiritual conversations and to bring that piece to my leadership roles," she adds.

Five church leaders in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada are taking what they learned at the Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation and creating a program for spiritual growth in the area church. Besides Steckley, Smith-Morrison and Shantz, the others include Lisa Carr-Pries and Ardith Frey, both of Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

"I believe there is a strong desire by many people to explore the depths of their own spiritual beings, and the summer institute equips people to do just that, and to help others, like those of us in MC Eastern Canada, to tend to that longing," Shantz says. ❧



Professor Wendy Miller engages students in conversation about deepening faith during the Summer Institute for Spiritual Formation at Eastern Mennonite University.



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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Finding peace among the peoples

AMBS hosts ecumenical peace conference on overcoming the spirit, logic and practice of violence

BY JOHN BENDER

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Release
ELKHART, IND.

Jamal, a Muslim refugee from Zanzibar, and Matthew, a Jew, got acquainted as their children played in a neighbourhood parkette in Toronto. Learning of Jamal's computer skills, Matthew found him a job. Later, as the events of 9/11 unfolded, Jamal came to Matthew's house, shaken. "I'm so sorry, but I don't know who to say sorry to." Matthew invited Jamal's family to share dinner with them.

The relationship of these neighbours represents "a testimony to the possibility of peace among peoples," said Mary Jo Leddy, addressing the opening worship of Peace Among the Peoples, an ecumenical peace conference hosted by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary at the end of July that attracted more than 200 participants from as far away as Europe and Australia. At the same time, the U.S. government's response to 9/11 illustrates "the near impossibility of such peace in an age of empire violence," Leddy said.

For almost 20 years this Catholic writer, speaker, theologian and social activist has lived with and directed the Romero House Community for Refugees, people living in four small houses in Toronto.

Christians have difficulty building peace because they are reluctant to stand with the peoples of the world who are oppressed and impoverished by empire, Leddy said, including her own country, which she called "a colony of empire." As an empire declines, however, it defines itself increasingly by what it is against, rather than what it is for, creating a great need for enemies, Leddy said. It loses sight of its founding vision.

For Christians, "our daily summons is to build peace among the people in our home, city, country and universe," Leddy said. Christians are summoned "to preach

with our lives the good news that we can, should, must love our enemies. If we simply hate our enemies, we become like them."

Leddy told of an ultimately successful effort in her neighbourhood to prevent an office tower from being built. The tower would have blocked any sunshine from reaching the parkette. The community acted like termites, persisting in taking small bites from the structure of empire until it fell. Calling conferees her "fellow termites," she blessed them, saying, "May you chomp on with great cheerfulness."

Other presenters included Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University, theologian and author Brian McLaren, and Linda Gehman Peachey, who directs the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Advocacy Program.

Hauerwas said Christian realism requires the disavowal of war. "Christians do not disavow war because it is often so horrible, but because war, in spite of its horror, or perhaps because it is so horrible, can be so morally compelling," he suggested. "This is why the church does not have an alternative to war, but rather the church is the alternative to war."

Peace Among the Peoples has been part of a decade-long initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to help people overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. From May 17 to 25, 2011, the WCC will convene a worldwide gathering, the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, in Kingston, Jamaica, as a "harvest festival" to celebrate the achievements of the Decade to Overcome Violence, which began in 2001.

The WCC is working on a statement that will outline a more comprehensive and biblical notion of peace, one that goes beyond a classical and limited understanding

of peacebuilding. A "just peace" can be understood as a multifaceted, collective and dynamic process of ensuring that human beings are free from fear and want; are overcoming enmity, exclusion and oppression; and are establishing conditions for right relationships that include the most vulnerable and respect the integrity of creation. ❧

John Bender, Elkhart, Ind., retired in January 2007 from his work as a writer-editor with North American church agencies. In 2010 he completed a labour of love as editor of the 75th anniversary volume of Cassel Mennonite Church, Ont., in which he grew up.



Hauerwas

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Calendar

British Columbia

Oct. 23: Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. annual fundraising banquet, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 6 p.m.

Alberta

Oct. 16: House of Doc fundraising concert at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton. Proceeds to Camp Valaqua. For more information, or to order tickets, call 403-637-2510 or 780-436-3431.

Oct. 16: Sweet Interlude at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, with performers Kim Thiessen and and Darryl Neustaedter Barg. An MCC Alberta event.

Nov. 4-7: Business as a Calling: Unleashing Entrepreneurship, MEDA's annual convention, Calgary. Go to businessasacalling.org or call 1-800-665-7026 for more information.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 15-16: RJC alumni volleyball, soccer and football tournament weekend.

Oct. 22: Pastors' gathering.

Oct. 23: Equipping Day, Osler Mennonite Church.

Nov. 6: RJC corporation meeting and fundraising/appreciation banquet.

Manitoba

Oct. 14-16: "Mennonites, melancholy and mental health: An historical critique" conference at the University of Winnipeg. For more information, visit mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events.

Oct. 15-17: MC Manitoba youth sponsor workshop and worship event, "For the Love of God," at Camp Assiniboia. Special guest: Bob Marsch.

Oct. 15-17: Scrapbooking retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Oct. 15-17: Manitoba Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend, in Winnipeg. For more information, visit marriageencounter.org. To apply, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705 or e-mail mmme@mts.net.

Oct. 19-20: J.J. Thiessen Lectures at CMU featuring Belden Lane, St. Louis University, Mo.; Theme: "From desert

Christians to mountain refugees: Fierce landscapes and counter-cultural spirituality."

Oct. 21: MC Manitoba fall gathering at Camp Assiniboia, 7 to 9 p.m.

Oct. 28, Nov. 9: Eden Foundation fall coffee and dessert fundraisers; (28) Steinbach Mennonite Church, (9) Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Oct. 29: MCI soup and pie supper, at 5 p.m.; fall concert, at 7 p.m.

Oct. 29: CMU fall fundraiser and 10th anniversary celebration dinner. Reserve online at cmu.ca/homecoming.

Oct. 30: Camps with Meaning celebration and fundraising banquet at Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, Man., at 6 p.m.

Oct. 30: Camp Koinoinia woodcutters retreat. For more information, call Laura or Sheldon at 204-534-2504.

Nov. 5-7: Quilting retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

Nov. 6: "Blending music in worship" workshops at CMU with Christine Longhurst.

Nov. 6, 7: Camps with Meaning celebration and fundraising banquets; (6) Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, at 5:30 p.m.; (7) Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 5 p.m.

Nov. 22: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at Westgate, 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until Nov. 28: "Via: Exploring the Way of Christ" each Sunday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Supper and childcare provided. For more information, or to register, call 519-745-4769.

Oct. 17: Christian/Veronica Steinman(n) reunion, at Shakespeare Optimist Hall; potluck at 1 p.m. Refreshments provided, but bring your own plates, cutlery and cups. Memorabilia welcome.

Oct. 17: Dave Rogalsky's 25 years of ordained ministry will be celebrated with an open house at Wilmot Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Oct. 17: Seventh annual gospel vespers, a hymn sing from Life Songs No. 2, led by Bob Shantz, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, near Roseville. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-

2805 or Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

Oct. 21-24: Ten Thousand Villages Fair trade sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (21 and 22), 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (23). For more information, call 905-627-4132.

Oct. 23: Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Enrichment Day, from 10:15 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont. Theme: "Haiti: Building in hope." Speakers: Donna Thiessen and Leah Reesor. Bring your own lunch; beverages provided. For more information, call Florence Jantzi at 519-669-4356.

Oct. 23: Workshop for congregational historians and record-keepers, with Laureen Harder-Gissing, archivist at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, at Conrad Grebel University College, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Registration details available at www.mhso.org.

Oct. 23: Fall meeting of Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 2 p.m. Keynote speaker: historian Barb Draper. Topic: "Many paths of faith: The Mennonite groups of Woolwich Township." Also the launch of Draper's book, *The Mennonites of St. Jacobs and Elmira: Understanding the Variety*.

Oct. 24: Pax Christi Chorale presents "Fauré's Requiem & S.S. Wesley

Anniversary" with guest conductor Stéphane Potvin at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto at 3 p.m.

Oct. 30: Menno Singers performs J.S. Bach's *Jesu Meine Freunde* and H. Schuetz's "German Requiem", at St. John's Anglican Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m.

Oct. 31: Woldemar Neufeld book presentation by Hildi Froese Tiessen, at Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall.

Nov. 3-6: Annual Ten Thousand Villages festival sale at Vineland United Mennonite Church; (3-5) 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., (6) 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tea and lunch room open each day.

Nov. 5-7: Marriage Encounter weekend at the King Hotel, Palmerston, from Friday at 7:30 p.m. to Sunday at 4 p.m. For more information, or to register, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667 or e-mail at wmroth@rogers.com.

Nov. 7: Grand Philharmonic Children and Youth Choirs present "Fall to Singing" at the Cedar Worship Centre, Waterloo, at 3 p.m.

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.

Classifieds

Announcement

TRAVEL: Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! See website for the 2011 Hotel and Youth Hostel Heritage Tours, including Holland, Germany, Poland, France and Switzerland. www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu.

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LOVING FAMILY READY TO ADOPT. We are a loving happily married couple with a 5-year-old daughter. We are eager to adopt and hope to have an open relationship with you. We offer plenty of love, patience, financial stability & all the advantages for your child. If you've been contemplating adoption, we would love to hear from you. Please e-mail familywaitingtoadopt@hotmail.com or call 519-634-9026.

Volunteer(s) sought

Volunteer couple or single person needed at Menno-Hof in 2011. Duties include hosting visitors while sharing our story. Length of stay is negotiable with a minimum of one month. Completely furnished apartment. For more information, contact Jerry Beasley, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565. Phone: 260-768-4117. E-mail: info@mennohof.org.

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FOR RENT: Spacious main-floor, 2-bedroom apt. in century home. Very large backyard adjacent to Festival Theatre, Stratford, Ont. Call Gerald or Grace Plett: 519-271-8268.

Employment Opportunities

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Initiatives for Just Communities (IJC) is an agency being formed by MCC Manitoba to carry forward its restorative justice programs. IJC is seeking an Executive Director whose leadership and lifestyle reflects the Christian purpose and values of the organization. This is a .5 FTE position. Application deadline is Oct. 29, 2010. Please submit a letter of intent and resume to Janelle Siemens at jms@mennonitecc.ca. Please consult the MCC Manitoba website at manitoba.mcc.org for a full job description, IJC purpose and values statement, and contact information.

PASTOR

Tofield Mennonite Church is searching for a pastor who is fearless and passionate for God, and is gifted in the areas of community outreach, preaching and teaching. We are an Anabaptist congregation of about 70 members in a growing town of about 2,000 people, with many acreage and farm families living in the surrounding area. Edmonton is only about 45 km northwest of us. Blessed with a newer sanctuary and fellowship hall, we look forward to working together with a pastor who has an outgoing personality and is eager to help our church bring Jesus to our community. The opportunity is great. Is God calling you?

Please direct resumes to:

B. Goerzen, Search Contact, Box 443, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0
or e-mail: bgoerzen@hotmail.com



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Rockway Mennonite Collegiate invites applications for the positions of **Business Manager** (half-time) and **Director of Communications & Marketing** (half-time), to commence in January 2011 or earlier. Depending on qualifications and expertise, these roles could be combined as one full-time position. The ideal candidate will demonstrate a commitment to the vision and ideals of education within a faith-based environment, and have personal involvement in an Anabaptist church community.

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You will be an integral member of our administrative team, bringing leadership and strategic direction to the Business and Finance services of our school. This includes, but is not limited to, budget setting, account management, personnel and facilities management, and oversight of accounting database systems.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

(Half-Time Position)

You will be an integral member of our administrative team, working collaboratively to support the school's recruitment, fundraising and promotional efforts. Technical marketing and communications expertise is required, including, but not limited to, project management, use of various media, best practices for effective communications, and general creative skills.

Visit www.rockway.ca or call 519-743-5209 for full information. Please note the extended deadline for application, and respond with cover letter and accompanying resume to principal@rockway.ca by **Oct. 12, 2010**.

We thank all applicants; however, only those invited for an interview will be contacted.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome Inn Community Centre seeks a dynamic and innovative Executive Director to lead a progressive community-focused organization in Hamilton's North End. The Executive Director is accountable to a Board of Directors. Our vision is to foster community resilience among children, families and seniors through education and relationships. Apply with cover letter, resume and brief writing sample to the Search Committee at edsearch@welcomeinn.ca by end of day Oct. 11, 2010.

www.welcomeinn.ca



Conrad Grebel
University College

PRESIDENT FOR CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

The Board of Governors of Conrad Grebel University College invites applications and/or nominations for the position of President, expected to be effective **July 1, 2011**.

Conrad Grebel University College is a liberal arts college founded by the Mennonite Church, affiliated with the University of Waterloo, and grounded by its Christian identity and Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated ability for engaging various communities in fostering:

- the College values and mission — to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue justice and peace in service to church and society;
- its programs, which embrace undergraduate courses in Arts including the University of Waterloo Music and Peace & Conflict Studies programs, a graduate Theological Studies program, and an exceptional undergraduate residence and student life program. The resources of the College Library and Archives support these programs.

The College is committed to employment equity. Preference will be given to candidates who stand within the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition and have earned a doctorate.

All inquiries will be kept in strict confidence. Applications and resumes should be received by **November 1, 2010** and be addressed to:

The Chair

Presidential Search Committee
Conrad Grebel University College
140 Westmount Road N.

Waterloo, ON, N2L 3G6, CANADA

Or sent by e-mail to: grebelsearch@uwaterloo.ca

Profile and other details are found at

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