

CANADIAN MENNONITE

September 20, 2010

Volume 14 Number 18

Hi, my
name is
Imvu

pg. 17

inside

Interfaith bridgebuilding 4

Let them stay 14

350 reasons to care for the Earth 19

EDITORIAL

Step up to the peace plate

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Tragic, isn't it, that one fringe religious leader with a very small following can get international attention, damaging beyond calculation the good work in Christian-Muslim relations when all of the remarkable work our congregations are doing goes largely unnoticed?

Terry Jones, pastor of a 50-member flock in Gainesville, Fla., held the world captive for four long days leading up to the ninth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, bombing of the Twin Towers in New York City with his threat to burn 200 Qur'ans in what has been termed an Islamophobic act.

Incurring the wrath and condemnation of leaders of both faiths, and of people on the streets of major Muslim cities, Jones managed to capitalize on a culture of fear before backing down in what he claimed was a "deal" with a leading Muslim cleric in New York City to move a proposed mosque to be built near Ground Zero.

While the significance of this heinous act is probably overrated, take note, good Anabaptist Mennonite Christians, of the shifting ground under our feet. The battle for good and evil has moved into familiar territory—houses of worship. Counter-terrorism has now moved from the political arena to the religious stage.

Notice that through the media—a dominant and instant force around the

globe—an obscure pastor with a tiny following was able to get the undivided attention of political and religious leaders, and the masses who watched and reacted to his every move over a four-day period. With this one act of political theatre he was able to tear down what has taken years to build.



While this is sad and can be extremely disheartening, it calls for a doubling of our efforts as a redeemed people, having honed a peace ethic based on a relationship with Jesus, who came to "heal the nations." It is our time, our calling, to step up to the plate in ways we haven't even imagined. We have been far too timid, too reluctant in our acculturation, to see the opportunities for peace-making in a politically charged environment, a fear-driven culture where religious extremists are now fanning the flames.

We have made a good start in our peace efforts.

We need more Robert J. Sudermans with the courage to challenge religious world leaders to "stop teaching and justifying violence in our faith communities" when he was in the "inner circle" of 80 senior leaders at the World Religions Summit 2010 in June. He could have just as easily rationalized that his presence and networking in that influential group was good enough—a sort of "quiet witness."

We need more Scriptural Reasoning groups, more Muslim students welcomed at our high schools and universities, more bridgebuilding breakfasts like the one sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, more refugee sponsorships by Mennonite congregations, as told by our Eastern Canada correspondent, Dave Rogalsky, on page 4.

We need to hear more narratives like David Miller shared in an address to the delegates of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada this spring and again to a workshop at our national assembly this summer, about relating to Muslim neighbours when he was pastor of University Mennonite Church in central Pennsylvania.

On the afternoon of the Sept. 11 attack, Miller, now assistant professor of missional leadership development at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., told his church's Muslim neighbours that, not knowing what would happen to them as a reaction to this event, they would have "sanctuary" in the church and among the congregation's families. This act was followed several weeks later by the congregation holding a picnic for the local Islamic community. At the start of the gathering, the president of the Islamic society said, "I want you to know that news of this event is being shared through my family in Egypt and Saudi Arabia."

We need more Jake Buhlers of Osler, Sask., who is making "peace in the public square" a passion and life-long vocation. We need more Brice Balmers, who has brought Muslims and Christians together through Kitchener's House of Friendship.

These are only a few examples of the good works among us. It is not meant to be comprehensive. Many, many good Canadian Mennonites are devoting noble efforts to the cause of good Christian-Muslim relationships. Praise be to God!

ABOUT THE COVER:

Imvu, the Zulu sheep, sports his trusty backpack. The creation of MC Canada Witness worker Karen Suderman, Imvu is a good ice-breaker as she and her husband Andrew develop an Anabaptist Network in South Africa and build relationships with the churches there. For story and more photos of Imvu, see page 17.

PHOTO: KAREN SUDERMAN, MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA WITNESS

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contents



Interfaith bridgebuilding 4

Mennonite filmmaker **BURTON BULLER** spent time in Waterloo Region earlier this year working on a documentary about the manifold ways Mennonites and Muslims are interacting peacefully and working jointly on justice issues.

Hi, my name is Imvu 17

MC Canada Witness worker **KAREN SUDERMAN** has created a knitted sheep called Imvu (Zulu for 'sheep') that she and her husband Andrew use, in her words, to make 'overseas church work more than an adult thing.'

25 years of silence 22

'Technically, there is no such thing as a Mennonite monk,' writes **WILL BRAUN** in his homage to the Hermitage, a Mennonite spiritual retreat centre in rural Michigan, as it celebrates a quarter-century of service to a sometimes disinterested church.

Caring about how we deal with our money 25



BRENT ZORGRAGER, the new chief executive officer of Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, builds his key beliefs of integrity, compassion and responsible stewardship on a Christian core centred in a relationship with Jesus.

Recovering a tradition of preserving food 27

Mother-daughter team of **SUSANNA MEYER** and **MARY CLEMENS MEYER** have created an easy-to-use guide for those who want to preserve their own food but don't know how.

Building bridges 28

In a two-page 'special report' read how MC Eastern Canada is building community, relationships and support.

Regular features:

For discussion **8** Readers write **9** Milestones **13** Pontius' Puddle **13** Calendar **30** Classifieds **31**

Step up to the peace plate 2

DICK BENNER

The mission-shaped home 10

PHIL WAGLER

Surviving eco shock 11

AIDEN ENNS

New blog postings

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

Eating together for peace: **CHERYL WOELK**

Positively separate: **PAUL LOEWEN**

Why environmentalism is set to fail: **DAVID DRIEDGER**

Interfaith bridgebuilding

Flurry of Mennonite-Muslim interaction in Waterloo Region attracts filmmaker

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent



Mohammed, a Palestinian refugee, and Luke Keller of Erb St. Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., share a smile at Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont.

Burton Buller came to Ontario's Waterloo Region this spring to explore the many Mennonite-Muslim activities taking place in the community for a new documentary exploring peace traditions in both the Christian and Muslim faiths.

Buller, who worked with Third Way Media, the media ministry of Mennonite Church USA, until the end of June, told a group of Mennonite and Muslim leaders gathered on May 14, "We're looking at trying to highlight the threads of peace that exist in both Islam and Christianity over the centuries and how they're being played out today. I don't hear many media or see TV pieces that talk about Islamic—or even Christian—peacemaking efforts. . . . The whole program that you're doing here intrigued me."

His hour-long piece is to air on the ABC network sometime in 2011.

What he found in Waterloo Region were Scriptural Reasoning, Muslim students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, a bridgebuilding breakfast sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, and multiple refugee sponsorships by both Mennonite congregations and Muslim organizations.



Muslim and Mennonite women clean up after the potluck meal at Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont.

Scriptural Reasoning

Scriptural Reasoning was begun in 1994 by Peter Ochs, a Jewish rabbi and currently a professor at the University of Virginia, to bring different faith groups together for the purpose of understanding each other, both their similarities and differences.

Yousef Daneshvar Nilu, a Shi'a Muslim student sponsored by MCC to study at the Toronto School of Theology in the late 1990s, proposed that Scriptural Reasoning could take place between Mennonites and Muslims in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Daneshvar Nilu and I (as pastor of

Wilmot Mennonite Church, Ont.), each prepare a topic—such as God, or the nature of human beings—and make presentations from the Qur'an and the Bible. Discussion then follows with a number of pastors in attendance.

An intense focus on the differences between Muslim and Christian views on revelation has been particularly invigorating for participants. Muslims believe the Qur'an was recited to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel over a period of 22 years, and was written down when Muhammad recited it to his followers. The books of the Christian Bible have 1,600-plus years of history of creation

and editing by many different authors in different cultures and times.

Daneshvar Nilu noted at one exchange that he finds that "Christians have too much human in their Scriptures." This led to a discussion of "literal interpretation" in Islam and Christianity.

Muslim students attend Rockway

Betsy Petker, principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate since January, believes that there are currently six or seven Muslim students studying there; since students don't have to indicate a religious background in applying, the number is inexact.

This has been an ongoing trend, although Muslim parents are clearly told that the school is Mennonite Christian, that regular chapels and religious studies courses taught from a Christian perspective are mandatory for all students, and that Mennonite Christian faith pervades the teaching of all topics.

'We're looking at trying to highlight the threads of peace that exist in both Islam and Christianity over the centuries and how they're being played out today.'
(Burton Buller, filmmaker)

Petker feels that the Mennonite focus on peace and understanding, as well as high academic standards, have attracted these families to Rockway, where students have been impressed by the non-judgmental questioning and acceptance of people from other faiths.

Both religious and cultural similarities and differences have been explored at Rockway, with an ability to “agree to disagree without having it explode” pervading the interchanges, said Petker. Rockway has “set a context for fair questions with honest answers.”

The presence of Muslim students at Rockway fits in with the many other

international students there. Petker believes that the “spiritual life of the school has more than just me, me, me. We’re grounded in faith, even if a different faith.”

Building bridges at breakfast

The Interfaith Bridgebuilding Breakfast was begun about three years ago by MCC Ontario at the encouragement of

local constituents. The group has roots in Mennonite pastor, writer and educator Brice Balmer’s work as chaplain at Kitchener’s House of Friendship, where halal foods—prepared according to Islamic rules—were needed for new immigrants.

Balmer noted that “Shafiq Hudda [an imam at the Islamic Humanitarian

Both religious and cultural similarities and differences have been explored at Rockway [Mennonite Collegiate], with an ability to ‘agree to disagree without having it explode’ pervading the interchanges

A primer on Muslim groups and beliefs

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Islam is one of the two largest religions in the world, with the other being Christianity. Figures differ, but it is clear that Islam is an alive and growing religion.

There are six main beliefs of Muslims:

- Allah (the Arabic word for God, which would be used by Jews and Christians as well).
- Angels;
- The “scroll of Abraham,” which includes the Psalms of David, the Torah revealed to Moses, the Bible revealed to Jesus, and the Qur’an revealed to Muhammad by God through the Angel Gabriel.
- All the prophets from Adam, Moses, Jesus and others who came before Muhammad, who is recognized as the Last Prophet.
- The Day of Judgment.
- The “measuring out” of the good and the bad on the day of judgment.

After these beliefs, the five pillars of Islam are:

- Declaration of faith.
- Fasting, as in Ramadan.
- Prayers, five times daily, facing Mecca.
- Almsgiving.
- Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Major groups within Islam include Sunni and Shi’a. Sunni and Shi’a differ in their understanding of leadership in Islam.

The Sunni believe that after Muhammad there are no divinely authoritative leaders, leaving the communities to chose their own leaders.

The Shi’a believe that Muhammad designated 12 members of his family to be inerrant imams—spiritual leaders and scholars. The first 11 led the people of Islam,

each dying a violent death as a martyr, while the 12th imam has been hidden away since 941 A.D.

While both Sunni and Shi’a identify a mahdi—“guided one,” the prophesied redeemer of Islam—only the Shi’a believe that this is the 12th imam. The Sunni believe that the mahdi will come at the end of the age to bring righteousness and justice.

The leaders of the Islamic Revolution in Iran are Shi’a.

There are smaller groups, including the Wahhabi from Saudi Arabia, an ultra-conservative part of Sunni Islam. While the Wahhabis are believed to support extremist organizations within Islam, the vast majority of Muslims believe in peaceful co-existence with Christians.

Within the major divisions are mystical groups, the best known of which are the Sufi.

An interesting belief among all Muslims, including the extreme groups, is that Jews and Christians, as “people of the book,” are not to be proselytized because they are fellow believers of Allah. This is a Qur’anic commandment. One of the Hebrew words for God, “El,” is from the same ancient Semitic root as the Arabic word, “Allah.”

While Muslims do not believe Jesus (“Isa” in Arabic) was God or the son of God, they do honour him as a messiah who will return before the Day of Judgment, and his words as a prophet of Allah. He is also referred to as the “word of God.”

With files from Idrisa Pandit and Yousef Daneshvar Nilu.

Service] and I met with Arli Klassen [then MCC Ontario director] even 10 years ago. We didn't do something regularly, but kept in communication." The Islamic Humanitarian Service helped after 9/11, when Shafiq and Saleem Bhimji, an Islamic scholar, came to the Chandler-Mowat Community Centre, a House of Friendship program, to ease both Muslim and Anglo-Canadian fears.

Original participants, who remain committed to the breakfast gatherings, include Leon Kehl, congregational chair at Floradale Mennonite Church; Idrisa Pandit, founder and coordinator of Muslim Social Services in Kitchener; and Fauzia Mazhar, an intercultural health worker at the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre.

Other participants include interested Mennonites and Muslims from the local community, faith and community leaders, people from various Muslim associations, and people who are interested in this work of interfaith bridgebuilding.

Spawned by the Interfaith Bridgebuilding Breakfast group have been several refugee sponsorships. A total of about 50 adults and children have been sponsored by a mixture of Mennonite congregations and Muslim mosques and humanitarian organizations.

Groups—one comprising Wanner, Preston and Brelsau Mennonite congregations, together with the Cambridge Islamic Centre; and another made up



Grade 12 Rockway Mennonite students Zainab Ramahi, left, and Leanna Wigboldus lead a school chapel this spring.

of Erb, Waterloo North and Floradale Mennonite churches, together with the Waterloo Masjid (mosque) and Kitchener-Waterloo Islamic Humanitarian Services—are sponsoring Palestinians who had been stranded on the Syrian-Iraqi border. The Palestinians lived and worked in Iraq, but had to flee persecution after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Jordan would not accept them and Syria houses them in camps in the desert within sight of the Iraqi border.

Refugee partnerships honoured with potluck

Burton Buller's visit was capped by an afternoon celebration of the refugee partnerships at Floradale Mennonite Church. The afternoon included time to visit among Mennonites and Muslims, including the refugee families, comforter knotting and a potluck featuring traditional Mennonite and Muslim foods from a number of cultures.

A "Faith and the refugee" panel discussion included Floradale pastor Fred Redekop telling stories of his Russian Mennonite ancestors' arrival in Waterloo in the 1920s, sponsored by Swiss Mennonites, and of Mennonites in what is now Uzbekistan who were taken in by Muslims there. Omar Al-awsage, one of the sponsored refugees, gave a first-person account with slides from the Syrian camp.

A biblical background for refugee support was provided by Moses Moini, a 1992 refugee from Sudan who now coordinates MCC Ontario's refugee program, while the story of Muslim refugees taken in by a Christian Abyssinian king around the time of Muhammad was recounted by Idrissa Pandit.

At the potluck, Leon Kehl announced that another related Palestinian family



Ray and Susan Martin of East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, Ont., visit with Fauzia Mazhar and her daughter Mehar Nayyar at the Floradale potluck.

of 10 had been cleared to come to Canada and that Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship was interested in helping support this venture.

Moini announced, "As of June, 56 of the refugees sponsored by the Anabaptists and partners in Ontario have landed."

The atmosphere around the tables of mixed Mennonites and Muslims was festive, even though in some cases

communication was difficult, since most of the refugees have only been in Canada a few months and speak little English.

Since the events which attracted Buller, several more congregations have entered into refugee sponsorships, as Muslims and Mennonite Christians continue to actively work at being neighbours and followers of God in Waterloo Region. ❧

journey inward to find meaning in mystical experience are all there in both religious traditions. But the application of spirituality to political life and the daily ritual practices of all Muslims, compared with a low view of ritual by many Mennonite Christians, show deep differences.

M. Darrol Bryant, distinguished professor emeritus of religious studies at Renison University College, Waterloo, was an observer of the dialogue and co-editor of the book. He writes, "I have always felt that dialogue is the new name for love of neighbour; it is a willingness to meet the Other, let each community define itself, and engage in multi-faceted conversation."

In dialogue, we find that the Other is truly other, and yet a fellow human being in search for meaning.

Other topics addressed by Shi'a Muslim and Mennonite scholars include: "Trinitarian foundations for Christian spirituality"; "From knowing God to loving God: Spirituality and submission"; studies in prayer; a discussion on spirituality and political life; two strong essays on spiritual poverty that point to similarities between Shi'a Muslims and Mennonites; and ritual and spirituality.

The book closes with a number of articles describing the dialogue, including one from the *Waterloo Region Record* summarizing each presented essay. ❧

Dave Rogalsky is *Canadian Mennonite's* Eastern Canada correspondent.

BOOK REVIEW

The new name for 'love of neighbour'

On Spirituality: Essays from the third Shi'i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue.
Edited by M. Darrol Bryant, Susan Kennel Harrison and A. James Reimer. Pandora Press, Kitchener, Ont., 2010.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

On *Spirituality* chronicles the third Shi'i Muslim-Mennonite Christian dialogue that took place during the spring of 2007 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

In the lead essay by Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, a lecturer in western philosophy and Christianity at the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute in Qom, Iran, where all of the Muslims were from, notes that Muslim and Christian spirituality are fundamentally different. "Christians understand spirituality as the work of the Holy Spirit, while Muslims understand spirituality as direction to ever deeper levels of meaning," he writes. "Muslim spirituality is the result of another kind of movement, not an external spirit coming in, but the self's delving within as it is guided to meaning."

Like all of the essays, Legenhausen's is paired with that of a Mennonite scholar, in this case, C. Arnold Snyder, professor of history at Conrad Grebel. "The Christian spiritual life is lived in relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, within a community of believers, embracing the entire world," writes Snyder in response. "Christian spirituality encompasses all of life and



relates all of life to the Creator."

These opening essays are particularly helpful in understanding spirituality for both Muslims and Christians. While it is a tenet of Islam that Christians are fellow followers of God—"people of the book" according to the Qur'an—Christians have beliefs of precedence based in Jesus' divinity.

The ideas presented point to either basic similarities between Mennonite Christians and Shi'a Muslims, or basic differences. Submission, spiritual poverty and the

/// For discussion

1. How concerned would you be if you had Muslim neighbours? How fearful are most North Americans of Muslims? Is this fear justified? What would you say to those who oppose the proposed mosque near Ground Zero in New York City? Do you think Muslim refugees are less welcome in Canada than other refugees?
2. What are the benefits and/or drawbacks of building bridges between Mennonites and Muslims? Is this something our churches should be working at?
3. What do Mennonites and Muslims have in common? What are the differences in beliefs and in spirituality? Why might Muslim parents send their children to a school like Rockway Mennonite Collegiate?
4. What do you think the relationship between Mennonites and Muslims will be in the future? Should more communities sponsor interfaith bridgebuilding breakfasts? What would you like to see happen in your community?

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.

✉ **Aboriginals are deserving of Mennonite sympathy, understanding**

THE AUG. 23 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* arrived at my home just about the same time as I returned from a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Grassy Narrows, a native community just north of Kenora, Ont. How great the contrast between our "overdose of forgiveness" with the stalemate between the environmentally and culturally rooted Anishnabe of Grassy Narrows and my provincial government bent on clear-cutting and exporting the forests on Anishnabe traditional lands.

It was right for Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on our behalf, to beg forgiveness of our native peoples in 2008 for imposing on them our residential school system, which sought by its very design to destroy aboriginal culture and connection to the land.

We Mennonites have had many battles with governments who wanted us to assimilate, and our stubborn resistance—as expressed in maintaining our own schools—should give us special sympathy for the native peoples on the residential schools issue at least.

However, the residential schools are now closed, and the survivors remind us that their relationship with the land is a fundamental aspect of their cultural and spiritual lives. Yet governments, on our behalf, are systematically trying to extinguish any rights to the land and contain its people on welfare-sustained reserves and in urban prisons, to keep them out of our way.

For Mennonites, too, the land has been a cultural basic and, indeed, a security against assimilation; so in this matter, too, the native people deserve our

sympathy.

Dick Benner, in his thought-provoking editorial (page 2), asks, "Beyond the spiritual cleansing and moving rhetoric of these high moments [of forgiveness], where do we go from here?"

Perhaps a good place to start is with Will Braun's column, "Mennonite treaty rights" (page 16). When we begin to see that our own worship space, and, of course, all our living space, is ours by treaty in which Canada's first peoples agreed to share—not to surrender or sell—the land in return for their own protected rights to sustainable living, perhaps we can return a sense of gratitude for our share, and give due respect and compassion for the descendants of those who understood sharing, but not surrender.

Whatever our ways in the past, we must support those Mennonite-related institutions that can express that gratitude and compassion in tangible ways.

RUDY WIENS, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

Rudy Wiens is pastor of Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship.

✉ **Former Poplar Hill teacher defends residential school**

RE: TRUTH AND Reconciliation Commission coverage, Aug. 23, pages 4-12.

My wife Anna and I spent a year teaching at Poplar Hill Development School in northwestern Ontario and we feel that these articles only dwell on the negative aspects, rather than the total experience.

Children were not forced to attend Poplar Hill because many reserves had schools of their own by the time Poplar Hill was started. Poplar Hill was unique, in that it had a program of teaching life skills as well as academic courses. There were more applications than the school could accept.

I worked as a shop teacher there with eight teenage boys. Together, we cut logs to build a house, repaired outboard motors and stored ice for preserving food. This gave us opportunities for relationship-building and learning from each other. The dining room was set up with small tables of five students and one staff, so at every meal we learned about the students' culture and their feelings. I remember these experiences as very happy occasions. I was shocked by the response of one student who thought that the Mennonite school "was just as bad as all the others" ("A first step towards healing," page 8).

My wife and I were able to visit the North 30 years after teaching at Poplar Hill. We were able to connect with four of the boys who had been in my class. I was overwhelmed by the success that we saw. One of the

boys had a university degree, his four children also had degrees and two of them were teaching at the Sandy Lake reserve. Another boy in Sioux Lookout was working for children's social services and was helping native families in the area. Another boy had become a commercial airline pilot and, after flying for Air Ontario, was able to have his own airline with a fleet of three planes providing a service to natives in the North.

I think it's important to acknowledge that there are

also some positive stories that came out of the residential schools.

RAY STEINMANN, SHAKESPEARE, ONT.

✉ Front cover headline saddens reader

TODAY WE STAND at a crossroads of opportunity to influence the creation of new cross-cultural pathways between our dominant Canadian society and people

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The mission-shaped home

PHIL WAGLER

During a worship gathering my four-year-old daughter was smitten by the arrival of snacks. The samples of juice and bread coming our way grabbed her attention and probably reminded her of that lady who passes out similar bite-sized temptations at the grocery store.

Enviously watching as I took a small cup and a less than filling piece of bread in hand, she pleaded to have some as well. I said no and “no” is not something little people like to hear. How was I going to avoid an unholy fit at this holy moment?

My initial parental instinct was to correct her into dutiful silence. But rather than fighting to keep the peace, I felt prompted to explain this moment. I bent towards my girl and we talked about the cross and the broken body and spilled blood of our Lord. I explained redemption and how this “snack” is our tangible act of remembering Jesus, and that it is reserved for those who have confessed their need for a Saviour and are committed to sharing life with others who have done the same. She sat quietly in contemplation—or maybe just resigned herself to whatever the Sunday school teacher had to offer a little later.

This simple episode reminded me

again of the awesome responsibility the church has to develop mission-shaped homes. This task must be central to the life of the local church. It always has been, we might argue, but I'm not so sure we've been doing it as well as our recent formulas might suggest.

I once knew a young couple who were co-habiting and struggling to understand love and life, and whether God had anything worthwhile to say about either. The young woman had been raised in a Mennonite church, the young man had virtually no church history whatsoever.



It struck me that this young woman did not in any way mention radical faith in Jesus Christ

He asked her to explain herself and she blurted passionately, “I'm a Mennonite! I'm thrifty and I cook.” Now, I'm all for thrift, and Lord knows I like good cooking, but if our churches and the homes that constitute them only produce thrifty cooks, then we are to be pitied beyond measure—even if we're eating well.

It struck me that this young woman did not in any way mention radical faith in Jesus Christ as that which defines being Mennonite, nor vibrant discipleship that cannot lie dormant, nor submission to

the will of God, nor service to the world in the name of Jesus.

Whether we have children or not, if we are part of a church family we are in some way charged with the duty of passing on that which is of inestimable worth—the salvation of souls—and what that means for living life beneath the reign of a good God.

Children are searching for answers and explanations to how they should interact with that neighbour kid with peculiar religious headwear, and that school friend who watches certain movies and sings certain songs we want to guard our kids from; and how they should respond to the over-sexualization of culture, the inundation of technologies, and the spiritual apathies of the day that make enthusiasm for Jesus out of step with what is acceptable.

Our task is huge and it demands more than thrift! The mission-shaped family begins as we take advantage of every opportunity for conversation, for honest wrestling, for faith-filled adventure, and even for disrupting the sober silence of communion.

Phil Wagler is the author of Kingdom Culture: Growing the Missional Church and loves the challenge his five kids throw at him in building a mission-shaped home (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).

of First Nations ancestry. The words we choose to express our questions and position in this societal transformation are potent.

Considering how words can empower or limit our thinking, I was saddened to see the title on the front cover of the Aug. 23 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*—“Should we confess to a national blight?”—positioned in front of a photo of a First Nations woman at the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering in Winnipeg, Man.

I love being part of the Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship congregation in Winnipeg today. As Mennonites, we profess a peace ministry. It is my hope

that we can encourage one another to use words that build positive images of peace within, among, between and beyond ourselves.

For over 35 years I have had the privilege of visiting First Nations communities as an invited facilitator of personal, team and community-development training. I have been greeted as if I were a family member in these communities. I have been told countless stories of seven generations of cultural genocide, and horrific inter-generational and personal wounds. I have also heard and witnessed many more examples of courage, beauty, community caring, and a culture rich in generosity, humour, faith and triumph.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Surviving eco shock

AIDEN ENNS

I long to find pristine wilderness and be thrilled by its sheer existence. I want the wonder of the wild to flow back into my domestic life and animate me as I sit in front of a computer on a street made for cars.

But I'm afraid that the wild places are gone. Not only have we explored every corner, we've also left our waste behind. I wish I could swim in the sea, chew on a blade of grass, or pluck a tomato from our garden (where trucks “fog” with poison to kill mosquitoes) without worrying about foreign substances that will make me sick.

Every once in a while I get a fresh shock that we have indeed finally ruined every aspect of the planet. Each of us, I bet, experiences this “eco shock.”



It could be the scale of an oil spill, the lack of ice for polar bears, or the amount of trash in the Antarctic. I got such a shock recently when I read that babies born to mothers in the United States are tainted by an average of 200 industrial chemicals.

In the book, *Technonatures* (Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2009), Julie Sze writes that babies absorb pollutants through the umbilical chord. These include “pesticides; consumer-product ingredients [including

Teflon]; stain and oil repellents from fast food packaging, clothes and textiles; and wastes from coal, gasoline and garbage.”

Not babies! Please don't tell me that babies are born polluted. (Maybe the Mennonite in me wants to keep the children pure.) When will the absurdity cease to be normal? When can we fret together and chart a new path?

Eco shock can bring despair. I am familiar with despair, for it is a companion on my quest for liberation from destructive human behaviour. I've learned to equate this despair with compassion.

Suffering caused by humans makes me sad. I'm sad because I will not resign

Maybe the Mennonite in me wants to keep the children pure.

myself to affliction and destruction. I eagerly want a better world for those who languish, whether they are the victims of land mines, the “garbage” fish caught in commercial nets, or the animals and plants torn asunder for roads and malls.

This can't be the end of the story. I believe that Life Itself will not be obliterated. This is what qualifies me as a believer. I use the phrase “Life Itself” with capital letters, to designate what some

Christians might call “God.” I see, hear and feel Life Itself all around us. Not only is it not destroyable by humans, it is also wild.

God is here in our midst. God is in the roots that push up the asphalt and bring the crews to patch our walkways. God is in the streams that cause large sink holes that swallow homes whole. God is in the dandelion, the smell of the skunk, the rebellion of the poet and the defiance of a child.

Yes, there is wildness in this world. It is no longer a frontier for commercial explorers to conquer. It is no longer for Christians crusaders to subdue with their rhetoric of stewardship or their “masculinist” tendency to dominate and control. The wildness is both the looming revenge of nature and fuel for the prophet's imagination.

The apocalypse may be real, but unfamiliar to those of us bent on destruction. It may be that wildness once again will reign. Locusts and honey, feral and tame. I think there are still wild places on earth.

Aiden Enns is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., and the editor of Geez magazine. He can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.

I invite others who feel called to find new answers to pause, in a spirit of mutuality and respect, to listen to and learn from the wisdom of First Nations people about the richness of their culture, a culture our government did its best to eradicate, but which has endured. I see a new, liberating path being built on a foundation of equality and shared understanding.

The following quote from Lilla Watson, aboriginal elder, activist and educator from Queensland, Australia, illustrates for me how words can reshape our thinking in constructive new directions: "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound with mine, then let us work together."

JOANNE KLASSEN, WINNIPEG, MAN.

✉ Organ music brings a blessing

I ENJOY READING *Canadian Mennonite* and have friends who share their copies with me. Going through recent issues, I just read the article by Jack Dueck,

"Church organs: Blessed or cursed?" (May 31, page 16). I was impressed with his description of the cathedral and organ music, as I have seen many cathedrals here and in Europe. I always enjoy beautiful organ music, which was my husband's great love when he was living. Thankfully, I can still go to a church where we are blessed with great organ music and we sing the wonderful songs from *Hymnal: A Worship Book* and *Sing the Journey*, instead of "off the wall" loud and repetitive words. That's fine for those for whom it is meaningful, and it is their privilege. I am just glad that our organ will never be "thrown into the Fraser River" as that "popular and dynamic" preacher suggested.

ESTHER L. RINNER,
NORTH NEWTON, KANSAS

✉ Mennonites should remember their own refugee heritage

The following is an open letter to the congregations of Mennonite Church Canada.

AS THE MISSION minister of MC Eastern Canada, I have the privilege of working with 11 new churches largely made up of immigrants, refugees and refugee claimants from countries beyond the North American continent.

One of these exuberant first-generation congregations in Toronto was excited to become the first Tamil-speaking Mennonite Church in North America. With this relationship in place, I've followed the stories in the wider media regarding the shipload of Tamil refugees that landed on Canadian shores recently with great interest. Thus far I've been disappointed by the coverage, as well as being a little disturbed by our federal government's public response. I hear much speculation about possible escaping fighters from the losing side of the civil war, about potential criminal elements and outcries against line-jumping in the immigration process.

As a fellow disciple of Jesus Christ whose Mennonite ancestors fled to Canada from a war in the United States more than 200 years ago, I'm writing to remind us that MC Canada is mostly made up of immigrant and refugee people. Some are quite recent and others are well established in Canada. As an immigrant people, and, more importantly, as Christians of Mennonite persuasion, I pray that we will not only reserve judgment on these people, but choose to not judge them at all.

It is our calling to offer a cup of cold water to these Tamil people and any other refugees. May that cup of water be filled with respect, love, hope, service, healing, prayer and friendship.

BRIAN BAUMAN, KITCHENER, ONT.

/// Corrections

- The Timber Bay Home at Montreal Lake, Sask., was a residence for aboriginal students who attended a public school in the town. Some aboriginal parents, although not all, sent their children to Timber Bay voluntarily. Incorrect information appeared in the "MC Canada shares the pain of Indian Residential School legacy" article, Aug. 23, page 6.
- Ethel and Menno Classen are the food coordinators for the Saskatchewan Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale. Their titles were incorrectly identified in the "'Taterware' instead of Styrofoam" story on page 25 of the Aug. 23 issue.
- Erwin Patkau is the father-in-law of quilt artist Bev Patkau, who was photographed on the cover of the Aug. 2 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* with a quilt featuring her father-in-law riding a horse. Incorrect information appeared in both the caption for the photograph and in a subsequent "correction" in the Aug. 23 issue.

Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.



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/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bergen—Walker Arlen (b. Aug. 8, 2010), to Jesse and Dana Bergen, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Ceh—Micah Nickolaus Peter (b. Aug. 9, 2010), to Tobi and Matthew Ceh, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Lo—Moses (b. Aug. 31, 2010), to Adley and Mandy Lo, Markham Chinese Mennonite, Ont.

Martens—Joshua Alexander (b. July 29, 2010), to Tomas and Delia Martens, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Recker—Jonathan Henry (b. June 24, 2010), to Chad and Elisa Recker, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Regehr—Jaden Dean (b. Aug. 18, 2010), to Dinho and Marnie Regehr, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., in Saskatoon, Sask.

Roen—Jada Denae (b. June 24, 2010), to Sharla and Ryan Roen, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Schiedel—Clara Frances (b. Aug. 27, 2010), to Marianne Wiens and Todd Schiedel, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Baptisms

Brian Patrick Reid—Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., July 18, 2010.

Celine Zehr, Chris Luckhart, Dean Steckley—Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Aug. 1, 2010.

Marriages

Andrew/Innes—Shae Andrew and Reid Innes, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 14, 2010.

Brubacher/Lee—Conrad Brubacher (Warden Woods Mennonite, Scarborough, Ont.), and Jinju Lee, in Daejeon, South Korea, Aug. 14, 2010.

Cletus/Janzen—Mary Jo Cletus and Jakob Janzen, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., July 24, 2010.

Cormack/Neufeld—Bradley Cormack and Paula Neufeld (Whitewater Mennonite, Boissevain, Man.), at the Neufeld farm, Aug. 7, 2010.

Derksen/Hubbard—Michael Derksen and Megan Hubbard, Hague Mennonite, Sask. July 2, 2010.

Derksen/Jackson—Kelsey Derksen and Kerry Jackson, at North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., June 5, 2010.

Fast/Shantz—Melanie Fast (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and David Shantz (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.), Aug. 21, 2010.

Fehr/Neudorf—Landon Miles Fehr and Kimmilee Joy Neudorf, Hague Mennonite, Sask., July 10, 2010.

Harms/Redekop—Edward Harms and Vanessa Redekop, at North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., July 24, 2010.

Deaths

Braun—William R., 87 (b. Aug. 22, 1922; d. Aug. 1, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Bueckert—George, 82 (b. Nov. 1, 1927; d. Aug. 23, 2010), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Dick—Abram, 87 (b. April 9, 1923; d. Aug. 22, 2010), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Funk—Maria, 86 (b. April 25, 1924; d. July 4, 2010), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Hildebrand—(Franz) Margaret (nee Peters), 89 (b. March 16, 1921; d. Aug. 22, 2010), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Kehler—John, 84 (b. Jan. 31, 1926; d. June 19, 2010), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Riediger—Cynthia, 53 (b. June 26, 1957; d. Aug. 25, 2010), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

Toews—Clarence Roy, 76 (b. July 7, 1934; d. Aug. 25, 2010), Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

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.

Poncius' Puddle



VIEWPOINT

Let them stay

BY EDMUND PRIES

For 500 years the Mennonite narrative has been dominated by stories of forced migration, escapes from persecution and the search for a place of refuge—often desperate quests for freedom to practise our faith or chosen lifestyle, and the burning desire to live and raise our children in peace. Ethno-cultural, religious and economic factors were usually fully intertwined.

For several weeks now, Canadian newscasts have focused on accounts of Tamils seeking freedom from persecution in Sri Lanka and a new life in Canada by arriving on the British Columbia coast aboard the barely seaworthy MV Sun Sea. The response from Canadian citizens has been mixed, but dominated—in the media at least—by anger against those who would take desperate measures to seek refuge with us.

Clearly, if anyone is able to understand the Tamils, it should be Mennonites. Yet even among our own one hears voices that have been less than charitable.

We need not go back five centuries to evaluate the Mennonite experience, but only examine our own family's journey to Canada. If we have not come here as refugees or immigrants, we have almost all been told stories first-hand by parents and grandparents who have, or have read the stories from an ancestor's diary.

Whether Mennonites came to escape war, starvation or persecution; or to seek land, religious freedom or a peaceful future for their children—they came because they were welcomed here. So let's look again at the accusations being thrown out by Canadian citizens against the Tamils and re-evaluate them from our own history.

Accusation 1

The Tamils are not really refugees because they cannot be fleeing for their lives. Their situation was not that bad. After all, they lived in a democratic

country in which they just happened to be the minority.

Stories of my own family's experience—Russian Mennonites who came to Canada from the Soviet Union via Germany and Paraguay—help me conclude rather quickly that these Tamils did not embark on their stressful three-month voyage as a vacation cruise. Circumstances will have been dire, dangerous and urgent to spark such a risk-filled venture.

When people decide to flee without sanction, and thereby imperil their own lives and the lives of their children, it is always an excruciating decision, one ultimately embarked upon because the alternative of staying put is worse. The devastation of the province in which the Tamils lived parallels the devastation of the Mennonite colonies in Ukraine after the civil war—and in some areas is much worse.

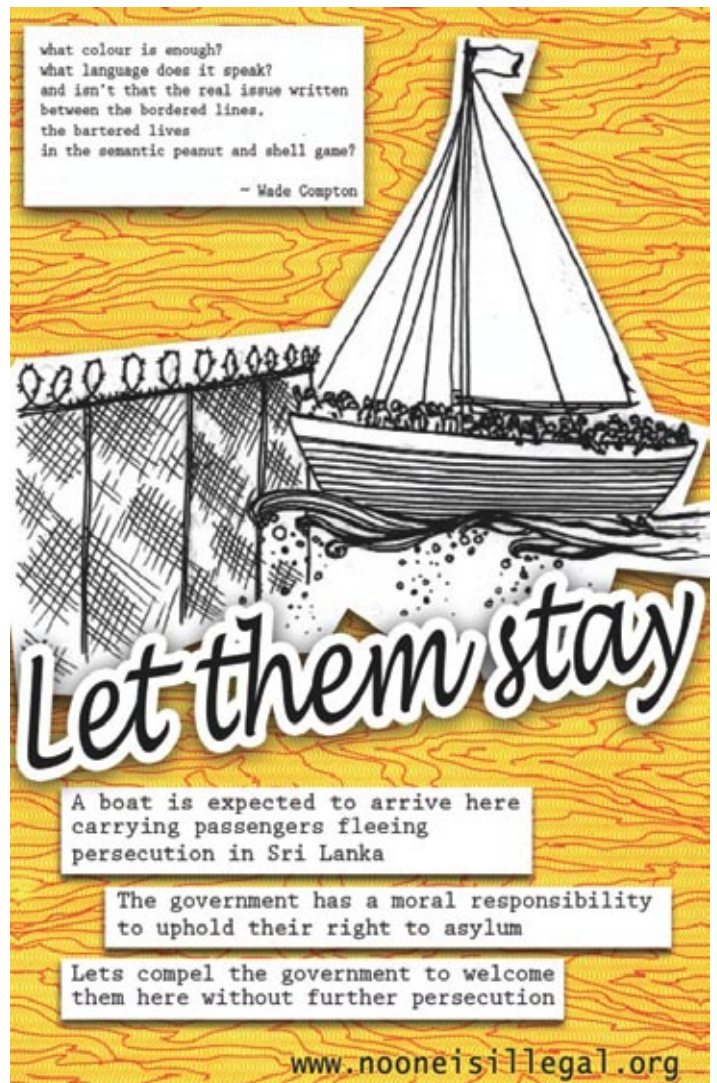
Accusation 2
These are not refugees, but economic migrants, because refugees are poor and the Tamils paid \$30,000 or more per head in order

to get on the MV Sun Sea.

It is unlikely that most of the refugees paid for their voyage from their own funds, but rather more likely that the money was raised by their community and either lent or given to them. According to some, that makes it even worse, since it suggests the involvement of criminal elements.

How quickly we forget. Perhaps words like *Reiseschuld* (travel debt) no longer mean anything to us. When Mennonites came to Canada, in almost every case it was other Mennonites who were already here who raised the vast funds required, or who took out loans in order to pay for the travel by ship and train for those who were coming. Or it was Mennonite

POSTER COURTESY OF WWW.NOONEISILLEGAL.ORG



Central Committee (MCC) that contracted for ships to transport Mennonites across the ocean. And MCC's money came from the Mennonite community.

Accusation 3

The quality of the on-board organization by these Tamil refugees to preserve sanitary conditions and proper order, including sleeping quarters, proves that it was indeed an illegal smuggling operation organized by criminal elements and possibly terrorists.

Once again, the story of my family and the accounts of others suggest that refugees usually try to organize quickly, while on the run, in order to preserve the health of both the immediate family and the refugee community, and to prevent the chaos that can spell the difference between success and failure of the desperate journey to gain refuge.

For this reason, I am impressed by the on-board organization of the Tamils and believe they should be lauded for creating survivable travelling conditions in circumstances that could have easily produced a humanitarian disaster otherwise.

Accusation 4

They are really terrorists masquerading as refugees—or at least there are terrorists among them.

It is easy to demonize and cast aspersions on the stateless and the homeless—those without a fixed address, lacking the supportive voice of a national government to lobby on their behalf, knocking on our doors and appealing to our human compassion to let them dwell with us in safety.

People did the same to Mennonite refugees at various times. In 1929, when between 13,000 and 16,000 Mennonites gathered in Moscow seeking refuge in Canada and the U.S., newspaper editorials across the country argued against accepting these Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union.

The *Edmonton Journal* and the *Regina Morning Leader* argued that these Mennonites were not good citizens. Even the *New York Times* scoffed at them as “prosperous” community members, suggesting on the one hand that they were

really economic migrants and, on the other, that they were also really “in their time . . . good revolutionists,” revolutionist being the equivalent term for terrorists in that post-Russian Revolution era.

So my question is this: Do we really know that any of these Tamil boat people are terrorists, as some—including Vic Toews, Canada's minister of public safety—have suggested? Interestingly, Toews' own forebears were accused of being “good revolutionists” as they fled to Paraguay after Canada closed its doors to them. Until proven otherwise, such statements are unhelpful and cause unwarranted animosity and unkind responses to be directed towards desperate people by normally generous and well-meaning Canadians.

Accusation 5

The Tamils evaded the normal process and had the audacity to come by boat!

Well, most Mennonites came by boat also. Indeed, some lived in refugee camps for a time first, the same as some of these Tamils. We, too, hired a boat to take us across the ocean. Fortunately, MCC made sure it was properly seaworthy.

Canadian culpability?

We need to seriously examine whether Canada bears some responsibility for the plight of these most recent Tamil refugees.

For many years, Canada sought to be an honest broker in overseas conflicts, recognizing that in most cases both sides commit indefensible acts and perhaps, at times, are also open to participate in doing some good. The goal should always be to try to inhibit the former and support the latter, which usually involves negotiating an end to hostility and seeking to broker a fair and equitable political solution.

Unfortunately, in recent years Canada's approach appears to have changed. We now seem to be declaring one side “good” and the other “bad,” even when both bear culpability for hostilities.

So it was in Sri Lanka, where, several years ago, we declared one side “good” and the other “terrorist.” Usually, as in this situation, we chose the more

powerful to be our ally and baptized them as “good.” The demonization of the other side as “terrorist” left Tamil civilians at the mercy of the more powerful, designated as a target despite the protections of the Geneva Conventions.

So did the tendency of recent Canadian foreign policy to choose sides contribute to the plight of the current boatload of Tamil refugees? It would seem so, and we must therefore ask whether we do not also bear additional responsibility for the predicament of these refugees.

Christian responsibility?

Does our Christian faith have anything to say about this? Of course, it does!

The oldest and most theologically significant biblical stories are about fleeing persecution and seeking refuge. The Israelite Exodus from Egypt was a 40-year refugee journey through the wilderness. Most theologians agree that this story became the theological paradigm for the New Testament story of salvation. Ours is a journey from captivity to liberty, from slavery to freedom.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was a refugee who fled to Egypt with his parents. Not surprisingly then, Jesus indicated that a willingness to welcome the stranger was one of only a few key questions we will be asked “*on the last day*” (Matthew 25:31-46). Jesus' entire ministry was deeply rooted in compassion, and he calls his followers to do likewise.

And Paul exhorts the church at Rome to “*extend hospitality to strangers*” (Romans 12:13). Similarly, the writer of Hebrews (13:2) expands on that: “*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.*”

Who knows? These Tamil refugees could be Canada's angels come calling. ☼



Edmund Pries teaches in the Department of Global Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., and is a member of W-K United Mennonite Church.

MENNONITE WOMEN CANADA
—A place to belong—

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

**Newness and movement
evident at
annual meeting**

BY ERNA NEUFELDT

*“New strength, hopefulness new,
new hearts, spirits new,
new minds, wisdom new,
Spirit of God moving.”*



The emphasis on newness and movement conveyed by the above words chosen by host Ev Buhr, president of Alberta Women in Mission, at this summer’s Mennonite Women Canada annual meeting in Calgary, Alta., seem most appropriate for our organization, which has undergone significant changes over the past few years.

NEW STRENGTH, HOPEFULNESS NEW is evident in this year’s encouraging and challenging report from the task force that moved the organization to:

- Unanimously adopt a new definition of membership, noting that “all women who are part of a Mennonite women’s organization, or participate in a Mennonite congregation in Canada, are welcome.” So, female reader, consider yourself part of the sisterhood in our denomination!
- Unanimously approve that the MW Canada executive be empowered to appoint representatives to the executive from areas where there are no regional women’s organizations or area church women’s ministries.
- Develop a communications committee to address the lack of knowledge about MW Canada cited by a number of survey respondents. The mandate of this committee, with membership from British Columbia to Eastern Canada, is to work with the organization’s website, blog, newsletters and other communication initiatives which exist or might yet be developed. Anyone interested in this work please e-mail me at neufeldte@yahoo.com. For a summary of the report, recommendations and executive response, including motions, visit mennonitechurch.ca/mwc/.

NEW MINDS, WISDOM NEW are also anticipated as three new women join the executive:

- **Liz Koop**, St. Catharines, Ont.—president-elect until the 2011



Koop

Mennonite Church Canada assembly, when she will move into the president’s chair. Koop and her husband Alf are grape growers in Vineland, Ont.

- **Lois Mierau**, Langham, Sask.—secretary-treasurer. Mierau and her husband Gaylord own and operate a small farm northwest of Saskatoon, Sask. She volunteers part-time as receptionist at the Mennonite Central Committee office in Saskatoon.



Mierau

- **Patty Ollies**, Milverton, Ont.—new chair of Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Ollies is coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Stores in Ontario.



Ollies

NEW HEARTS, SPIRITS NEW will hopefully result from the annual Bible study guides produced by an advisory council of American and Canadian Mennonite women that discerns topics and appoints writers each year.

Currently, the Canadian representatives are Kris Culp, Kitchener, Ont., and Patty Friesen, Saskatoon. Culp is an editor/writer for a marketing firm in Guelph, Ont., that specializes in non-profit fundraising and marketing. Friesen is a chaplain at the Rosthern, Sask., nursing home and the author of the 2009 Bible study, “For the beauty of the Earth: Women, faith and creation care.”

This year’s guide, “Seek peace and pursue it: Women, faith and family care,” written by Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, seeks to inspire readers to carry out God’s message of peace—starting in each home. In Canada, order copies of the new guide by calling toll-free 1-800-631-6536.

“Christian families are not automatically peaceful ones,” concludes Soto Albrecht. “They must work toward that goal with God’s help, following biblical examples and applying Jesus’ teachings. . . . We can choose life and begin building a family of peace. Peace is much more than just the absence of conflict, sickness or calamity. Shalom means a state of physical, mental and social well-being, both alone and with other human beings and God.”

Ultimately, that is also the goal of the newly re-organized and re-energized Mennonite Women Canada: Actively creating shalom and well-being not only for ourselves, but for women and their families and friends “across the street and around the world.” ☸

Erna Neufeldt is president of Mennonite Women Canada.



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

COVER STORY

Hi, my name is Imvu

Knitted sheep opens ministry up to children of all ages

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release

A passion for writing children's stories and a desire to engage children in church life gave birth to Imvu, a small knitted sheep who connects Mennonite Church Canada ministry in South Africa with children around the world.

Imvu—whose name is also the Zulu word for “sheep”—is the creation of Karen Suderman, the former advertising representative for *Canadian Mennonite* who currently serves as an MC Canada Witness worker, along with her husband Andrew, in South Africa. From their office in Pietermaritzburg, the Sudermans are developing relationships and an Anabaptist Network in close collaboration with the American Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) and Mennonite Central

Committee colleagues, through teaching, editing workshop and seminar material, and by providing support to partner churches in South Africa.

Each prayer letter they send out to supporters includes insights from Imvu's perspective and a related photograph of the small white and black sheep wearing a knitted red backpack.

“Imvu is my attempt at making overseas church work more than an adult thing, allowing children to enter the world in which Andrew and I work,” Suderman says in an e-mail exchange. “Imvu can hopefully be a device to distil some of the simple joys and profound truths that we discover as we live here.”

In one prayer letter, Imvu confides, “Often people put clothing and supplies into their backpacks. I am putting memories and thoughts into mine.” In another, he says, “The thought I am putting into my backpack is to remember to be thankful for the gift of learning at school and for the gift of learning at church. I know sometimes I forget to be grateful for these things.”

Imvu has been captured posing with a soccer ball during the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament that took place in South Africa this summer, and with Marmite, a stuffed monkey about Imvu's size, who travels with Wayne and Lois Hochstetler of MMN.



Imvu enjoyed the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament held in South Africa this summer.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN SUDERMAN



Imvu can be seen peering over the shoulder of MC Canada Witness workers Andrew and Karen Suderman.

Those who look carefully will also find Imvu “hiding” in other photographs in the Sudermans' prayer letters.

Suderman has found that Imvu is a good icebreaker with people of all ages. “There is one pastor in Mthatha that asks us about Imvu and where Imvu is every time we see him,” she says.

A collection of letters from a Grade 7 Sunday school class at Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., reveals Imvu's impact on children. “Almost each one of the letters mentioned Imvu and how they like to find the hidden sheep in each letter,” Suderman says. “Some even drew their own Imvu in the letters they sent to us.”

The Sudermans have heard from others, too. “My favourite message was from our niece—she was three at the time it was sent,” Suderman enthuses. “It said, ‘Dear Imvu, Andrew and Karen are in South Africa. I love you, sheep. That's all done.’”

Suderman has knit a number of sheep over the past couple of years. “Most of them have ended up in the hands of babies that our friends have had,” she says. “Imvu is the first sheep that I knit that didn't find a new home. Come to think of it, I think Imvu was the first project I knit in South Africa.”

Imvu is a unique sheep, in that he has his own e-mail address. He can be reached by young and old alike at askimvu@gmail.com. ❧

Community opens its arms to newcomers

From El Salvador to Burundi, Altona has taken in 15 refugee families in last five years

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
ALTONA, MAN.

The southern Manitoba town of Altona, population 3,700, was settled and established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Mennonites from Ukraine. Perhaps it is their historical familiarity with fleeing persecution and having to make their home in a new country that has prompted the community to sponsor 15 refugee families since 2005.

But more likely it is the conviction that God has called the residents to provide support and a safe haven for these new families who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict and political or economic hardships.

Ray Loewen, a member of Seeds of Life Community Church, a Mennonite Church Manitoba congregation, began Build a Village in 2001 as a response to the plight of people in El Salvador following a devastating earthquake there. Four years later, Build a Village expanded its scope to include refugee sponsorship.

"The support for our work with refugees, both financially and time-wise, has come from members of all Altona and area churches," says Loewen. "We are fortunate to have a strong core of supporters in Altona and area who feel strongly that God has called Build a Village to this work with newcomer families."

In partnership with Mennonite Central Committee, Build a Village sponsored six families directly. "The other nine families were sponsored by the government or other agencies, and we provided the non-financial support that is required," explains Loewen.

Dieudonne Mbarushimana is one such refugee. Mbarushimana spent eight years wrongfully imprisoned in his homeland of Burundi. This was followed by six more years in a Tanzanian hospital before he

finally arrived in Winnipeg, says Seulmi Ahn, an intern with the federal Joint-Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program.

A back injury in Tanzania left Mbarushimana paralyzed from the waist down. When the Dutch government learned of his injury, his resettlement application to the Netherlands was rejected.

"The Canadian government decided to take Dieudonne under its wings in the JAS provided they could find a non-governmental support group, which turned out to be Altona," says Ahn.

"The newcomer families have had a positive impact on Altona," says Loewen. "They have certainly expanded our worldview. Situations like the conflict in Darfur have become very personal because people we know and care about have been deeply affected by that conflict. They have also brought their wonderful customs, traditions, cultures, languages and more to our community."

Wendy Friesen, an Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church representative on Build a Village, recalls last Christmas when Mbarushimana received a turkey and wanted to share it. "He invited his neighbours, other people he had met, friends from a variety of churches, and brought all these people together in his apartment for a Christmas dinner," she says.

"[We] in Altona who have gotten to know Dieudonne believe he is a special gift given by God to our community," says Loewen.

"Over 100 people have been directly involved in 'walking' with newcomer families and many more have been involved financially and in other ways," Loewen notes.

Providing safety, shelter, food, and access to medical care and education enables

Altona area residents to meet some of the needs of the newcomers.

But Loewen acknowledges that "life in Canada for a newcomer is not easy. Even after they have learned English, those newcomers who were professionals, business executives, teachers, etc., have difficulty finding meaningful work in Canada."

"About half the families we have worked with are still living in Altona," says Loewen. That number includes a grateful Mbarushimana.

"From the time I was a little boy I never imagined I would have my own place," he says of the generosity he has received. "I will never be able to repay all of you, but I ask God every day to bless you richly for what you are doing." ❧

PHOTO BY SEULMI AHN



Dieudonne Mbarushimana, a newcomer to Altona, Man., learned to crochet in a Tanzanian hospital. He continues to use this skill in Canada, creating African items to sell to Africans in North America and incorporating Canadian patterns for Canadian buyers as well.

350 reasons to care for the Earth

Hope Mennonite creates YouTube video calling on Christians to do what the Bible says

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg produced a video for YouTube expressing its belief that God calls Christians to look after creation.

The idea was conceived on Peace Sunday last November. On that Sunday, the congregation divided into small groups to discuss how they could make a public declaration for peace.

“One group focused on the issue of creation care, as this was the passion of one particular member of that group,” recalls Pastor Lynell Bergen. “And somehow the idea of doing a video for YouTube came up.”

Congregants wanted to make a connection between creation care and their faith. As the video clip explains, “Scientists are calling for a reduction of CO2 in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million, so that the Earth can continue to sustain life.”

Reflecting on that number, they wondered if the Bible contained 350 verses that spoke about caring for creation. And they found them. In unique and entertaining ways, members of the congregation feature each of those 350 verses.

Curtis Wiebe, a member of the church with a master's degree in filmmaking, directed and produced the video in record time.

“With a small committee, a gathering of props, a musician and the energy of all our church members, old, young and in between, a YouTube video was produced,” says Bergen. “It was ready for December 10, 2009, the Sunday when churches were invited to do some sort of symbolic action around the number ‘350’ during the



Christine Penner participates in Hope Mennonite Church's YouTube video that presents 350 biblical reasons for Christians to care for the Earth.

climate change conference being held in Copenhagen.”

The video was shown this summer during the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Calgary, Alta., and has been picked

up and used by other churches and individuals, Bergen notes.

The YouTube video and all 350 verses can be found online at hopemennonitechurch.wordpress.com. ❧

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Working together for aboriginal justice

MC Saskatchewan teams up with MCC to help the Young Chippewayan First Nation trace descendents of its original members

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Abe Funk didn't realize the land he was farming belonged to someone else. Other people living in and around the Laird district of northern Saskatchewan didn't know it either. Originally given as part of a package to the Young Chippewayan First Nation during the signing of Treaty 6 in 1876, the rich farmland was later taken from its members and turned over to Mennonite and Lutheran settlers. When the truth came to light, farmers like Funk wondered what to do.

In 2006, Mennonites and Lutherans met with the Young Chippewayan community and were relieved to find out that its members didn't want the land back, only proper compensation for what had been

rightfully theirs. In turn, the farmers and townspeople living on the land agreed to support the aboriginal community in its fight for justice.

But before the first nation can move in that direction, it needs to identify its present members. According to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, a search is necessary to determine the exact descendents of the original first nation.

To raise funds for this search project, Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert and Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan decided to work together



PHOTO BY RYAN SIEMENS

The Spruce River FolkFest and Jamboree at Ray Funk's farm north of Prince Albert raised nearly \$4,000 to help the Young Chippewayan First Nation do a study of its current members in an effort receive compensation that the federal government took away from the aboriginal community and gave to Mennonite and Lutheran farmers many years ago.

to help the Young Chippewayans.

"There were originally 60 tents or families [at the treaty signing in 1876]," says Renata Klassen, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan moderator. "The project is to trace the descendents of those families."

"Due to a shrinking budget [at Grace], we haven't done a lot of donating [towards the search project]," says Ryan Siemens, pastor of Grace Mennonite. Instead, the congregation decided to use its energy and love for others to stage a few fundraisers. A local musician who attends Grace suggested a music festival.

But the church didn't just want to hold a religious-looking event. Siemens sees more to the event than just people getting along. "It's about right relationships," he says. "We need events that build trust [between the two communities]."

Relationships, yes, but the congregation also sees this as a chance to do its part for MC Canada's call to active peacemaking. "It's our 'peace in the public square' event," he says.

Almost \$4,000 was raised at the Spruce River FolkFest and Jamboree on Aug. 28. Leonard Doell, who works with the MCC Aboriginal Neighbours program, would like to see it become an annual event.

"I hope it's used for God's purposes," Siemens says. "And that's about reconciliation."

Now in his 90s, Abe Funk is still waiting for the issue to be resolved. "I hope this gets dealt with before I go," he says. ☘

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Inner city youths get a chance to connect

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Three cultural groups in the inner city of Winnipeg that have been fairly disconnected in the past—to the point of being almost conflicted—have become a little more connected, thanks to a summer peace camp.

Dagmawit Fekede, an established immigrant from Ethiopia who came to Canada via Kenya, notices that when it comes to cultural background, “people stick to their own groups and don’t really talk to each other. At the beginning of the camp, people stuck together [in their own cultural groups,] but then they started spending time with their cabin-mates and that helped them to start reaching out to other people,” she said.

The participants came together at Camp Y northwest of Winnipeg for the third annual Young Peacebuilder Camp hosted by the Institute for Community Peacebuilding, a project of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU).

Of the 60 participants, about a third each were aboriginals, European refugees or from established communities of immigrants who have been in Canada for some years. The participants were mostly from the inner city.

David Pankratz, director of the Institute for Community Peacebuilding, explained that the camp is meant to provide a space for youths to get together and talk when, more often than not, they would be at odds with one another otherwise. The camp also aims to teach the participants about one another’s backgrounds and cultures before conflict situations turn violent. “If they have learned to bridge the gap at this level, they won’t get to the next level [where the misunderstandings lead to violence,]” Pankratz said.



YOUNG PEACEBUILDER CAMP PHOTO

Participants of the Young Peacebuilder Camp, a program of Canadian Mennonite University’s Institute for Community Peacebuilding, gather to discuss their respective cultures and to learn from one another.

According to some anonymous response cards filled out by campers, it was successful.

One person reported feeling that it is important to spend time with a person from another culture because “then we have less assumptions and don’t pre-judge as much.”

Another person learned that it is important to hear the opinions and views of

someone from another culture because “that way [they will] have a better understanding of everyone’s story.”

“The friendships formed here are deeper because of the understanding that develops,” said Pankratz. “Once the youth have a way of understanding their differences, they are very good at finding their common interests and take it from there.”

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

25 years of silence

BY WILL BRAUN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

THREE RIVERS, MICH.

Technically, there is no such thing as a Mennonite monk. But if you travel to a remodelled century-old barn in the rolling countryside of southern Michigan, you will find some decidedly monk-like Mennonites. At the Hermitage—a Mennonite-run spiritual retreat centre—directors David and Naomi Wenger welcome pilgrims to a setting of quiet, stillness and prayer.

Meals are eaten in silence, prayer services follow a Taize-like liturgical form, and the library includes Mennonite stalwarts next to monastic classics. While there are no long robes or bells to mark prayer times, the rhythms and ambiance of the Hermitage are much like those of a monastery or convent: Everything is oriented towards prayer and attentiveness to God.

The tranquil Hermitage setting changed somewhat on the weekend of Aug. 6-8, when about 70 people gathered for the centre's 25th anniversary celebration.

The events began with a day-long retreat led by Father Eric Haarer. As a Mennonite young adult, Haarer helped turn the old timber-frame barn into a guest house back in the 1980s. Influenced in part by his time at the Hermitage, and by the people connected to it, Haarer eventually became a Catholic monk. He is one of many examples of how the Hermitage both shapes people's lives and how it creates a fruitful confluence of Catholic and Anabaptist worlds.

Also present at the anniversary were Gene and Mary Herr. They are the people who bought the barn and the surrounding 26 hectares of rolling meadow and forest

in the mid-1980s with a vision of transforming it into a place of prayer. The Herrs had worked in pastoral and other ministries throughout the U.S. since they met while doing Mennonite Voluntary Service in Chicago in the 1950s.

According to a history prepared for the Hermitage anniversary, the Herrs had “experienced few places where pastors could replenish their energies.” Out of this grew their vision to “begin a retreat centre where pastors could come for silence, prayer and renewal.”

“What makes the story of the Hermitage so remarkable,” Marlene Kropf wrote in an e-mail, “is the faith and vision of a very small but tenacious group of people who heard the cry for an authentically Anabaptist expression of contemplative spirituality, and then nurtured it among the pastors, leaders, missionaries, service workers and others who came for rest, renewal and spiritual companionship.”

Kropf, who is a professor at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and an outgoing minister of worship with Mennonite Church U.S.A., says the Hermitage has “thrived” as the church has awakened to the “potent yeast of contemplative prayer.”

Of the roughly 600 guests who visit the Hermitage annually, some come for part of a day, others for several days, and some for longer. Some come regularly, others not. Many are Mennonite—the Goshen-Elkhart area is about 50 minutes to the south—while many are not.

At the Hermitage, silence is not a rule, but a permission. Guests are provided space for themselves, without the need to engage in small talk. It is one way of limiting distraction and increasing attentiveness to God.

In the history booklet prepared for the anniversary, Gene Herr sums up what the Hermitage has sought to offer guests: “a place of quiet and simple beauty . . . the gift of privacy, a desk, a relaxing chair, a firm mattress and a faithful guide.”

The Herrs retired to Newton, Kan., in

PHOTO COURTESY OF GENE AND MARY HERR



Gene and Mary Herr opened the Hermitage in 1985. This photograph was taken in 1996.

2001, and the Wengers took over.

While Mennonite conferences took many years to formally recognize the value of the ministry, the Hermitage is now “endorsed” by the Indiana-Michigan Conference of MC U.S.A. But financially it relies entirely on individual donations.

Kropf says church conferences “have been slow to provide organizational support and financial backing for spiritual formation training programs.” She suggests congregations might benefit if spiritual formation was brought “closer to the centre of church structures,” rather than being relegated to “para-church status.” With or without official backing, the Hermitage “has served a central anchoring role in the Mennonite church,” Kropf says.

Mary Herr hopes the church will anchor itself evermore in the form of spirituality embodied at the Hermitage. “I pray,” she writes, “[that] the legacy of prayer, silence, listening and being bathed and ‘gentled’ into God’s presence . . . will become a tradition that Mennonites will continue to embrace.” ☿

Will Braun is a Winnipeg writer who did two three-month working retreats at the Hermitage in the 1990s. He can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com. Visit the Hermitage online at hermitagecommunity.org.

*The Hermitage has ‘thrived’ as the church has awakened to the ‘potent yeast of contemplative prayer.’
(Marlene Kropf)*

Laird Mennonite turns 100

STORY AND PHOTO BY HENRY PATKAU

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
LAIRD, SASK.

Laird Mennonite Church celebrated its centennial over two days at the end of August. Congregants, former members and adherents came to this joyous festival to celebrate, remember the past, anticipate the future and renew acquaintances, all around the motto of “Celebrating 100 years of God’s faithfulness and many blessings.”

In keeping with the event’s scriptural theme of “The Lord is my shepherd,” the emphasis of the Aug. 28 program was on those who had been shepherds of the church. Those attending were exhorted to “remember those who have spoken the word of God among you; whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct” (Hebrews 13:7).

The church honoured former pastors by distributing a collection of tributes written by various church members. The tributes were to Cornelius F. Sawatsky, one of the founders of Laird Mennonite; I.I. Penner, who was ordained in 1938; Arthur Pauls, who was ordained in 1935; Art Friesen, a pastor in the 1950s; George Dueck, pastor from 1971-77); and Irvin Schmidt, pastor from 1982-89. They have passed on to their eternal reward, but are still remembered.

Wilmer and Barb Froese, who were co-

pastors in Laird for 15 years, did an imaginary flash-back, looking back from the year 2040 to envision what might have happened from now until then. Gary Giesbrecht presented a slide show entitled “Creation calls.”

During the Aug. 29 worship service, former pastor Peter Funk tied expressions of the past to the future. He used the text from Joshua 3:4, “You have not gone this way before,” emphasizing that the future will be different than the past. Current pastor Bruce Jantzen recognized the sacrifices of the church’s forefathers had made in their desire to serve God, noting that their footsteps are hard to follow, but that there is hope for the future because God will carry through what God has in mind for the church.

Afterwards, the congregation assembled outside the church for the unveiling of a memorial stone, which includes a timeline of significant events:

- 1802 brought the first Mennonites to the area in search of religious freedom.
- A desire to worship together began in homes under the guidance of Peter Regier, bishop of Rosenort Mennonite Churches. Later, services were held at the Carmen

school.

- By 1910, men like Cornelius F. Sawatzky envisioned and encouraged the congregation to build a church in the village of Laird.

- Additions to the church were made in 1926 and 1959.

- The present church was built in 1985.

The memorial concludes with a statement of Laird Mennonite’s goal: “May the door be opened to share the good news of Jesus Christ so that generations to come may glorify the greatness and goodness of God”; and the words of I Corinthians 3:11: “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” ❧

❧ Staff changes

Program director appointed at Camps with Meaning

WINNIPEG, MAN.—Aaron Nussbaum has been appointed as associate program director of Camps with Meaning, a ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba. He will begin his new position in mid-October. The associate program director position was created last fall after the resignation of Bob Wiebe, a long-time director of MC Manitoba’s Camping Ministries. Nussbaum is a graduate of Hesston College, Kan., and has a degree in camping, recreation and outdoor ministry from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He spent a summer as program director at Laurelville Mennonite Camp, Pa.; for the last two years he was a leader with Canadian Mennonite University’s Outtatown program in South Africa. David Hogue, Camp Assiniboia’s manager and interim team leader, and Pam Peters-Pries, part-time interim administrator, will continue in their interim positions into 2011.

—Camps with Meaning Release



Former congregational chair Don Regier, left, and current deacon Stewart Epp, right, unveil Laird Mennonite Church’s centennial plaque on Aug. 29, with the help of Jerry Buhler, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan conference pastor, and Renata Klassen, MC Saskatchewan moderator.



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/// Briefly noted
Japanese congregation celebrates 10th anniversary

SURREY, B.C.—Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship of Surrey celebrated its 10th anniversary on Aug. 29 with a worship service, potluck lunch and fellowship time. Original pastor Takahiko Yoshiyuki, returned from Japan with his family for the celebration, and brought the morning message. Other special guests included Mennonite Church B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen and pastor Barry Lesser of Yarrow United Mennonite Church, with which the Japanese fellowship has a special relationship. Surrey Mennonite and North Shore Japanese Church also sent representatives. According to current pastor Gerald Neufeld, about 120 people came for the celebration, while normally the congregation has an attendance of around 20.
—BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. youth groups perform summer service

Two Mennonite Church B.C. youth groups were busy this past summer learning and serving others through service trips:

- Five youths from First United Mennonite in Vancouver went to work from July 12-17 at Trek, a summer camp held in conjunction with King Road Mennonite Brethren Church of Abbotsford and South Hill Community Church in Vancouver. The young people were leaders-in-training, and did tasks such as washing dishes, serving food, cleaning outhouses, supervising campers and helping run activities, as well as other general labour jobs.
- Nineteen youths and sponsors from Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford spent a week with the Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection (DOOR) program in Hollywood, Calif., from July 18-24, helping at homeless shelters and food banks.
—BY AMY DUECKMAN

GOD AT WORK IN US

Caring about how we deal with our money

Brent Zorgdrager leads Mennonite Savings and Credit Union

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

KITCHENER, ONT.

Brent Zorgdrager's surname translates from Dutch to English as "sorrow carrier or caregiver," an apt description of the new chief executive officer of Mennonite and Savings Credit Union.

Zorgdrager had been an assistant vice-president and CFO of group retirement savings in the Canadian division of a large insurance company before coming to the credit union as its chief financial officer in 2006.

Zorgdrager builds his key beliefs of integrity, compassion and responsible stewardship on a Christian core centred in a relationship with Jesus Christ. These values must be lived out as an example to his children and others around him in peace-making and social justice.

He believes he learned much from his former insurance job, including that he wanted to "be an encourager of my team," a "servant leader." But he wanted his next employer to be a place where his faith and values would be more aligned with his work. Now overseeing the eight branches, 135 employees and more than \$750 million in assets for the 17,000 members of the faith-based credit union is a responsibility he takes seriously.

Before he made the move to the credit union, he had already served on its council of members and board of directors, as well as on the board of Meritas Mutual Funds, which offers socially responsible investment opportunities that specifically incorporate Mennonite values.

"I knew about as much as I could as an outsider before becoming an employee as you could, to try and assess an organization," he says of his decision to seek employment with the credit union, after he

found the increasing time demands for work at the insurance company were leaving less time for his family.

He and his wife Nancy have been credit union members since 1985, when they joined Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church. They are now members of Glencairn Mennonite Brethren Church, also in Kitchener.

Zorgdrager grew up in the area and received his bachelor of business administration degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont. He subsequently also qualified as a chartered accountant, something which he says "has been foundational to my technical and leadership qualifications and development."

One of the first moves of which he was a part as new CEO was the change from a "closed" membership charter—one had to be a member of a Mennonite, Brethren or Amish congregation—to a more open and invitational charter. Prospective members are now told what the institution stands for, including the seven "shared convictions" now being used by Mennonite World Conference. Before joining, people are invited to affirm these convictions.

"This has raised our obviousness as to our faith, and has raised the level of discussion across the institution and the awareness of the staff of what we do and why we do it.," Zorgdrager says. "We are very pleased that our staff have embraced this. . . . While some potential members have chosen to not join, as this was different from what they expected, overwhelmingly potential members from a variety of church conferences have readily supported what we stand for and enthusiastically joined us. . . . The things that members



Like most CEOs, Brent Zorgdrager finds his desk at the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union head office in Kitchener, Ont., filled with work.

feared, we have found the exact opposite; in fact, we have so much discussion about [faith issues] now at so many levels and in so many places."

Zorgdrager's involvement in Meritas Mutual Funds is another place where he sees the credit union providing members with a way of matching their money and investments with their faith. He wants people to be thinking not only about the financial return on their investments, but also about the social consequences of where they invest their money.

His three children, aged 14, 17 and 20, prompt Zorgdrager and his wife to wonder how they will communicate their values of community and mutuality to future generations. His own move to working at the credit union was for him a move from focusing only on "me" to focusing on a community and caring for the larger world. This is both a challenge and an opportunity, he admits. ☸

OBITUARY

Church loses theologian who loved it

A. James Reimer

Aug. 10, 1942 – Aug. 28, 2010

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

A. James (Jim) Reimer died on Aug. 28, just two days after the final concert of his beloved bluegrass gospel quartet, Five on the Floor.

The concert epitomized Reimer's love for God, music and the church; it was a fundraiser for the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, which Reimer was instrumental in founding in 1991. He served as director of the centre that helps prepare teachers and theologians to train pastors and teachers in churches and educational institutions.

As friend and colleague Tom Yoder Neufeld said in the funeral sermon, "Jim loved the academy . . . he loved the church even more."

One of Reimer's major theological projects was to connect Mennonite theology to that of the larger Christian world, with a re-appreciation of the great creeds that Anabaptist theology has often connected with the fall of the church under Constantine. Neufeld noted that Reimer's deep faith in God's grace and love made it possible for him to dialogue with others. That dialogue took him to East Germany in the 1970s and '80s, and made him a central participant in the Shi'a Muslim-Mennonite Christian dialogues of the past decade.

Born in Altona, Man., he grew up in the Bergthaler Mennonite Church, now part of Mennonite Church Canada. He married Margaret Loewen in 1968 and they had three children: Christina, Thomas and Micah. His education took him to Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the University of Manitoba. He spent a year at Union Theological



Reimer

Seminary in New York, and completed his graduate degrees at the Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto. He began teaching at Conrad Grebel College in 1978 and retired from Conrad Grebel University College in 2008 with the title of "distinguished professor emeritus."

His loving relationship with Margaret was mentioned often, described as one of balance between the more mercurial Jim and the matter-of-fact Margaret.

Each of his children spoke with passion and love, describing their father as one who had loved and cared for them through their whole lives, taking time for them in the midst of a full academic life. His last words had been to ask his daughter if she was still working on her thesis.

The second last song at the Aug. 28 Five on the Floor concert was "Who Will Sing For Me When I'm Gone?", which Reimer did not join in on.

At the funeral both bluegrass gospel and the closing chorale of Bach's *St. John Passion* were sung for this complex man who loved both his fellow human beings and God deeply. ✎

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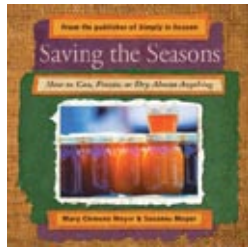
Recovering a tradition of preserving food

Saving the Seasons *an easy-to-use guide for those who want to preserve their own food but don't know how*

By JOHN LONGHURST

Herald Press Release

Not that long ago, many people knew how to preserve food. Information about canning, freezing and drying was passed down from generation to generation. But that's not the case today, say Susanna Meyer and Mary Clemens Meyer, co-authors



of *Saving the Seasons: How to Can, Freeze or Dry Almost Anything*, a new book from Herald Press.

"Many younger people today want to preserve food, but don't know how to do it," says Susanna. "Maybe their grandmother canned, or their mother used to, but that generational knowledge hasn't been passed down."

"Many families no longer have a tradition of preserving food," adds Mary, who is also Susanna's mother. "They have not learned what the more rural population of a century ago knew about how to pick, prepare and process food to keep for the future."

Passing on tips and ideas for preserving food was one reason why the two decided to create *Saving the Seasons*.

"We wanted to provide a clear and easy-to-use guide for those who want to preserve their own food, but don't know how," says Susanna, who directs agricultural production at Grow Pittsburgh, a non-profit organization that produces food in the "City of Brotherly Love" and helps people create new gardens.

"It's especially helpful for those without a farming or gardening tradition," adds Mary, who, along with her husband, grows certified organic vegetables and fruit in Fresno,

Ohio. "It tells the best way to preserve a certain food and exactly how to do it."

The two note that the book also comes along at a time when more people are expressing an interest in eating locally grown and seasonal food.

"More people care about where their food comes from," says Mary. "They want to know who grew it and under what conditions. The easiest way to get those answers is to grow food yourself or buy direct from the grower."

"People are growing more interested in issues like food safety, gardening and supporting local farmers," Susanna adds, noting that tighter household budgets also play a part in decisions to preserve food.

They both think that *Saving the Seasons* will be of particular interest to those who bought *Simply in Season*, a cookbook from Herald Press that celebrates cooking and eating locally grown seasonal food.

"One of the challenges of cooking seasonally for many in the U.S. and Canada is not having the food you need when it is out of season," Susanna says. "Preserving food while it's in season is a great way to make sure you have it later in the year."

"We include information about when produce is in season, and the best way to preserve each item," adds Mary. "Learning to preserve your own food makes living seasonally a year-round possibility, not just a one-season experience."

The book also grows out of their faith. "Being a Christian to me means caring for God's earth and learning from the created

/// Briefly noted

Herald Press e-books now available

There's a naked Anabaptist on Kindle! Not only that, so are other Herald Press books such as *Emma*, *Isaiah*, *Ruth*, *Jonah* and *Esther*. Altogether, 33 top-selling Herald Press books are available on Amazon's electronic book reader, including *The Naked Anabaptist*. Twenty-three other titles are in the process of being converted. "The world of books is changing quickly, and people want to choose from multiple formats," says Amy Gingerich, editorial director for Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN). "They want the flexibility of reading a paper copy or downloading a book whenever they want." Herald Press titles are presently only available electronically on Kindle, but will also be offered in other formats. In addition to e-books, Herald Press also offers a number of titles in print-on-demand (POD) format, which allows it to publish single copies of books as they are ordered. "POD allows books to be published that are important to our constituents, but for which we anticipate low sales," says Terry Graber, who directs production for MPN. "It also allows books to be kept in print that would otherwise be declared out of print due to low sales." A list of Herald Press titles available on Kindle can be found at heraldpress.com/e-books.

—Herald Press Release

world," says Mary. "The process of planting, weeding, waiting and then finally harvesting, preserving and eating, helps me feel that I am a participant in God's creation, not just a bystander."

"Growing up Mennonite, I learned that I was responsible to care for my own health and the health of the environment and people around me," adds Susanna. "Growing and preserving my own food helps me live out these values."

Susanna hopes *Saving the Seasons* will "inspire people who might otherwise think they can't preserve their own food." //

building bridges

a special report from MCEC

by Lisa Williams, MCEC



building community

Chin Christian Church

According to Wikipedia, a bridge is a structure built to span a physical obstacle for the purpose of providing passage over that obstacle. We often build bridges within our society from one direction – helping those who are in need. The challenge comes when we move from asking how we might help someone to asking how we might be in relationship together.

Throughout the following stories, you will discover examples of two-way bridge building. Where are the opportunities in your congregation and in your life for two-way bridge building?

Pastor Jehu Lian left his congregation in Chin State of Western Burma (Myanmar) and immigrated to Canada where he became pastor of Chin Christian Church in Kitchener, ON.

As the Kitchener community grew, they found that they were unable to meet the financial expectations of renting a facility. When First Hmong Mennonite Church became aware of this, they immediately offered their building to them without hesitation. First Hmong MC was able to assist the Chin community in the same way they had received assistance many years earlier when they were newcomers to Canada.

Chin Christian Church continues to explore what it means to be Mennonite. They have watched those around them. When a village in the Chin State was destroyed by fire, Chin Christian Church collected money to send back home. "We learned that from Mennonites

– helping our neighbours," Jehu states with a smile.

Jehu has a dream that all the members of Chin Christian Church would be able to provide for their families. There are skilled people in Chin Christian Church who are unemployed because of communication barriers.

He has noticed that there are many business people in the Mennonite denomination.

"Is there a way to connect people in my congregation with their brothers and sisters in MCEC?" Jehu asks. "The benefit would be mutual – the employer would have a skilled worker and the worker would be able to support their family without worry. It just takes someone willing to work with someone who may not be able to speak English."

Brian Bauman, MCEC Mission Minister, expounds, "There may be someone out there who can provide that opportunity. We see articles in the media on a regular occurrence where immigrants are well educated, but are not able to get meaningful work anywhere near to their expertise."

In response to Pastor Jehu's dream, MCEC has developed a new section on their website entitled *People Helping People*. For more information on how to support or connect with this ministry, please visit their profile. Look for *People Helping People* at www.mcec.ca.

Is there a way to connect with brothers and sisters in MCEC?

Pastor Jehu - a man with a dream for the Chin people in Kitchener.



PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT

building relationships

The Gathering Church

“Are you getting the space?”
He asked with great interest.
“Will we be able to visit you now?”

A young boy in the south end of Kitchener, ON asked these questions one Tuesday evening to Catherine Gitzel, a pastor at The Gathering Church. *Tuesday's in the Park*, an ongoing venture of The Gathering, has been a hit with the kids in the community as volunteers provide opportunities for the neighbourhood kids - some nights up to 90 kids - to play games, mingle, and just have fun.

The Gathering Church has been building bridges into the community since 2005. They are self described as a place for people who don't like “church,” and those who do, to experience God at work in their own lives. They work at creating a safe place for people to explore questions of faith.

Most recently, they have rented part of a building in a strip mall for a community space, as well as for their offices. It is located directly across the street from where they gather for worship at WT Townshend School in Kitchener, ON.

“We continually are asking how we might engage the community around us. A dedicated space in the community means that a lot more visits and connections can take place.” lead pastor Jim Loepp Thiessen told me. “We discover who we truly are when we engage the world that God has called us to serve - how we live the gospel of Jesus in the place where God has called us to



The Gathering Church: Providing opportunities for the neighbourhood to play soccer, mingle, and just have fun!

‘move and live and have our being.’”

This fall, they look forward to being able to offer youth programs, ESL conversation classes, Mom and Tot's drop-in, and after school programming.

Catherine Gitzel says, “Up until now we have parachuted into the neighbourhood - arriving and then packing up and leaving. The beauty of this is that we are very much known in the neighbourhood. Having this space allows us to be present all the time. We can say ‘Come on in for a coffee’ and the community can ask us to support them in a particular area.”

For more information on how to support this ministry, please visit the *People Helping People* section of the MCEC website at www.mcec.ca.

building support

Growing in Faith Together

Conversations between MCEC pastors in the GiFT program have been encouraging for organizers and participants alike. Growing in Faith Together, GiFT, was developed in 2009 as a year-long exchange program pairing leaders from established, traditional congregations with leaders from newer immigrant congregations. They will meet together for intensive worship and study, sharing together from their own cultural perspectives.

Jehu Lian, pastor at Chin Christian Church in Kitchener, shares, “GiFT has been good for me. It has been a little difficult as I cannot understand it all or express exactly what I want to say, but this is my first time to have worship and make good friends with white people.”

GiFT is a leadership formation program sponsored by MCEC. For more information, contact the MCEC office at mcec@mcec.ca.



MCEC
4489 King St. E.
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
www.mcec.ca

litgo

Calendar

British Columbia

- Oct. 4-6:** Pastor/Spouse Retreat at Camp Squeah.
- Oct. 15-17:** MC B.C. Women's Retreat at Camp Squeah. Featured topic: Women's health issues with a focus on breast cancer. Speaker: Feather Janz, a two-time breast cancer survivor. Concert by Lisa Adrienne.
- Oct. 23:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. annual fundraising banquet, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 6 p.m.
- Nov. 19-21:** Senior Youth Impact Retreat at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

- 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.
- Nov. 14:** Cowboy Church at Trinity Mennonite Church, near DeWinton/Calgary. Join Doris Daley and other friends and guests for western-style

worship, cowboy poetry, music and yodelling; at 11 a.m.

Saskatchewan

- Oct. 15-16:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat at Shekinah. Theme: Worshipping God using our senses.
- Oct. 22:** Pastors' gathering.
- Oct. 23:** Equipping Day, Osler Mennonite Church.

Manitoba

- Oct. 2:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising cyclathon.
- Oct. 2:** Coffeehouse fundraiser for InterMennonite Chaplaincy Association at Fort Garry EMC Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m. Featured artists TBA.
- 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:** 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.
- Nov. 1:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at Westgate, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 18:** Evening of the Arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 10, 11:** DIVE—a short intensive retreat for serious senior high students—at Camp Assiniboia; 7 p.m. (10), 3 p.m. (11). For more information, call MC Manitoba Youth Leadership Ministries at 204-896-1616.
- Nov. 27:** Volleyball Classic in Steinbach. Bus trip offered from Winkler and Winnipeg. For more information, call MC Manitoba Youth Leadership Ministries at 204-896-1616.
- Dec. 6:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

- Sept. 25, 26:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Durufle's *Requiem* and Dvorak's *Mass in D*; (25) First United Church, Waterloo, 7:30 p.m.; (26) Central Presbyterian Church, Cambridge, 3 p.m. Free concerts.
- Sept. 27:** Fall seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Theme: "The role of congregations in the ministry of our seniors." Speakers: Gloria Dirks and Nancy Mann. For more information, call 519-625-8602.
- 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. 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. 24:** Pax Christi Chorale presents "Fauré Requiem & S.S. Wesley Anniversary" with guest conductor Stéphane Potvin at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto at 3 p.m.
- 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.
- Until Nov. 10:** "Willow, Ash and Rye: Traditional Basketry Revisited" exhibit, at Joseph Schneider Haus museum, Kitchener, featuring the work of folk artist-in-residence Wendy Durfey. For more information, call Susan Burke at 519-742-7752.
- Nov. 13, 14:** DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Vanishing Point: Music for choir, organ and saxophone," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. (13), 3 p.m. (14). For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapo-chamberchoir.ca.
- Nov. 20:** Annual handicraft sale at Fairview Mennonite Home auditorium, Cambridge. Crafts, decorations, gifts, quilts, woodworking, and much more. Tea room and lunch available. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Nov. 20:** Grand Philharmonic Chamber Choir presents "Music of the North," at First United Church, Waterloo. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.
- Dec. 4, 5:** Pax Christi Chorale presents Bach's "Christmas Oratorio I, VI & Cantata 140," "Wachet Auf," Carols and Motets with guest conductor Howard Dyck at 7:30 (4) and 3 p.m. (5).
- Dec. 11:** Second annual *The Children's Messiah* designed for the younger crowd with Pax Christi Chorale and Gallery Choir of the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene at Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, Toronto, 4-5 p.m.
- Dec. 11:** Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Handel's *Messiah* with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, at

UpComing

Dutch Mennonites set to celebrate historic events in 2011

Dutch Mennonites will commemorate several important historical events in 2011:

- The 450th anniversary of the death of Menno Simons in 1561;
- The 275th anniversary of the founding of the Mennonite Seminary in Amsterdam in 1735;
- The 200th anniversary of the founding of the Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit (ADS), the conference of all Dutch Mennonite congregations, in 1811; and
- The centennial of the beginning of ministry of the first female academically trained pastor, Anne Zernike, in Bovenknijpe.

It is the aim of Dutch Mennonites not to look back to a glorious past in 2011, but to look forward and tell to each other and outsiders: here we are, we want to continue a role in our society in the next decades. An exhibition of the work of Jan Luyken, who illustrated the *Martyrs Mirror*, will be held in Teylers Museum in Haarlem, one of the oldest museums in Europe. The schedule of events—which is still extending—can be found at the website of the Mennonite Church in the Netherlands: doopsgezind.nl. For more information, contact Henk Stenvers, secretary of the ADS, by e-mail at h.w.stenvers@ads.nl. —Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit Release

Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

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.

Plan to Attend

MENNONITES, MELANCHOLY AND MENTAL HEALTH

A History Conference
October 14-16, 2010

Convocation Hall, University of Winnipeg

- Melancholia in Literature
- Anabaptists & Russia
- Old Order Groups
- Russlaender and War
- Mennonite Practitioners
- Diagnosing Patients
- Children & Mental Health
- Eden Mental Health

Free Attendance - Registration On-site

FULL DETAILS AT:

<http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/>

HOST:

Chair in Mennonite Studies

Classifieds

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.

Announcement

Christian/Veronica Steinman(n) Reunion on Sunday, Oct. 17, 2010, at Shakespeare Optimist Hall, Shakespeare, Ont. Potluck at 1 p.m. (Refreshments provided, bring plates/cutlery/cups, memorabilia welcome).

Employment Opportunities

STORE MANAGER

Ten Thousand Villages Store in Brandon, Man., is looking for a store manager. The candidate should have a knowledge and commitment to the mission of Ten Thousand Villages, alternative/fair trade, and Mennonite Central Committee and its work globally. Experience in retail sales is required. Please submit resume to hlepp@wcgwave.ca.

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

LEAD PASTOR

Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask., is inviting applications for a full-time Lead Pastor starting fall 2010 to work in a pastoral team setting with an Associate Pastor for Youth and a Hispanic Pastor. We seek a Lead Pastor who has a joyful desire to preach, teach and provide spiritual counsel and mentorship. MRMC is made up of varied age groups, occupations and cultural backgrounds set in a growing city. We are an Anabaptist congregation following the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* with a desire to serve and grow. Congregational information is available through MC Saskatchewan, Area Church Minister: jerry@mcsk.ca. Inquiries can be forwarded to Jerry Buhler at MC Saskatchewan or Mary-Lou Dyck, MRMC Pastoral Search Committee: mfd@sasktel.net.

HALF-TIME PASTOR

Kingsfield is searching out a half-time Pastor to join our team to be on mission with the church in the community of Clinton, Ont. This position is to provide leadership of pastoral and mission-shaped integrity and direction of Kingsfield-Clinton and to share unique leadership qualities with Kingsfield as a whole. Kingsfield-Clinton is a home-based church established almost 3 years ago. The applicant should have a dynamic, vibrant and mature personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ and have demonstrated gifts in leadership, areas related to a church plant setting (i.e. developing a missional presence in the culture), teaching, visioning and disciple-making.

Please apply before Monday, Oct. 4, 2010. For a full job description, or to submit your resume, please contact: Lead Pastor, Tim Doherty, Kingsfield, 37818 Zurich-Hensall Rd., Zurich, ON N0M 2T0, or by e-mail: tim@kingsfieldcommon.ca.

www.kingsfieldcommon.ca

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Oct. 18	Oct. 5
	<i>Focus on Travel</i>
Nov. 1	Oct. 19
	<i>Focus on Books & Resources</i>
Nov. 15	Nov. 2
	<i>Focus on Music</i>

Blanketing the

world with love



Clockwise from top: Jeanne-Mance Bolduc, Manon Desjardins, Lucy Beauchemin, Marie Marthe St. Cyr and Johanne Rochon—all members of Église Chrétienne de Saint-Eustache Church, where the Mennonite Central Committee Quebec material resources centre is located—pose with some of the blankets they have made for MCC relief efforts around the world. “It gives me a lot of joy to do this,” says Desjardins. “Maybe someday I will work in an orphanage, but for now I’m touching a little part of my dream [with the blankets].”

MCC PHOTOS BY NINA LINTON, LEFT;
AND GLADYS TERICHOW, BELOW



Retired farmer Cornelius Harder of Niverville, Man., has made more than 2,000 blankets for Mennonite Central Committee since 1994. “After retirement, I couldn’t sit around,” he says. “I still can’t.” His wife had spent countless hours making items for MCC’s newborn kits and that inspired him to buy a sewing machine for \$15 from their daughter-in-law and start making blankets himself, says Harder, who is well into his 90s. When he isn’t sewing, he enjoys spending time with his family, which includes one great-great-grandchild.