

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

August 22, 2011

Volume 15 Number 16

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strikes ...

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## EDITORIAL

# A new Mennonite archetype

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

I have never met César García, but I am impressed with his story as told by Meetinghouse freelancer Kathy Heinrichs Wiest on page 4. García is the general secretary-elect of Mennonite World Conference.

He seems to have a special narrative, one which might make him the new Mennonite archetype for the 21st century. He just might have the special leadership gifts and personal charisma to bring the 1.6 million worldwide members out of whatever makes us, at times, religiously provincial, sometimes arrogant and stubborn, sometimes divisive and mean-spirited, but is at other times full of grace, vision and hope.

First, he is from Colombia, a small country in the Global South which was not a part of the Mennonite colonization in South America. There are fewer than 3,000 souls who identify themselves as Anabaptists there, freeing them from some of the provincialism European Mennonite immigrants brought with them to other parts of the continent.

Because of this, García presumably has a fresh set of eyes to envision and help shape what the global church should look like in the next 25 years. More culturally free to move easily among the diverse groups of global Mennonites, he says it well when declaring a calling "to eliminate suspicions," but rather "show

appreciation and respect for differences."

Second, his personal journey of faith is not conventional in any way, including some teen years of rejecting God and the church. It was out of his disillusionment with existentialism and other philosophies that he found a spiritual home in Anabaptism. This prepares him well for identifying with young people who often find themselves in a stifling environment in their home congregations where tradition and a refusal to change sometimes restricts new forms of spirituality.

Third, he has honed his communication skills by working for six years at a Christian radio station where he interacted with Christian leaders from charismatic, evangelical and mainline denominations. This kind of religious "cosmopolitanism" should give him the language breadth he needs to speak to a wide range of groups and bring them into the big tent of Anabaptism.

With these unique gifts, García comes to the global Mennonite church scene at a time of shifting winds. First off, North American and European Mennonites are not happy that they are no longer in the majority, having to give up this birthright to the Global East and Global South because of their increasingly large numbers.

Africa, in fact, is now the leading continent with nearly 600,000 Mennonites,

while North America comes in second at less than 525,000. Asian and Pacific countries now number about 265,000 members. Despite our wealth and power, we Canadians and Americans are not growing churches in numbers commensurate with our historic place of influence in shaping the Mennonite narrative and ethos.

Difficult as it is to face this reality, owning up to it we must. We resist, at our own peril, not only limiting the release of spiritual energy and vision that this shift is bringing, but risking our own survival as a people of God with an enduring set of core beliefs of peace, justice, community and discipleship that we have so earnestly and carefully cultivated over the past 500 years.

This set of beliefs is what is attracting many to our circle in recent years, including a new Anabaptist movement in the United Kingdom and beyond through the influence of theologians and authors like Stuart Murray.

What is emerging will not please all of us, particularly those with well-defined spiritual disciplines rooted in historically well-known places which have deeply held cultural expressions mixed in with our beliefs. Those of us tending to resist the changes will have to lighten up and feel the wind with joy, rather than sorrow. Or to use Nelson Kraybill's apocalyptic metaphor in his recent Mennonite Church Canada assembly speech: "Discover where the river is flowing."

García, forming his identity out of spiritual struggle, learning to speak a "global" language and hearing the call to unify a sometimes divided church body, is the archetype of a "new" Mennonite, coming to the kingdom for such a time as this.

And why not? Anabaptism is only one brand, one part of the body of Christ that God continues to shape in our troubled world. Will we get on board?



## ABOUT THE COVER:

Until Sept. 16, donations to the East Africa food crisis through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will be matched four-to-one through a core funding agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency as well by a special one-to-one contribution from the federal government. See pages 18, 19 and 29 for stories on famine relief efforts by the Foodgrains Bank and MCC.

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE CANADA

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# Heeding the call

*Mennonite World Conference general secretary-elect César García  
reflects on his journey and his vision*

BY KATHY HEINRICHS WIEST

FOR MEETINGHOUSE



*Members of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) executive committee, MWC general council commissions, and Young Anabaptists committee pray for César García, kneeling, following his appointment as general secretary-elect at their 2011 meetings in Taipei, Taiwan, in May.*

**A**s one amateur Mennonite historian likes to point out, the only real Mennonite name is Menno Simons. From there on down through history, the rest of the family names are just “add-ons.” But after a series of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) general secretaries named Dyck (1961-73), Kraybill (1973-90) and Miller (1990-2011), the García name stands out as an historically recent addition to the Anabaptist family.

César García’s personal story with the Mennonite family began in Bogotá, Colombia, when his mother took him and his sister to several congregations in search of a new church home. Eleven-year-old César chose Iglesia Hermanos Menonitas Dios es Amor (God is Love Mennonite Brethren Church) as the place they would settle.

That choice was the first step on a continuing journey for García, who has come to treasure Anabaptist theology and history, and has given his life to scholarship, to mission and to shaping the church from an Anabaptist perspective.

A drive to understand Scripture and have a reasoned faith has characterized García’s walk since what he calls his “first conversion” at 19. After some teen years rejecting God and the church, García found himself depressed and unfulfilled by the existentialism and other philosophies he was pursuing. “The sense of vacuum was huge,” he recalls.

Under pressure from his mother to come back to church, García attended a Dios es Amor youth meeting, where he was touched by the speaker’s assertion: “God doesn’t see us as a problem, but as a possibility in his hands.” Half-believing that he was just “talking to the walls,” García told God that he wanted to experience that hope.

“The next day my life was different,” he says. “I decided to read the Bible, come back to church and start looking for responses to my atheistic arguments.” Not satisfied with a personal emotional



PHOTOS BY BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER



*César García, at the podium, greets the Sung-Chiang Mennonite congregation in Taipei, Taiwan, in May. To his right are outgoing MWC general secretary Larry Miller, and Joshua Chang, Sung-Chiang pastor and former MWC general council delegate.*

experience, he also began a lifelong pursuit of theological study, mission and church ministry.

García's love for learning has brought him into contact with many theological traditions. As a child attending private Catholic school, he already found himself bringing what he learned into discussions with his teachers. "Of course I lost the argument every time," he says with a smile, "but it pushed me in my convictions."

García worked for six years at a Christian radio station, where he interacted with Christian leaders from charismatic, evangelical and mainline denominations. "It was a time of growing theologically," he says of those years teaching and counselling in his radio ministry and serving as youth pastor and elder at Dios es Amor.

More formal education at Seminario Bíblico de Colombia, an interdenominational seminary in Medellín, earned him a bachelor of theology and Bible degree with an emphasis on missiology, and gave him the tools for study of the Bible. Well-versed in Protestant theology, García was now ready for his "second conversion," this time to Anabaptism.

Juan Martínez, then president of the Seminario Anabautista Latinoamericano (Semilla) in Guatemala, challenged

García to complete his education by studying Anabaptism. When García and his wife Sandra Báez moved back to Bogotá for church ministry, he took up the challenge, starting with John Driver's book, *Eclesiología Radical*. "It was amazing," he says, "like candy for a child."

A year later, the couple were commissioned as church planters in Bogotá and seized the opportunity to weave their newfound theology into every aspect

understanding of Anabaptist theology. One of them, Mark Baker, tells a story of how García applied the theology in his role as president of the Colombian MB Conference. At a national convention a delegate vote on a contentious issue barely passed the required 80 percent approval. García was not content with the spirit of the debate or with the narrow margin of approval. He invited the delegates who had voted "no" to voice their

*'I have a calling for eliminating suspicions, and rather showing appreciation and respect for differences. There are differences, but that doesn't mean we have to fragment. The body of Christ is a living organism that demands diversity, but also requires love and unity.'*

*(César García, MWC general secretary-elect)*

of Iglesia Hermanos Menonitas Torre Fuerte (Strong Tower MB Church). "I was excited about participative community, restorative discipline, servant leadership and communal hermeneutic," he says. "It was so clear that I wanted that kind of values for our new church." The spirit of community drew new believers, and the church grew and flourished.

García credits visiting teachers with helping Colombian pastors gain a deeper

concerns with conference leaders and encouraged everyone to reflect, pray and be ready for a new vote the next day. The result was a positive vote of 94 percent, and a strengthened sense of trust and confidence among the conferees.

As much as he values the ideas and principles of Anabaptism, García also cherishes his relationships in the global Anabaptist community. Fellow leaders in Portugal and Venezuela are now counted

among his closest friends because of their work together in the International Community of Mennonite Brethren.

Other new friendships have developed among MB, Brethren in Christ and Mennonite church leaders in Colombia. After periods of little interaction or cooperation between the three denominations, he says, “Mennonite Central Committee helped us to realize that in reality we were not so different and that many of the suspicions between us were only that.”

“I have a calling for eliminating suspicions, and rather showing appreciation and respect for differences,” he adds. “There are differences, but that doesn’t mean we have to fragment. The body of Christ is a living organism that demands diversity, but also requires love and unity.”

One of the bridges García is determined to strengthen is the one between people with a long Mennonite pedigree and those who have come to Anabaptist faith more recently. At the same time, he knows from experience the value of coming to Anabaptist faith by conviction, rather than heritage. “It gives the opportunity to have a passion—to fall in love with the tradition,” he says. “We need to value Anabaptism by conviction, but we also need to maintain our historical tradition, and to learn that those things are related, and not opposed,” he asserts. “We are thirsty for identity. In Anabaptism, we find a body that offers that, not just theologically, but also historically.”

García also wants to strengthen the ability of every national body in MWC to find and share its own cultural expression of Anabaptism. “MWC is relevant as ethnic churches bring our own identity and theology contextualized, instead of just copying Western patterns,” he explains. “Enrichment happens when every church brings that kind of value.”

When asked what he values about MWC, García pauses, taking delight in mentally scanning the faces that would be around the table at their meetings. “I value the people who are there,” he responds. “Each one is like a treasure. They bring insights from their different contexts, different gifts, different ways of seeing life and church.”

PHOTO BY TANGIE SHEETS



*Pictured from left to right are MWC general secretary-elect César García, his daughters María and Paula, and wife Sandra Báez.*

A year and a half ago, MWC search committee facilitator Bert Lobe of Canada took García aside after a church service and asked him if he would consider being one of the candidates for MWC’s next general secretary. With typical humility, García thought he must have misunderstood the question.

As soon as he realized that the invitation was genuine, he began a discernment process, talking and praying with his wife and composing a discernment group to help them determine God’s direction. Humbly he accepted the nomination, which resulted in his selection as the first general secretary from the Global South.

Few others who know García would consider this appointment surprising. Recognizing his unique gifts of learning

and leadership, many have invested in his education and preparation for ministry, including the Colombian MB conference that sent him to complete a master’s degree at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif., two years ago.

Perhaps least surprised of all would be García’s mother, Evelia. She was 45 years old when she became pregnant with her son. The doctor advised her that, because of her age, the child was at risk. She pleaded with God for a healthy child and, like the biblical Hannah, consecrated her son to God for ministry.

With a wry smile García remembers how aggravating it had been to hear his mother recount that story during those rebellious teen years. But today he finds it reassuring—a reminder that God’s gifts and blessing have been on him from before his birth. And with this call to ministry comes God’s Spirit to guide and give strength for the task ahead.

García replaces Larry Miller at the beginning of 2012; Miller, who has served as MWC general secretary since 1990, takes on the role of secretary of the Global Christian Forum on Jan. 1, 2012. ❧

*Kathy Heinrichs Wiest is a writer from Kingsburg, Calif. This article was commissioned by Meetinghouse, a consortium of Anabaptist publications.*

### /// For discussion

1. Does your congregation have members with a long Mennonite pedigree, or have they come to the Anabaptist faith more recently? What gifts do each of these groups bring to the worldwide Mennonite church? Do you agree with César García that we need to strengthen the bridges between these two groups?
2. García helped plant a new church in Bogotá, Colombia, where he was excited to aim for “participative community, restorative discipline, servant leadership and communal hermeneutic.” What do you think he means with these phrases? Do you agree that they are important Anabaptist values?
3. Why is it important to have someone from the Global South as the next general secretary for Mennonite World Conference (MWC)? How much disparity and struggle is there between Mennonites from the Global North and the Global South?
4. García says that he “cherishes relationships in the global Anabaptist community.” What dreams or visions do you have for MWC? Will you participate in the MWC assemblies in Harrisburg, Pa., in 2015 or in Indonesia in 2021? How important is it to have a worldwide Mennonite organization?

## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

*We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an 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. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. 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. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.*

✉ **Homosexuality: Not what God intended**

**RE: SEXUAL INCLUSIVITY** motion to be presented at national assembly," May 30, page 15.

I realize that the matter of sexual inclusivity within the Mennonite church has likely "crossed the Rubicon," and there will be no turning back.

The church community has constitutions, statements of faith and practice, and doctrinal statements that basically state that heterosexual practice within marriage is the only approved behaviour.

But slowly over the years, within colleges and universities, including the schools that are supported by the Mennonite community of faith, there has developed a steady, clear and determined drive by groups such as Harmony to achieve the following goal: that homosexual orientation and practice is honorable, blessed by God and equal to heterosexual orientation and practice.

Will they achieve this? Yes, I believe they will, at least on paper. Will this result in a major split in the Mennonite church community? Only time will tell.

Many Bible scholars have stated that Jesus is silent on the subject of homosexuality. I believe that the Bible is very clear about what is divinely approved sexual behaviour. Genesis 2:18-25 describes very clearly what God's will is for sexual companionship for the human race. Jesus confirmed this again when he stated in Matthew 19: 1-11: "*In the beginning God created them male and female.*"

I believe there are too many teachers telling people what they want to hear on the subject of homosexuality. Sowing the seeds of approval of homosexuality

through teaching will only produce a crop of hard hearts and lean souls.

In the Mennonite church today the importance of a person's gifts in the area of leadership, music, finances or social skills are considered most important, while their sexual orientation is of minor importance. Homosexuality (practising or non practising) is low on the list of concerns that would disqualify a person for church membership and leadership.

And people who accept only heterosexuality often change their convictions on this topic when someone within their family or local church community comes out as homosexual. Then their convictions are put to the test. The struggle is profound.

In conclusion, I believe that, according to Scripture, homosexuality is not what God, the divine architect of creation, intended for his creation.

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL, QUE.

✉ **Will the world see Christians walking the 'narrow path'?**

**RE: "OTHERS ARE** watching closely" column by Willard Metzger, May 30, page 8.

Yes, the world is watching.

Will Christians follow the narrow path that Jesus talked of? Or will Christians flip-flop, be politically correct and save the environment while trying to build peace? What did Jesus mean in Matthew 10:34 when he said, "*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword?*"

What is the truth? Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. The truth shall set the prisoner free from prisons of hatred, anger, addictions and low self-esteem. Should we not be concerned about people's souls and tell them where real inner peace can be found by preaching the life-giving hope and salvation found only in Jesus Christ? Read the books of John and Romans.

AGATHA REMPEL, STEINBACH, MAN.

✉ **Church needs to talk about sexuality**

**I ACCOMPANIED THE** youth from Floradale Mennonite Church to the Mennonite Church U.S.A. assembly in Pittsburgh, Pa., and it was incredible in every way. The music, speakers, seminars, events and even the food were great and it all ran without a hitch. All except one thing: there were no seminars for the youth on the topic of sex and sexuality.

We told our youth that they needed to go to a minimum of three seminars. They were looking for



seminars that interested them and were unable to find any that dealt with sexuality although sex seminars have been the most popular with youth for the past four or five conferences. The only seminars on sexuality were for youth leaders. I attended one led by Keith Graber Miller called "Creating a faithful sexual counterculture."

Why are we not talking about sex and sexuality in our churches? God has made us as sexual beings and we should not hide it or make it out to be dirty. Sexuality involves so much more than just sexual intercourse; it deals with having skin, bodily functions, gender, puberty, pregnancy, relationships with family and friends, non-physical intimacy, etc.

After our youth pastor and I attended Graber Miller's seminar, I asked the youth if they wanted a "sex talk" and they agreed because they have so many

questions. They were very interested in what the church has to say on this topic. I found it disheartening when, after our short talk, one of the youth said, "We are taught sexual education in Grade 5. Why are we only hearing about this now in the church?"

No parent can keep topics of sexuality from their child because of the culture we live in. Sex runs rampant on TV, movies, the Internet and among youth peer groups, and these are terrible places to learn about sex and sexuality. Our culture has distorted our ideas of what sexuality is, so we need to educate kids in our homes and churches. If we start around the age of eight or 10, it will be easier to talk and there won't be as much awkwardness.

Maybe some adults need to learn more about this topic, too. Perhaps we should teach a Christian perspective on the way the reproductive organs work,

## Two gifts for our youth

ANNA REHAN

Whenever a congregation gathers to look ahead and contemplate its future, you can be sure that questions about the youth will be raised: Where are they? How can we keep them? We have all likely heard—and possibly have spoken—these concerns in various forms.

These are important matters and the church does well to keep them alive. We would also do well to move this question past the rhetorical stage and actually explore some satisfying responses.

I know that our adult concern is sincere and I know that youth also long for connection. I have sometimes felt as though I am standing in the gap between young and old, wishing I could say the magic word or push the magic button that would instil this realization into our collective understanding and build a bridge that would eliminate the gap.

I celebrate with delight the many contributions from our youth that I witness and experience. This has given my work

ongoing energy and has kept me believing in its importance. I continue to be committed to the pursuit of cultivating within our youth a love for the church.

There are two invaluable gifts that we can offer when passing on our passion for the church to our younger generations:

• **WE CAN OFFER THE READINESS TO**

individuals.

• **WE CAN OFFER AN OPENNESS TO CHANGE AND TO IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES.** Demonstration that there exists the willingness, at any age, to learn, accommodate and be shaped, is a powerful example and inspiration. Over the years I have observed many changes in trends among youth in the church and in the way youth work is approached. These will be healthier when there is thoughtful collaboration between generations, particularly if there is encouragement from adults to take risks and try new things.

I urge you to offer these simple yet profound gifts to the young people around



## FROM OUR LEADERS

**ENTER INTO RELATIONSHIPS.** Like anyone else, a young person will value the showing of respectful and sincere interest. This must be interest that extends beyond social exchanges and that holds the promise of growth, both in trust and in constancy. Young people have a particular intuitive ability to sense authenticity in adults. While it can be helpful to be somewhat informed of the cultural dynamics that youth are exposed to, this type of knowledge is very secondary to an honest and pure interest in them as

you and give yourself to the sacred vocation of being a voice and advocate for them.

My hope is for a church that is defined by deep and meaningful relationships that transcend generational obstacles, and weave a brand of unity that rises above structures and programs to embrace us all.

*Anna Rehan is Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's area church youth minister.*



contraceptives, sexually transmitted diseases and relationships.

It is time for the church to be part of the process because children are hearing about sexuality from everywhere else. They can make better choices if they are shown that sexuality is combined with their emotions, body, mind, soul and spirit. It is important to open up conversation so kids, youth and young adults can ask questions as part of a dialogue that is comfortable and nurturing.

The best way to know what the Bible has to say is to start with I Corinthians 6:15-20: *“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! . . . Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. . . . You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.”*

JARED REDEKOP, FLORADALE, ONT.

# An earthy wisdom

PHIL WAGLER

About 80 percent of Canadians are city-dwellers. Despite the expanse of our nation, slightly more than a third of us dwell in only three metropolitan areas: Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver. I live in one of them.

I grew up, however, in Hicksville. My backyard was an open field that provided the seasoned aroma of freshly spread manure. There was no cable TV, only bunny ears and Saturday night hockey games in a snowstorm. There was no Tim Horton's or Starbucks within a 30-minute drive. Without such luxuries we just went to each other's homes for Sunday dinner and coffee. Strange, I know.

Am I waxing nostalgic? Not really. Having lived and served in rural and urban Canada, I would propose that those who follow Jesus

in cities could learn a few things from their rural cousins. Not only do much of the Scriptures require an agricultural lens to bring clarity, but there is an earthy wisdom found in the “sticks” that could teach us a lot about living the Word and being the church in this ever-changing world that sends ripples through all our ponds.

So, what could the city could learn from the country?

• **FIRST, SEASONS HAPPEN.**

The push of urbanization is to never let

anything rest. Produce, produce, produce is the anxiety-inducing drive of the city. I wonder how this has caused us to misread the rhythms of life in the church?

But the country teaches that there is no production without a time of fallowness. The pace of life changes with the seasons. There are full-on times to make hay when the sun shines and necessary down times to be embraced.

• **SECOND, IT TAKES FERTILIZER TO GROW THINGS.**

No “lilac spring” aroma therapy could adequately deal with the smell wafting from the field behind the home of my childhood. It was awful. Still, we never wrote a letter to the township asking

many Christians and churches have missed amazing growth opportunities through an inability to accept the gift of fertilizer?

• **THIRD, THE WORLD IS A COLLECTION OF VILLAGES.**

One rural area I served in had these towns near each other: Dublin, Zurich and Exeter. In this small area there is a collision of Irish, Swiss and English histories. Of course, time bleeds out some differences, but in a rural context these differences are not so quickly blended or forgotten. That can become nasty or, from a missiological perspective, be a great tutor.

If we are going to reach people for Jesus, then we have to realize the cultural DNA that shapes histories and locales. People really are not metropolitan at the



## OUTSIDE THE BOX

for the establishment of a poop-patrol. Rurally, you accept that it takes fertilizer to grow things. Organic is as organic does.

Have we forgotten that the church is an organism and organisms actually require and produce fertilizer? The urban myth is that we should—without inconvenience or any bad smells—access what we need, even spiritually. When there is manure, the assumption is this church stinks and many run to the next place where the grass appears greener. I wonder how

end of the day. Our relational spheres and sense of place are more village-like than often assumed. Urban areas champion the “towns” within the city.

What might change if we'd see the opportunities of a little small-town thinking—rather than big-box marketing—in how we live out our mission with Jesus?

*Phil Wagler (phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca) lives in the town of Cloverdale, which is really Surrey, which is oft mistaken for the urban sprawl of Vancouver, B.C.*

## ✉ No need to lament a Conservative majority

**RE:** “Mennonites should lament the recent federal election results” letter, June 13, page 12.

Why should we lament? We have a government that wants to limit abortion to lifesaving of the mother. The present government also wants to outlaw euthanasia.

For letter writer Vern Ratzlaff, it is very easy to give

advice and to offer no alternatives or suggestions for remedies.

With the Liberals, we had the alternatives to bring in euthanasia with some controls and abortion with some controls.

The other option was the NDP, which wanted no controls for euthanasia and abortions were to be “on demand,” to be a free choice. Remove old people and kill the young so they don’t bring us work and trouble.

# A hard look at hunger

BY WILL BRAUN

Once again, famine plagues the headlines and swollen bellies afflict the airwaves. The Horn of Africa is hungry. Babies are dying. Statistics are swirling. And the rest of the global village, wired as it is, has pulled up a front-row seat.

Since the food crisis in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya debuted in the news last month, most of us have seen images of timid and blank-eyed starving children. Such images present a dilemma for me: Are they an accurate depiction of reality—one that evokes compassionate response—or are they invasions of dignity that turn human suffering into a numbing side show?

Susie Linfield argues that graphic images of suffering, however problematic they may be, are necessary. She is a professor at New York (N.Y.) University and a prominent commentator on photojournalism. She disagrees with the critics who say a continual stream of “atrocious photography” deadens our sensitivity to human suffering. “Far from dulling our senses, photography has been a key component in the creation of what we think of as the modern human-rights consciousness,” she wrote in the Fall 2009 issue of *Geez* magazine. Linfield admits that human sensitivity is still limited, but she argues that awareness of, and responsiveness to, global human need is greater now than it ever has been, and photography deserves some of the

credit.

Linfield quotes a human rights activist who expresses concern that images of starving African children inappropriately put “people’s bodies, their misery, their grief and their fears on display.” Linfield does not dispute that such photos are “radically discomfiting” and imperfect, but she asks, “Is there an unproblematic way to show the destruction of a person?”

She warns of a danger greater than problematic photos: “a desire not to look at the world” at all.

I find Linfield’s argument convincing, yet I am offended by the famine photos I see. I question the intent behind them. I can’t imagine myself taking such photos. And I can’t imagine a Somali father proudly pinning up a newspaper clipping of his emaciated unnamed child.

While many mainstream news outlets do not hesitate to use “famine pornography”—as it is called—you

donors to give out of a “sense of partnership” than to be “shamed into sharing.”

In addition to not using images they consider undignified, MCC communications staff try to print the names of people in the pictures they publish. They also share all materials with overseas partners as a way of increasing accountability to the people depicted in those materials. “It’s not cut and dried,” Fast says, as images are always open to interpretation. “We don’t always get it right.”

Without criticizing agencies that use more dramatic images, Fast says MCC does not need to. The organization is fortunate to have a constituency that responds generously without needing to first see disturbing photos. That said, he notes that most donors will see graphic images in the news even if MCC does not use them.

Are famine photos necessary or exploitive? Probably both, as we live in a messy world. Atrocities should not happen behind closed doors. We must be willing to look at the world. At the same



## NEW ORDER VOICE

will not find it in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) materials. “It’s in MCC’s DNA to portray people in a respectful way,” says Rick Fast, MCC Canada’s director of communications. A basic principle of MCC’s communications policy is to “affirm dignity.”

The policy says it is healthier for

time, the divinely granted dignity of each person must be ever guarded. Ultimately, we should not need to be shamed or shocked into caring.

*Will Braun is a former MCC volunteer who lives in Winnipeg, Man. He can be reached at [wbraun@inbox.com](mailto:wbraun@inbox.com).*



Is that a good solution?

Ratzlaff and especially the NDP give us no alternatives, no choices. I submit those alternatives mentioned would be a deal-breaker for me.

Democracy under the present government gives the most people their best chance for fulfilment of their hopes and dreams.

GERHARD JANZEN, PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

### ✉ Editor right to lament Conservative election victory

RE: "A POLITICAL lament" editorial, May 16, page 2, and "Editorial topics violate magazine's mission statement" letter by G. Heinrichs, June 27, page 9.

I wish to commend the editor of *Canadian Mennonite* for his lament, which I share, not only personally but because I believe it is consistent with the Anabaptist stream of theology on political issues. There is no violation of the magazine's mission statement, as the letter writer claims.

He asserts that "nothing in this editorial shares the good news of Jesus." On the contrary, Mennonites and others seeking to share the good news of Jesus witness to political leaders about social justice for the poor and marginalized, restorative justice, and reconciliation, rather than war.

The Conservative ideology reflects the opposite of what we believe strives for peace, justice and fairness. We rightly lament a political culture that uses the media to demonize and slander their opponents. We rightly lament the scapegoat of the poor and marginalized, and we cannot accept that increased Canadian militarism will solve international conflicts.

Heinrichs thanks God for Stephen Harper's support for Israel despite the horrific human rights violations committed against the Palestinians. His views reflect Christian fundamentalism that believes that anything done by God's "chosen people" is legitimate because it must be God's will.

I would urge Heinrichs to check out the Christian Peacemaker Teams' website and simply read some of the on-the-ground reports of the suffering inflicted on ordinary Palestinians.

The Conservative government's policy of unilateral support for Israel only reinforces a continuation of violence and hatred fostered by extremists on both sides. Unfortunately, if you have already decided that God condones and encourages current Israeli policies, then everything is set in stone because the Palestinians do not matter and the Harper government is right on track.

The writer ends with a predictable threat by those who unilaterally support anything that Israel does with, "Woe to those who did not support Israel." In

other words, if you do not agree with what is happening, you are damned. End of discussion, end of story.

EDGAR ROGALSKI, HAMILTON, ONT.

### ✉ Church disapproval hurt divorcee the most

RE: "WHO GETS the church . . . when a couple divorces?"; June 13, page 4.

My experience as a Mennonite pastor going through divorce was a difficult one. Although at first there were members of the church community who offered much support and love to me, my overall experience of the church is tainted by the few very vocal people who made my life very, very difficult and those who did not stand up to them.

I have kept quiet on this issue for a long time because I don't want to paint all the people in that congregation with the same brush.

There are countless people who showed such overwhelming love and support to me as I went through my divorce as well as through the process of the congregational discerning what to do with a divorced person as youth pastor.

However, it was the voices of disapproval and judgment that were heard loudest and left the most pain. Not only those voices, but the lack of support at that time from the area church.

After growing up in the church, and having a passion for the church and what the church can be, it is because of my treatment by the church that I no longer attend services.

At a time when I was mourning and grieving the loss of my marriage and the brokenness of that covenant, my church community put me through a gruelling process of discernment that ended in me leaving a job that had been a dream come true.

There were things said to me, as well as behind my back, by those in lay leadership within the congregation that have left deep wounds.

I wish I could say that my overall experience was one of finding hope and healing within the church (as stated in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and quoted in the article). But instead, I find that six years after my divorce, it is the wounds left by the church that are hardest to heal and not the ones left by my abusive ex-husband.

ANONYMOUS

*After growing up in the church, and having a passion for the church and what the church can be, it is because of my treatment by the church that I no longer attend services.*

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Baas**—Kurt Herman Erik (b. June 20, 2011), to Dave Baas and Helga Wiens, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Bergen-Braun**—Emmett Isaac (b. July 28, 2011), to Matthew Braun and Julie Bergen, Osler Mennonite, Sask., in Prince George, B.C.

**Brown**—Vivian Anne (b. July 20, 2011), to Jason and Liana Brown, St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Cox**—Trent Robert (b. June 29, 2011), to Stephen and Christina Cox, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Martens Bartel**—Felix Abram (b. July 11, 2011), to Ben and Lisa Martens Bartel, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

**Rempel**—Claire Abigail (b. June 28, 2011), to Jill and Kendall Rempel, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Wiens**—Claire Avalien (b. July 20, 2011), to Markus and Nicole Wiens, St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Will Bender, Brianna Bowman, Justin Finney, Ben Holst, Shane Kuepfer, Riley McCrea, Alex Roth**—Crosshill Mennonite, Ont., July 10, 2011.

**Maria Dirks**—Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 12, 2011.

**Sam Schellenberg**—Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., July 3, 2011.

### Marriages

**Baldwin/Enns**—Nicholas Baldwin and Christa Enns (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) in Whitefish, Montana, July 9, 2011.

**Battershill/Wiebe**—Andrea Battershill and Graham Wiebe, Jubilee Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., at Canadian

Mennonite University, Winnipeg.

**Beekman/Ropp**—Jennifer Beekman and Mark Ropp (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.) at Ingersoll Christian Reformed Church, June 4, 2011.

**Bergman/Koop**—Ben Bergman and Amara Koop, Jubilee Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., at Pine Ridge Hollow, Birds Hill, Man.

**Fisher/Kuepfer**—Mark Fisher and Lori Kuepfer, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., July 23, 2011.

**Green/Rose**—Betty Green and Cecil Rose, at East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., June 25, 2011.

**Greening/Peters**—Dylan Greening and Kyla Peters, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., July 23, 2011.

**Hanby/Harder**—Dean Hanby and Kristina Harder (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, July 23, 2011.

**Jutzi/Witzel**—Laura Jutzi and Brad Witzel at East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., June 11, 2011.

**Klassen/Shapansky**—Benno Klassen (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) and Joan Schapansky (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim, Sask., July 9, 2011.

### Deaths

**Bender**—Loretta (nee Wilker), 69 (b. Aug. 29, 1941; d. June 21, 2011), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Bergen**—Jake, 71 (b. March 10, 1940; d. July 21, 2011), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

### Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

*announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org), including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.*

## Pontius' Puddle





# MCC volunteer speaks out on Wineskins

BY GEORGE RICHERT

**R**e: Coverage of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) New Wineskins process over the past year.

I write from the point of view as someone who, along with my wife, has spent a good portion of the last 10 years on special assignments with MCC from 2002-03, as well as interim country representatives in the Middle East and former Soviet Union from 2006-09 and 2011. I was also on the board of MCC Canada from the late 1980s-99, and chair of MCC Canada and a member of MCC Binational's executive from 1993-99.

We are staunch supporters and advocates for MCC in its current formulation, but, in my opinion, the process of Wineskins was flawed from the beginning. There were a number of different levels of consultations, from international to local. But from what I have heard, the only consultation where the "structure" of MCC was discussed in detail was at the consultation that took place in the Philippines; the attendees there were church and MCC leaders and others who had an interest in altering the structure, governance and accountability of the organization.

My wife and I were at the Istanbul consultation; structure was not an agenda item there. Friends who attended the Saskatchewan consultation and former MCC workers who attended a consultation in the U.S. all stated that structure was not on the agenda. The consultations dealt mainly with MCC programming, yet the Wineskins process for the last year and a half or so has dealt mainly, or should I say exclusively, with structure.

Will Braun is, in my opinion, accurate when he said in his Nov. 29, 2010, and Feb. 21, 2011, articles that the process did not "show robust links between the grassroots consultations and the Wineskins

outcomes." In the process there has been a significant disconnect with the "pew."

Partner organizations in recipient countries who attended the international consultations were asking when they will we see a report of our discussions on MCC programming. They were not asking about structure, governance or accountability. From what we have heard and read, the recipient countries were very satisfied with MCC's programs, and the peace emphasis was very much appreciated.

Another flaw in the process was what I think is a misguided notion among MCC Canada leaders that MCC Canada

needs to administer some international programming. I simply point to the third point in John A. Lapp's article, "What has made MCC work well?" (April 18, page 6), where he writes: "Being both a Canadian and American church organization transcending the pervasiveness of national identities." However, Wineskins is dividing the world between Canada and the U.S. We will now be two MCCs administering international programs! How will this affect administrative costs?

Let me turn now to the "Readers deserve another perspective" article by Robert J. Suderman (April 18, page 4).

His first issue relates to programming. He writes that a positive response to MCC programming was not predictable by the partner organizations in recipient countries. For the thousands of us who have served with MCC over the years, or who have conducted program reviews, the positive response was entirely predictable. Three of the key priorities over the past several years have been access to water, HIV/AIDS and peace. These three

extremely important areas were given high priority by both recipient countries and MCC.

His second point relates to Mennonite identity, ownership and focus. In many countries MCC works closely with the churches of various denominations. And in those countries where religions other than Christianity are dominant, the partner organizations know of the identity of MCC. A sheik from a little village in Jordan said in a speech, "We are a peace-loving people, just like the Mennonites."

The partner organizations in recipient countries know MCC's focus and identity, and that it is an organization formed by the North American churches, and that it does not have a "mission" focus, in the sense that it does not proselytize or plant churches.

I was very much afraid of MCC moving too close to being a direct arm of the church, since this would, in my opinion, not be viewed positively in those countries where other religions are dominant. I refer readers to Lapp's point that, "MCC

## VIEWPOINT

prefers the role of bearing witness, rather than being a strategy of church or society." A part of that witness has been the emphasis on "peace" programming, and this emphasis was overwhelmingly endorsed by partner organizations, at least, at the Istanbul consultation.

Suderman's third point regarding whether MCC ownership and governance should be shared beyond North American borders was not front and centre in the Wineskins process—maybe in his task force discussions, but not in most of the consultations. I was very pleased when the Mennonite World Conference delegates expressed no interest in becoming little MCCs. Governance and ownership usually rest with those who pay the bills. ❧

*Until just recently George Richert and his wife were interim MCC representatives in Ukraine/Kazakhstan/Russia. He held off responding until their term ended, feeling it would have been inappropriate while still a volunteer with MCC.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# A vision for China

BY JEANETTE HANSON

Mennonite Church Canada

As a young seminary graduate in 1995, Timothy Zhang became pastor of the Anjing church. With few material resources, a common reality in rural church settings where most families are subsistence farmers, the Anjing church had little support to offer him.

Zhang worked in almost complete isolation from other church communities and pastors. Making decisions was difficult in his lonely walk, so he sometimes discussed issues with the foreign Mennonite teachers who lived at the college in Anjing. Those teachers—formerly working under the auspices of China Educational Exchange, now Mennonite Partners in China (MPC)—became a source of personal support for him.

By walking alongside local Christians in the Chinese congregations where they have worshipped and served, Mennonite teachers built bridges and nurtured partnerships that led to community-outreach programs and training and leadership development opportunities within the church.

“I like how they [Mennonite teachers] trust and work together with local pastors without demands and restrictions,” says Zhang. “They have been important in the development of the local church.”

As Mennonite teachers developed partnerships with various congregations,

they encouraged connections between those congregations for mutual support and resource-sharing, which led to their growth.

Zhang points to a local Sunday school program as an example. It began in 2002 with about 20 students. With MPC’s encouragement, the church connected with another congregation where Sunday school training was taking place. In 2007, four teachers from the Anjing church took part in that training. In 2008 and 2009, more teachers attended. Since then, the Sunday school program has expanded significantly, now reaching more than a hundred children from local elementary to high schools each week.

The Chinese partners have now formed a fellowship of support and sharing called China Vision. The Chinese name that was chosen means, “China pastor exchange to promote fellowship.”

“It is a real joy to see how God is working through and in this group of church leaders who challenge each other, both in their personal lives and in the ministry of their congregations, to follow Jesus,” says Todd Hanson, who presently teaches English at Sichuan Normal University in Chengdu, Sichuan, and coordinates teaching resources for other MPC teachers. “One of the pastors often phones the others and

always ends the conversation by saying, “This life is so short. We have the chance to use it to follow Jesus! What a privilege!”

Since these pastors began meeting, their focus has shifted from building their own congregations to sharing a common vision for building the kingdom of God. They say that coming together enables them to more effectively reach out into the community beyond their individual churches, drawing the larger church towards biblical ministry with active missional congregations. They have shared financial resources for building funds and lay leadership training programs, and after summer flooding in 2010 for direct church-to-church disaster relief.

Zhang attributes the Anjing congregation’s plans for a retirement home and social service centre to the encouragement of the group.

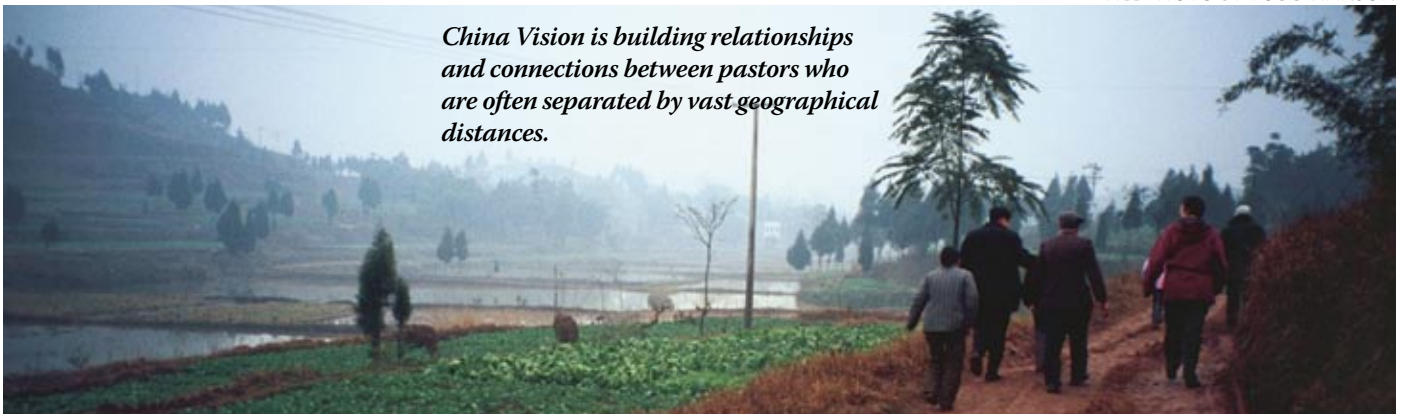
“We have spent so much energy and many resources getting people into the church, but we were only telling them half of the story,” says Pastor Sun Hongbo, a founding leader of China Vision. “Most don’t even know why they are there! We need to work together to build the kingdom of God.”

Several China Vision pastors draw inspiration from the Anabaptist vision being shared among the group. While most do not call themselves Anabaptist or Mennonite—and none have either name on their church door—they are inspired by notions of servant leadership, Christian discipleship and ethics, and the importance of walking in a community of believers.

“We are not alone,” says Zhang. “We are many churches united. All the churches can develop together.” ❧

FILE PHOTO BY TODD HANSON

*China Vision is building relationships and connections between pastors who are often separated by vast geographical distances.*





# Two wheels move the soul

BY PERRY BARTEL

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Just a few weeks into a four-month sabbatical from my congregation at Hawkesville (Ont.) Mennonite Church, the last thing I expected on a winter's day was an invitation to join a gang of Mennonite bikers for a summer retreat.

"MennoCycle?" I asked, thinking it might be another name for the Mennonite Board of Missions Out-Spokin' bicycling group I had heard of. "Sure," I thought to myself. "I cycle a fair

sessions for a segment of Mennonite culture I knew very little about.

What's a Mennonite "biker gang" look like? How might they exhibit their Anabaptist faith through the medium of leather and loud pipes? I found myself paying higher attention to the bikes rumbling down my street in hopes of finding inspiration for the devotions I would lead.

This spring, I spoke with Earl and Marie Martin, two local organizers of this bi-national event. "Had I found a bike to use

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

bit. I could lead some devotions for a cycling group coming through my area."

But it all came clear with the next question: "Do you have a motorcycle to ride with us?"

This would be the 23rd annual retreat for Mennonite bikers sponsored by the Laurelville (Pa.) Mennonite Retreat Center, scheduled for July 15 to 17 in Guelph, Ont. And I had just consented to leading three

for the retreat?" came the question. I had not. And the truth was, I hadn't even been on a motorcycle for 10 years. "I think I can find you a bike," came the reply.

Just 10 days before the event, I slid my leg over the saddle of a beautiful Kawasaki Vulcan Nomad borrowed from a previous MennoCycle participant with the words, "Take a few days to get to know the bike. I think you'll enjoy it." He was right, I did enjoy it!

When more than 80 riders rumbled their bikes into the parking lot of a Guelph hotel, I got my answer to what this kind of group looked like. From under the helmets and riding gear came the varieties of folks you might find in any Mennonite gathering: farmers and academics, trades people and professionals, homemakers and executives, ranging in age from their mid-40s to 70-plus years.

Despite some of the stereotypical kinds of clothing, this "gang" turned out to be anything but stereotypical. Worship sessions filled the conference room with a cappella hymn-singing. I enjoyed a responsive, enthusiastic group as I led sessions entitled "The pride in your ride," "The measure of your treasure," and, "The

sign of the divine on your spine."

With tentative plans made for next year's retreat in Lancaster, Pa., the Sunday morning brunch and worship service fueled riders for their return trips home to parts of Ontario and the eastern U.S. While several spoke of having traded their two-wheeled machines for three-wheelers in recent years, as the bikes thundered out of the parking lot that morning it was clear that "four wheels might move the body, but two wheels can certainly move the soul while three wheels spirit you away." ❧

### ❧ Briefly noted

#### Bethany Mennonite opens doors to migrant workers

VIRGIL, ONT. — Greeting them in their language of Patois—or Jamaican Creole—Alyce Blair pastors the seasonal migrant workers at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, and



Blair

others in the Niagara Region, counseling and praying with those who help with the area's fruit farms. Common topics for discussion include money management, healthy lifestyles and dealing with Canadian culture and weather. "Many of these men have never lived on their own or cooked on their own," she notes. "They want to work well so that the farmers will be pleased with them and bring them back for another season. Many of these men are Christians and must live their faith while they are here." In her second term as minister of religion, she says the men are more comfortable and so more open with her. "We clap, we shout, we are emotional," she says of their worship times together. "We lift our hands. We are so excited we have been blessed. It is challenging, because in Jamaica church can be three hours. I am learning to preach in 10 minutes, where at home I would preach for an hour and a half."

—By Andrea Epp

PHOTO COURTESY OF PERRY BARTEL



On a borrowed Kawasaki Vulcan Nomad, Perry Bartel pastored the MennoCycle 'bike gang' during their summer tour of southern Ontario.

# Faith Mennonite celebrates half-century of ministry

BY BARRY BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

An activity-packed weekend was enjoyed by all who attended Faith Mennonite Church's 50th anniversary celebration in mid-June.

Friends and former members and pastors mingled with current congregants. A time of remembering and honouring the past and looking forward to the future was held on the evening of June 18 following a fundraiser dinner put on by the church's youth group. Visiting around a bonfire lasted late into the evening.

The June 19 worship service included communion, which was served by former pastors, all but two of whom were in attendance. Following the service and a noon potluck lunch, another service included greetings from various local churches and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada representatives.

Faith Mennonite began as the first English-speaking Mennonite congregation in Essex County. It was formed by some of those who were worshipping at Leamington United Mennonite Church, which, in 1961, held its services exclusively in German.

The new church was formed by 51 charter members who were concerned that their children, whose primary language was English, would not be able to receive enough from German-language worship services. The first worship service was in an elementary school on Feb. 26, 1961, with George Janzen consenting to be the inaugural minister.

In 1962, Faith Mennonite became a member of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, General Conference, and the Ontario United Mennonite Conference.

The church began a building project in the summer of 1963. The structure was to be built for an estimated cost of \$50,000. A mortgage-burning ceremony was held in June 1975. An addition to the church building was completed in 1995 in order to better serve the growing congregation. The congregation has since upgraded its sound system and recently completed a renovation of the stage area of the sanctuary.

Since 2005, Faith Mennonite has opened its doors to Iglesia la Buena Semilla, a Spanish-speaking congregation that has grown from a small group using the basement to sometimes filling the sanctuary. The church has been active in the community, supporting many Mennonite and non-Mennonite initiatives with funds and volunteers. ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Canadian chair to be named to MennoMedia

HARRISONBURG, VA. -- As part of a new governing structure for the newly formed MennoMedia, it is in the process of inviting a Canadian to serve as its board chair, according to the executive committee of the binational board. Because of the complexity of the transition, Phil Bontrager, the present chair, has been asked to continue in his role until Dec. 31, 2011. The newly merged agency sold its long-time publishing building in Scottsdale, Pa. on Aug. 12 to a local congregation, Wellspring Church, for worship and outreach, ending 103 years of Mennonite publishing in this small town east of Pittsburgh. After two previous attempts to sell the printing facility valued at \$600,000, it was sold to Wellspring for \$125,000. The four-storey, 7,000-square-metre building takes up half a block at the town's highest point. MennoMedia, a merger of Mennonite Media and Mennonite Publishing Network, was formed on July 1 as a joint venture of Mennonite Church U.S.A. and MC Canada.

—MennoMedia

PHOTO BY VIC THIESSEN



Checking out the congregation's anniversary book are Janice and Jim Founk and Vicki Towle. The Founks' parents were some of the founding members of Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont.



# Lutherans welcome a humbled Mennonite

By DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada  
SASKATOON, SASK.

**H**umbling was the feeling that best described Willard Metzger's experience of worshipping with Lutherans at the national convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) in Saskatoon from July 14 to 17.

Metzger, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, reciprocated the invitation that was extended to Bishop Susan Johnson, who participated in the Mennonite assembly in Waterloo, Ont. But Metzger experienced a welcome, recognition and hospitality at the Lutheran event that spoke to a deeper, more serious relationship between the two denominations than the MC Canada assembly offered in Waterloo.

"The ELCIC is speaking about us [Mennonites] as partners," said Metzger, who was moved by the irony that two denominations exist today because of disagreement 500 years ago, and now he was invited to the table as an equal.

A historic reconciliation between Lutherans and Mennonites was initiated by the World Lutheran Federation and took place last summer in Stuttgart, Germany, after several years of Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue. The foundational Lutheran Augsburg Confession called Mennonites "heretics," resulting in persecution of Mennonites during the Reformation years. Mennonites, in turn, have not always responded graciously to the "heretic" label.

"I am personally very grateful for the growing friendship I have experienced with Bishop Susan and look forward to the ways in which our two church families can become better acquainted," said Metzger in his address to the gathered church.

Besides serving opening communion, Metzger was welcomed to sit at the Synod bishops—church leaders—table throughout the convention, and received a baptismal chalice symbolizing the beginnings of a new relationship with the ELCIC.

But more than that, Metzger was moved by a piece of personal history: "My great-great-grandfather [a Lutheran] was



*Willard Metzger, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, was warmly greeted by Bishop Susan Johnson at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada convention in Saskatoon, Sask., from July 14 to 17.*

orphaned and was adopted by a Mennonite family in Waterloo County, Ont., near Kitchener. The family allowed the boy to keep his surname. So now, Metzger in

the Mennonite community of Kitchener-Waterloo is a very common Mennonite surname. But outside of this region, Metzger is a German Lutheran name." ❧

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MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)  
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## COVER STORIES

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Canadian Foodgrains Bank commits \$7.8 million to East Africa drought response

*More than 230,000 people in Kenya and Ethiopia to receive food through Foodgrains Bank member agencies.*

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Two new projects supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee—Canadian Foodgrains

Bank member agencies—have been added to the Foodgrains Bank response to the food crisis in East Africa.

In all, \$7.8 million dollars will be used to

provide food to more than 230,000 people in Ethiopia and Kenya. Maize, beans, oil and famix, a supplementary food for children under five and pregnant and lactating women, will be distributed to those in need in both countries.

The Foodgrains Bank has been responding to the drought in East Africa since March, says Joan Barkman, director of international programs. “Because of a long history and strong partnerships in the area, our member agencies are in a good position to respond,” she says.

The Foodgrains Bank has received more than \$270,000 in donations earmarked for East Africa Drought Relief.

Some of this money will support people in the Shashemene district of Ethiopia, an



*A typical ration for one adult for one day—as outlined by the World Health Organization—includes 460 grams of cereal, 50 grams of pulses, 50 grams of oil and five grams of salt.*

## Canadian Christians invited to Fast for Change

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

On Oct. 16, James Kornelsen wants people to fast—for change.

“Fasting is a way to change yourself, change your relationship to God, and change the world,” says Kornelsen, who coordinates the annual Canadian Foodgrains Bank Fast for Change event. “It’s a way for people of faith to respond to the issue of hunger through fasting, praying, advocating and giving.”

Timed to coincide with the United Nations World Food Day, an international day to remember global food needs, the goal of Fast for Change is to “invite Christians to take time to remember the almost one billion people in the world who don’t have enough to eat, and reflect on God’s desire that no one go hungry,” Kornelsen says.

It’s also a way for Canadian Christians to encourage

the federal government to make the needs of poor people a top priority. This year, people who participate in Fast for Change are being asked to send a letter to Members of Parliament thanking the federal government for committing \$400 million in 2010 to help developing countries adapt to, and fight, climate change, and to encourage it to maintain that commitment for 2011 and 2012.

Fasting from food—for those who can do it—is a good way to remember the issue of hunger as it applies to those who have little, and those who have much, Kornelsen explains. “Being hungry, even if it’s just a little bit, is a way to identify with the needs of poor people,” he says.

Since World Food Day falls on a Sunday this year, Kornelsen says it is an excellent time for churches to take time during their worship services to reflect on the needs of hungry people around the world. Worship resources are available at [FastForChange.ca](http://FastForChange.ca).



Kornelsen

area affected by drought and poor rains, as well as by recent spikes in food prices. The Christian Reformed organization is supporting a project to distribute food to vulnerable households, including more than 6,000 children under five and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Flooding in the past and the failure of this year's *belg* rains, which usually fall between February and May, have left Shashemene severely food insecure. The area has high levels of malnutrition, particularly among children under five. This project supports vulnerable people so they can stay in their homes.

In Eastern Kenya, MCC is expanding their support for food-for-work projects. (See story below.)

Other projects led by Foodgrains Bank

member agencies, including Canadian Lutheran World Relief, are distributing food to vulnerable households in rural Kenya and Ethiopia, where rains have failed and crops have been damaged.

Some of the food is also going to pastoralist communities, which rely on livestock for their living, and which have been particularly hard hit by the crisis.

Donations to East African Drought Relief through the Foodgrains Bank will be matched four-to-one through a core funding agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency; until Sept. 16, donations to the Foodgrains Bank are also eligible for a special one-to-one matching contribution from the federal government. ☞

*'Because of a long history and strong partnerships in the area, our member agencies are in a good position to respond.'*

*(Joan Barkman, Foodgrains Bank director of international programs)*

## MCC expands response for East Africa drought

BY GLADYS TERICHOW  
Mennonite Central Committee

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) has surpassed its initial target of raising \$1 million for the East Africa drought and is now expanding its response to the continuing crisis in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. At press time, nearly \$2 million had come in, \$1.6 million of it from Canadian donors and a further \$300,000 from U.S. donors.

"We are both elated and humbled by people's willingness to entrust MCC with their contribution," says Willie Reimer, who directs MCC's food and disaster program. "The needs are great and the crisis will not abate for a long time. We are providing much-needed emergency food assistance and longer-term support to help communities adapt to drought, high food

prices, climate change and other causes of hunger."

To date, MCC has allocated approximately \$700,000 for this disaster response. This total jumps to \$2.3 million when MCC's response through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank is included.

MCC is planning to provide emergency food assistance for internally displaced people and their host families around the Somali border town of Dhobley, the last exit before crossing into Kenya. MCC also plans to assist Somalis in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. In both places, safety and security remain a significant concern, so disruptions are possible.

An estimated 11 million people in the Horn of Africa have been affected by the

current drought. Conflict, problems accessing food and skyrocketing food prices have added to the crisis.

One of the most drought-affected countries is Somalia, where ongoing conflict and the absence of a stable government have made it difficult to get humanitarian aid to the people. Thousands are fleeing their homes and livelihoods in order to survive.

"These families have no support systems to turn to for help," says Reimer. "Their crops have failed, their animals have died and there is a critical need for emergency food assistance."

The food distribution in Dhobley is a joint effort involving World Concern, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, the Foodgrains Bank and MCC.

Food is being distributed through the use of commodity-based vouchers. Under this system, families selected for food assistance use vouchers to buy food from local merchants or traders. The traders then present the vouchers they have received to the World Concern office, where they are paid through an electronic banking system.

Traders and merchants are used because they have experience in distributing food in difficult circumstances, Reimer explains. This voucher system has been used before and is considered to be an effective approach for food distribution in countries where it is difficult to get food and other humanitarian aid to vulnerable people.

In collaboration with the Foodgrains Bank, MCC is supporting food-for-work projects in Kenya that provide thousands of households with cooking oil, maize and beans for participating in the construction of 92 sand dams and 25 wells.

In southeastern Ethiopia, MCC has committed an initial \$200,000 to support emergency relief efforts in two districts of the Oromya region for up to six months. This project is being developed and coordinated by MCC staff in Ethiopia and the Relief and Development Association of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, an Anabaptist denomination and member of Mennonite World Conference.

Meanwhile, MCC is part of Canadian Churches in Action, which has applied for

funds from the Canadian government's East Africa Drought Relief Fund for a \$3.9-million response for non-food items in Kenya.

For every dollar Canadians contribute to registered Canadian charities responding

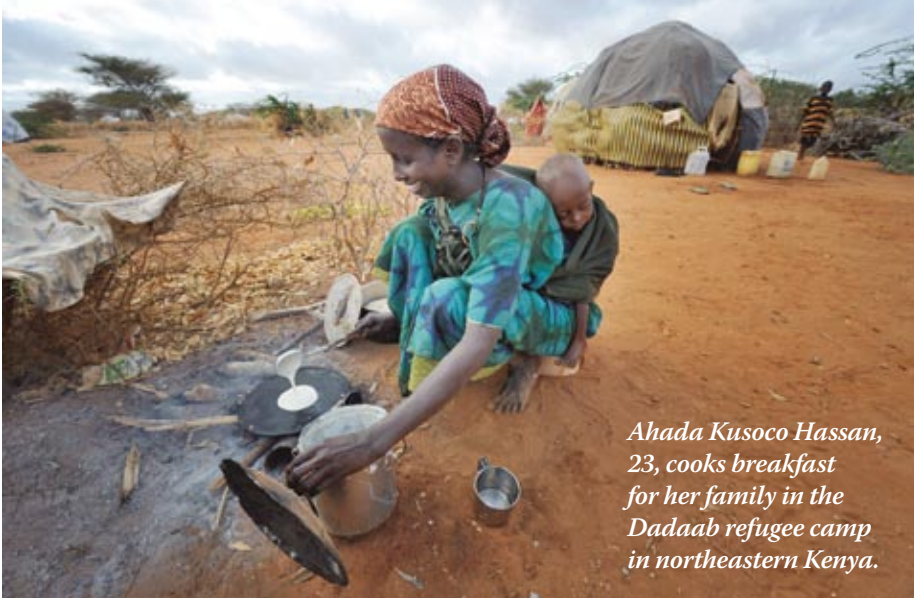
to the East Africa drought until Sept. 16, the federal government is setting aside one dollar for the fund. The Canadian International Development Agency then allocates these funds to established Canadian and international humanitarian

organizations to ensure an effective and timely response.

"MCC has years of experience working in East Africa," Reimer notes. "We have workers on the ground and a network of committed and proven partner organizations. We are responding to the present disaster situation, but at the same time we are continuing to work with our long-term partner organizations to help lessen the effects of future droughts."

Donations to support MCC's response can be made online at [mcc.org](http://mcc.org) or at any MCC office. Gifts should be designated for "East Africa Drought Response." ❧

ACT ALLIANCE PHOTO BY PAUL JEFFREY



*Ahada Kusoco Hassan, 23, cooks breakfast for her family in the Dadaab refugee camp in northeastern Kenya.*

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### ❧ Briefly noted

#### Order of Manitoba for Foodgrains Bank founder

WINNIPEG, MAN.— Art DeFehr, a Manitoba business leader and founding chair of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, was inducted into the Order of Manitoba on July 12. The Order is the province's highest



**DeFehr**

honour, reserved each year for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the province or its people. DeFehr came up with the idea for the Foodgrains Bank in the mid-1970s after returning to Canada from a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in Bangladesh. DeFehr discussed the shortage of food for famine relief with a group of others. They decided to use the "Joseph Principle" from the Bible as a guide for a new way of helping people get access to food—banking grain and resources in years of plenty for distribution when times were lean. The group produced a draft proposal for a food bank that was accepted by MCC in 1975; DeFehr became chair of the first interim board. In 1983, MCC opened the bank to other denominations and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank was born.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank



# Southwestern Ontario MEDA chapter hosts Ukrainian farmers

STORY AND PHOTO BY BARRY BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

**M**ennonite farmers in the Leamington area have a special place in their hearts for Ukraine, where their ancestors are from. This fondness spurred the local Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) chapter to host Ukrainian farmers who benefit from the Ukrainian Horticultural Development Project, a MEDA-supported endeavour, for 10 days in June.

The visiting farmers and others related to the Ukrainian project visited local greenhouses as well as other industries, learning about local produce, including tomatoes, cucumbers, table grapes and berries, and talked with the experienced greenhouse growers to understand the challenges they faced to get to where they are now. These challenges include everything from pest control to marketing. The Ukrainian farmers hope that by making personal contacts with Leamington greenhouse growers, they will be better able to stay on top of cutting-edge greenhouse industry knowledge.

Oleg Osauliyuk, the project's value chain development manager, says that many challenges face the farmers in the Crimea and Zaporizhzhya areas of Ukraine. The first is the lack of a cohesive marketing system, he said, adding that here are thousands of small producers with basically no market information; they all just grow what they feel will make them some money that year. This, of course, leads to years when some commodities are in overabundance, while others are scarce, he explained.

Another hurdle for Ukrainian farmers to overcome is the lack of available capital. According to Osauliyuk, there is not a lot of capital in Ukraine to begin with, and most lenders are more interested in loaning money for consumer goods, because lending money for cars and television sets is much more lucrative than lending to farmers. For that reason, most financial

institutions do not have farm credit on their radar.

Through the project, MEDA is helping small farmers in Ukraine by easing the plight of these small producers through support of Agro Capital Management, an organization that issues credit to small farmers. The organization has more than 600 clients and has not had one single default on any loan. Unlike many financial institutions, it strives to make the lending procedure simple and quick. The farmers on tour expressed an interest in ways to make this new capital work for them, as they are very open to new technologies and methods to increase their production. %



*Rob Hansen, owner of Erievue Organic Greenhouse Farm, left, speaks with Oleg Osauliyuk, the value chain development manager for the Ukrainian Horticultural Development Project, during a visit to Leamington, Ont.*



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## GOD AT WORK IN US

# A belated farewell

BY LYDIA BERGEN

*(On July 9, 2010, I boarded a flight from Abbotsford, B.C., to Quebec City, Que., where I was met by my son Barry, daughter-in-law Ruth and grandson Matthew. The highlight for us was locating the cemetery where my almost-three-year-old sister Maria had been buried 85 years earlier. We gathered at the gravesite and held a memorial service in her memory, singing "Gott ist die Liebe" and "Jesus Loves Me," and sharing memories of Maria. Ruth read Scripture and prayed. I placed flowers at her grave and Matthew had chosen a butterfly balloon to leave there for Maria.)*

## The story begins in October 1925

My parents had gone through some turbulent years in Russia and decided to immigrate to Canada with their three children, Susie, Maria and Nellie. They arrived in Quebec City on Oct. 16, 1925, on the S.S. Minnedosa.

The family was detained because the children were not well and they were taken to the immigration hospital in Quebec City. Maria was diagnosed with scarlet fever and placed in quarantine.

My father left three days later for Manitoba. Maria's condition worsened. My mother was not able to go to her, even though she could hear her calling and asking for water. Maria died in that hospital, and Mother watched from a hospital window as they carried her little girl away in a casket. She had not been able to say goodbye to Maria and now didn't know where she would be buried. Mother, Susie and Nellie left Quebec City to join Dad in Manitoba, but a part of Mother remained in Quebec City.

Approximately 10 years ago, my daughter-in-law asked me if I had ever considered trying to locate Maria's burial place. I said I had, but didn't quite know where to begin. We began by writing letters to Vital Statistics and Immigration

Canada, and soon received a copy of the passenger list of the S.S. Minnedosa. This gave us the exact date for their arrival in Quebec, but no other information.

Five years later, while on a bus tour to Eastern Canada we stopped in Quebec City. I walked into the information centre in the old part of the city and told them my story. I was given a pamphlet on the history of Grosse Ile. This small island had a large immigration hospital on it. Many immigrants, having contracted infectious diseases during the crossing, were buried there. I was certain that would be where Maria was buried, and I decided that I would return one day to find it.

Another five years passed. I began planning my trip to Quebec, but first I needed to confirm Maria's burial site. I contacted Grosse Ile and was told

there was no record of any death there in October 1925. How could that be? Further phone calls and searching the Internet ended in failure. Ruth then contacted a friend who was into genealogy and gave him our information.

On May 9, 2010, he found the following recorded in the Quebec Vital and Church records 1621-1967: "Maria Buhler, a Russian Mennonite, two and a half years old, died in Immigration Hospital in the City of Quebec on Saturday the 24th day of October of scarlet fever after an illness of 11 days, and was buried in Mount Hermon Cemetery on Monday the 26 day of the same month in 1925. No relative of the deceased was present."

I was particularly saddened by the last line. I knew now that I really needed to go for Mom. Next, I googled Mount Hermon Cemetery and looked at that picture on the screen for a long time. Was this really the place my little sister



*Lydia Bergen lays flowers on the grave of her sister Maria Buhler's grave 85 years after her death of scarlet fever upon arrival from Russia with her parents in 1925.*

had been laid to rest 85 years ago?

I immediately phoned Mt. Hermon Cemetery, located on the banks of the St. Lawrence River. I told the man of my plans

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

to visit the gravesite and needed to know if they could show me the exact location.

Within the hour, he called back to tell me there was no grave marker of any kind since a plot had never been purchased for her. However, from cemetery records he could tell me within a square metre where she was buried. That was certainly close enough for me.

We spent a few hours wandering around and letting it all sink in. As we were about to leave, Matthew said, "But I didn't say goodbye to Maria." We walked back to the gravesite and he very solemnly stood there and simply said "goodbye."

It was hard to walk away and leave her behind again. This vacation will no doubt remain in my mind as one of the most memorable. ☸

*This article originally appeared in Connecting, the Emmanuel Mennonite Church newsletter.*

# Building a go-kart . . . and a friendship

STORY AND PHOTO

BY BARRY BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

Alfred Driedger and Andrew Dyck share a love of fixing things, and the fact that they are separated by 60 years or so only makes repair work more interesting. This seemingly unlikely pair was brought together by a set of circumstances that has proved beneficial to both of them.

Just over three years ago, Driedger, the senior member of the pair, was caring for his dying wife, Eleanor. He invited David Dyck, the new pastor of Leamington United Mennonite Church, to visit so that he would be able to get to know them before the impending funeral. Over the course of these visits, Dyck learned that Driedger was adept at building and fixing anything mechanical.

At the same time, Dyck's son Andrew was asking about motorizing his go-kart. During a follow-up visit after the funeral, the pastor asked Driedger if Andrew could come over, starting a relationship between the two that still goes on three years later.

They began meeting once a week, spending about an hour to 90 minutes in one of

## Across Generations

Driedger's three shops. The first project included installing a grass whip motor on Andrew's former push-type go-kart. This project was followed by two more go-karts built from scratch, and a solar cooker with mirrors that focus the sun's rays. Later projects included metal plant stands, a sled, candle-holders and even cookies.

While Andrew learned new skills, their time spent together helped Driedger through the first several months of his

grieving for his wife.

When asked what have they learned from each other, Andrew is quick to say that he learned "how to make things simply in an uncomplicated way." He has gained experience on the mig welder, oxyacetylene torch, drill press, metal lathe and belt sander.

While Driedger didn't learn anything new about his equipment, he certainly learned something about patience, and gained the ability to see that others have different strains of thought and come at problems from different angles. He feels that both he and Andrew understand each other better for having been together.

The two both enjoyed their time together very much. Andrew is now in high school, and finds it more difficult to get together with his mentor. Both miss their time spent together. ✎



*Andrew Dyck, left, learned a lot about building and repairing things from Alfred Driedger, who also learned the art of patience during their weekly times together over a three-year period.*

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## ARTBEAT

# A celebration of food and faith

*Mennonite Girls Can Cook.*

By Lovella Schellenberg et al. Herald Press, 2011.

REVIEWED BY MARLENE EPP

Recently I stood in line-ups for two different kinds of “Mennonite” foods. In one line I waited, along with many others, for my order from the annual Laotian Mennonite spring roll sale. A week later I waited for my two dozen Russian Mennonite *fleisch perishky* (meat-filled buns).



in Mennonite households in Canada has diversified widely and may include the ethnic foods described above, or also French Canadian poutine, South Asian *samosas* (vegetable- or meat-filled pastry), and Korean *kimchi* (fermented vegetables).

Both of these delicacies were received with delight by the members of my household and disappeared from the freezer in alarmingly short order. On other occasions I've stood in line for Swiss Mennonite apple fritters at the annual Mennonite Relief Sale or for Hispanic Mennonite *pupusas* (another variation on meat inside dough) sold as a fundraiser by Mennonite youths at a local church.

I have also experienced Mennonite “ethnic fusion” when eating homemade chicken noodle soup along with burritos at a southwestern Ontario restaurant operated by Low-German-speaking Mennonite immigrants from Mexico.

All of these “Mennonite foods” are, of course, not intrinsically Mennonite, but rather emerge from the ethnic and cultural contexts in which particular Mennonite groups lived in the past. Cultural markers such as language, dress, architecture or foodways—which evolved from the intersection of religious belief and ethnic experience—became significant features of Mennonite community identity at various times and places.

Historically, these cultural markers differentiated “Russian” from “Swiss” Mennonites possibly mainly by their traditional foods. Today, food as cultural custom

stretch our imaginations when we think about “Mennonite foods” should not compel us to dismiss the overlapping connections between our religious identity, ancestral histories and food practices. I personally fear the demise of a Mennoniteness that seeks to “downplay” or “set aside” the family history and personal ethnicity of any member (see “Mennonite’ not eaten here,” Jan. 24, page 13), since religion and

culture cannot be separated.

These linkages are front and centre in a new cookbook published by Herald Press, amusingly titled *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*. The book was preceded by an online blog of the same name, begun by 10 women who wanted to share their favourite recipes and thoughts about cooking, eating and life. Although the recipes on the blog are widely varied, the women would often post stories and recipes from their Russian Mennonite heritage, paying tribute to their mothers and grandmothers who taught them the “joy of cooking and serving.”

The popularity of the blog led to the 200-page hardcover book with glossy pages and numerous colour photographs. Indeed,

*Mennonite Girls Can Cook* is a beautiful coffee-table art book as much as a cookbook. I immediately thumbed through it in search of the foods prepared by my grandmother, aunts and mother, such as *paska* (Easter bread), *platz* (coffee cake), *zwieback* (double-decker buns) and *holub-schi* (cabbage rolls). The cookbook also has a wide assortment of recipes for main dishes, side dishes, desserts and baked goods, including many gluten-free options.

The women—I can't bring myself to refer to these middle-aged friends as “girls”—acknowledge that they were brought together by their “ethnic roots, common love for cooking, and our faith.” The faith element is front and centre in this cookbook, as each woman profiles her own personal story in sections entitled “Who's Cooking,” and in short spiritual reflections—a Bible verse beginning each one—entitled “Bread for the Journey.” That food is so closely embedded in identity becomes very clear in this book, and this is what I like about it most.

In the same way that the notion of “Mennonite foods” deserves thoughtful analysis, the stereotype that “Mennonite girls can cook” should, I think, be received with a sense of the irony that such a generalization must surely be reflecting and was hopefully intended. Of course, not all Mennonite girls can or want to cook, but I suspect the average cookbook buyer will not get it, and thus age-old clichés that link

## BOOK REVIEW

Mennonite women with food will be perpetuated by the title.

This cookbook is really part of a larger renaissance in “roots cooking,” whereby people explore and celebrate their ancestral heritage by discovering and recovering foods of the past. I hope that in a few generations we will see Laotian-Canadian Mennonite women also blogging and publishing about their ethnic food traditions and telling stories that connect their food and faith. ❧

*Marlene Epp is a historian at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., who describes herself as ‘a Mennonite girl who would rather write than cook.’*

# John's epistles help believers understand how Jesus was unique

*Herald Press releases latest in Believers Church Bible Commentary series*

BY ARDELL STAUFFER

Herald Press

**T**ucked at the back of the Bible just before the Book of Revelation, the three letters of John may not get much notice. But J.E. McDermond thinks they warrant the modern church's attention.

McDermond is the author of the Believers Church Bible Commentary volume, *Epistles of 1, 2, 3 John*, released this year by Herald Press. He is a professor of Christian ministry and spirituality at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa. An ordained Brethren in Christ minister, he has pastored churches in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Scotland.

Who is Jesus? How do we follow his commandments to love one another? How does the church reach out to those trying to understand Jesus? These are themes that McDermond sees spanning the centuries from John's Roman world to today.

"In 2011, you hear interesting ideas about who Jesus is," says McDermond. Some are appealing, but they may not be close to traditional Christology—the understanding of who Jesus is. John's epistles remind Christians that they need to be careful how they describe Jesus, according to McDermond, affirming as they do the uniqueness of Jesus, that he was more than a great teacher.

And with John's strong emphasis on love, the epistles help Christians take seriously the concept of loving their enemies, as Jesus taught. "If you understand Jesus as the focal point of God's action in human affairs, you will fully understand his commandment to love one another," says McDermond.

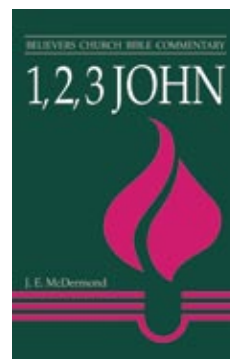
The faith community displays love in action by caring for the poor and taking care of each other, and attracting others to Jesus by embodying a loving community. "Theology lived in ethics is a powerful, powerful witness," he says.

Despite the brevity of John's letters, McDermond thinks a commentary offers the modern Christian helpful tools in understanding them. Sometimes John's grammar "is a mess," he says, with confusing syntax and a range of possible meanings. McDermond explores the way the text can be translated.

He places the letters in their historical setting, describing the Roman world of persecution from which John writes. He examines the divisions that shape John's writing: within Judaism, as Jews who follow Jesus are removed from mainstream Judaism; and within Christianity, as John addresses believers who are dividing over

the question of who Jesus is.

McDermond sees parallels between the pluralism of the Roman Empire and today's society, so that the letters of John continue to provide practical theology for modern believers. ☿



## New from Herald Press



### Teatime in Mogadishu

My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam  
*Ahmed Ali Haile, as told to David W. Shenk*

The author returned to the chaos of his native Somalia with a clear mission: to bring warring clans together to find new paths of peace—often over a cup of tea. A grenade thrown by a detractor cost Haile his leg and almost his life, but his stature as a peacemaker remained.

This book is a good resource for congregational study groups who are looking at peacemaking in the engagement with Muslims.

Ahmed Ali Haile died of cancer the week that this book was released.

\$17.25. [www.mpn.net/teatimeinmogadishu](http://www.mpn.net/teatimeinmogadishu)

800-631-6535

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and Mennonite Church Canada

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELISE EPP

*Epp, who attends Toronto United Mennonite Church, also suggests that her beliefs influence her writing in less direct ways just because that's the culture she grew up in. '[Music] doesn't need to be a praise song for God to be involved,' she asserts.*



*Elise Epp poses with a studio microphone while recording her band's first demos.*

## Capturing history through song

*Toronto Indie band writes music for young smart people who think about things*

**BY EMILY LOEWEN**

Young Voices Editor  
TORONTO, ONT.

**L**ike rings on a tree, or carbon layers in ice, Elise Epp hopes that when people look back on her music it will mark the events of her generation. "Saying it's representative of the generation, that's sounds so arrogant," she says with a laugh, but she also sees the anxiety of people her age reflected in the dark themes she sings about.

"I mean, I have conversations with my friends about how depressing everything is and how the world is falling apart," she

says, adding that many people have these thoughts. But since most don't want to hear a depressing lecture, she pairs the thoughts with catchy tunes that she hopes will appeal to her target audience of educated twenty- and thirty-somethings, "usually with some sort of useless degree like arts."

Epp is the front-woman and founder of Theodor, a Toronto-based indie pop band. Although the group has played together for over a year, Epp counts their official birthday



as July 7, 2011, the day they released the first recordings on the Internet. The band was born out of 24-year-old Epp's desire to work as a musician, a goal that developed out of years of musical education. From age six onward, she took lessons in one instrument or another and imagined her life as a band teacher or jazz trumpet player before realizing she really wanted to sing.

Being Mennonite was a boon to those vocal aspirations. In one of her earliest memories, Epp stands on a church pew, peering over her father's shoulder as he showed her how to read the hymns. Even when she stopped singing in school because it wasn't really cool, the church kept her in practice. "I think being Mennonite, singing was always a huge part of everything," she says, "so I never actually stopped singing, even if I got kind of self-conscious of it."

Faith also influences her music, although her character-driven melodies wouldn't be classified as church music. One of her songs focuses on the experience of pacifism in a war-centred world. Nonviolence has always been important to Epp, and the song is about her strong belief in peace. "But the other words in the song are about how I don't know how to answer people's questions and how I get so confused," she admits.

Epp, who attends Toronto United Mennonite Church, also suggests that her beliefs influence her writing in less direct

ways just because that's the culture she grew up in. "[Music] doesn't need to be a praise song for God to be involved," she asserts.

While Epp enjoys her thoughts and ideas in song, since launching a band she has discovered there is a lot more than melodies and lyrics that make a successful band. She graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a degree in classical voice performance, which covered the musical skills, but when trying to increase Theodor's notoriety found she lacked business abilities. "I took one business class last year," she says, "and now I'm supposed to run a band, and know how to get gigs and sign contracts."

She's trying to learn some of those skills by seeking out others in the business who have been through the same thing and by asking lots of questions. The next goal on Epp's horizon is finding a producer to help put together an EP.

She also hopes to get the band playing more, touring and, above all, getting the music heard. Although a major label deal isn't on her list of aspirations, "I would kind of like an indie label deal," Epp says. That would ease the financial burden, and music could be a full-time job, she says, so she won't "have to hold down some crappy other job."

To hear some of Theodor's songs, visit [youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org](http://youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org) or [radio3.cbc.ca/#/bands/Theodor](http://radio3.cbc.ca/#/bands/Theodor). ☘

PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN



*Elise Epp is lead singer and founder of Theodor, a Toronto indie pop band.*

# Emerging adulthood... or 'screwed generation'?

*How the church should respond to single, unemployed, educated young adults*

BY JULIA THIESSEN

Special to Young Voices

From *The New York Times* to the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, emerging adulthood has become a topic worthy of many printed pages and even more blog posts.

As increasing numbers of twenty- and thirty-somethings remain unmarried and

without long-term employment, there seems to be a loose consensus that just as the early 20th century gave birth to the adolescent, so the 21st century has created yet another stage of life. This stage is one of great flexibility and very little responsibility, leading many to worry that



mine is a whole generation of slackers.

However, a recent *MacLean's* cover has called these emerging adults the “screwed generation.” This and other similar stories suggest that recent economic troubles

receptivity and hospitality, and I believe these traits are a gift that emerging adults have to bring to the church. Also, as more and more young people pursue advanced degrees, I hope the church is able to

## VIEWPOINT

may have shifted the finger of blame. With few jobs and prohibitive housing prices, young people simply cannot progress easily down the prescribed road to adulthood.

How is the church to respond? It is my hope that it can see this as an opportunity, rather than a problem. After all, the prescribed road to adulthood is fundamentally a way of gauging worldly success, not Christian growth. As Anabaptists, we do not grow our church through having children, and we do not build our communities only through marriage. Moreover, Mennonites have long valued unpaid overseas assignments and enriching employment over high salaries, both of which are becoming more popular in this new demographic. Perhaps the presence of emerging adults in our congregations can keep us questioning our definitions of success.

I also see potential in the particular traits and skills fostered by the emer-

engage us in our areas of expertise.

Of course, there are many downsides to the life of the emerging adult. The last several years of my life have also been characterized by profound loneliness, aimlessness and occasional feelings of uselessness. But this, too, presents an opportunity, for I am confident that these struggles are not unique to the emerging adult generation. We in this age group are not the only members of the congregation to be unemployed or unmarried, and I'm sure we are not the only ones who experience feelings of confusion and futility. For this reason, I hope the church does not seek to cater to the emerging adult demographic with new programs or initiatives, which could increase the isolation many young adults already feel, but instead looks for the points of continuity and similarity with other generations.

I have heard many sermons in the last year on the importance of stepping back from one's busy life and multiple com-

*Of course, there are many downsides to the life of the emerging adult. The last several years of my life have also been characterized by profound loneliness, aimlessness and occasional feelings of uselessness.*

ging adult lifestyle. Unlike the writers of the above-mentioned articles, I clearly belong in this category: 28 years old, unmarried, unemployed, over-educated. For the last several years, I have not had the time commitments of family or regular employment, so, like many others my age, I have instead dedicated my time to new friends and intellectual pursuits.

Living in Toronto this past year, I have been part of a community of engaged and supportive individuals ranging in age, occupation and religious background. Such a life of diversity and flux requires

commitments, of taking time for study and prayer, but I have not heard any about having too few commitments and too much free time. I yearn for a sermon on this topic, and I imagine there may be some retired people in our congregations who would feel the same. I hope that the presence of emerging adults can draw attention to a different, but hardly novel, set of concerns.

I urge the church to embrace the vision we emerging adults have of our lives, but also to recognize the struggles that accompany such an uncharted life. ❧

# Lemonade for international aid

*Youths sell lemonade for East Africa Relief*

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Many people can identify with being hungry, but cannot understand what it is like to be among tens of thousands who are on the verge of death because of hunger, with little hope of survival.

Many people living in East Africa are living in this reality currently. (See more coverage on pages 18 and 19.) They have had to flee to Kenya, Ethiopia and the Somali capital of Mogadishu to find food at refugee camps there.

Recognizing this incredible need for aid, Mennonite Central Committee has been campaigning to raise money for desperately needy famine-affected people, especially in southern Ethiopia and Kenya.

Many people have donated money to MCC and other international aid organiza-

stand, which totalled about \$100, is all being donated to MCC.

“My mom and I made more than 10 dozen cookies and my dad made a sign that said, ‘Best chocolate chip cookies ever, made with love for the African famine,’” Kate says.

The two had great responses to their work. According to Kate, one woman donated \$10 and didn’t even purchase a beverage or snack.

They had regular customers, people who returned with cash, as well as people in cars and on bikes who stopped to peruse the stand.

They aren’t the only ones making donations to the East Africa food aid effort.

The vacation Bible school (VBS) children

*The two had great responses to their work. According to Kate, one woman donated \$10 and didn’t even purchase a beverage or snack.*

tions, recognizing the great need to help. Even some youths and young children recognize the need.

When Meghan Fast and Kate Moulden, 11-year-olds from First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, saw footage of the famine on television, they felt the immediate call to act.

“It is really awful and instantly I knew that I wanted to help out,” Meghan says.

When Kate suggested a lemonade stand, they set to work making treats and designing their advertising. For six hours over two days of the August long weekend, Meghan and Kate sold cookies, iced tea, lemonade and peaches at the corner of Dominion Street and Wolesley Avenue.

The money raised from the lemonade

at Grace Mennonite Church in Nouenlage, Sask., are giving small donations every day in an offering to MCC. According to Darryl Neudorf, who coordinates the VBS, the children can identify with being hungry—obviously not to the same extent, but it makes sense to them why children in Africa need to eat.

According to Rick Fast, communications director of MCC Canada, Canadians have donated about \$1.6 million to the cause so far. American donors have given about \$300,000.

“This is simply astonishing and humbling,” he says. “We’re now looking to expand our response.”

To learn more about donating to MCC Canada, visit [mcc.org/eastafricadrought](http://mcc.org/eastafricadrought). ☞



*Meghan Fast, left, and Kate Moulden show off their menu. All proceeds from their lemonade stand went to Mennonite Central Committee’s East Africa response.*



## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Sept. 9-10:** MCC Festival and Relief Sale, Tradex, Abbotsford.

**Sept. 30:** Mennonite Disaster Service dessert fundraiser with great food, good music and reports from the Level Ground youth group who served in Kingcome Inlet in July, at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 6:30 p.m.

**Oct. 3-5:** Pastor/spouse retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: The Life-giving Sabbatical—three perspectives.

**Oct. 1:** Mennonite Disaster Service dessert fundraiser with great food, good music and reports from First United Mennonite youth group who served in Kingcome Inlet in July, at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver,

at 6:30 p.m.

**Oct. 1, 2:** Thanksgiving Vespers with *Abendmusik Choir* at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, 8 p.m. (1) and at Knox United Church, Vancouver, 8 p.m. (2).

**Oct. 14-16:** MCBC Women's retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: The Business of Everyday Life.

**Nov. 18-20:** Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

### Alberta

**Oct. 29:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta 25th anniversary celebration with Jim Lore's view of Mennonite settlement in Carstairs/Didsbury area. Register by calling 403-250-1121 on Thursdays, or email [mhsa@mennonitehistory.org](mailto:mhsa@mennonitehistory.org) by Oct. 15.

### Saskatchewan

**Sept. 16-18:** Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization junior high youth retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

**Oct. 4:** Youth Farm Bible Camp annual fundraiser at the camp, from 5 to 7 p.m.

**Oct. 14-15:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat.

**Oct. 22:** MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

### Manitoba

**Sept. 10:** Eden Foundation's "Head for the Hills" bike event begins at Colert Beach, Morden, at 8 a.m.

**Oct. 1:** Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association fundraiser dessert coffee house at Fort Garry EMC with Matt and Baka (House of Doc), Andy and Trish Funk, and Mark von Kampen & Dale Kraubner (FMC Simpletones) at 7:30 p.m.

**Oct. 14:** Going Barefoot communicators conference, at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Keynote speaker: John Stackhouse, editor of *The Globe and Mail*. Topic: The future of media. Plus workshops on media, fundraising, marketing and design. For more information, e-mail John Longhurst at [jlonghurst@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:jlonghurst@foodgrainsbank.ca).

**Oct. 14-16:** Manitoba Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. For more information, visit [marriageencounter.org](http://marriageencounter.org). To apply, call Peter and Rose Dick at 204-757-4705 or e-mail [pmmme@gmail.com](mailto:pmmme@gmail.com).

**Oct. 15, 16:** "Musical Grow Project" fundraiser for Canadian Foodgrains Bank with Canzona, Catherine Daniel and Central Manitoba Youth Choir; (15) at 7:30 p.m., Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, and (16) at 3 p.m.,

Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

**Sept. 19:** "Stories for thought" at Sam's Place, Winnipeg, featuring stories from artist Kevin Lee Burton and activist Will Braun on housing and water issues on First Nations communities; from 7:30 to 10 p.m.

**Sept. 23-24:** Brandon MCC Relief Sale at the Keystone Centre; (23) barbecue supper and musical group The Keenagers; (24) sale and auction.

### Ontario

**Until Sept. 27:** "Just food: The right to food from a faith perspective" exhibit of original art on the theme of food and justice by 19 artists from around the world, on display at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, call 519-885-0220.

**Sept. 2-5:** Silver Lake Mennonite Camp 50th anniversary camping weekend. For more information, call 519-745-8458.

**Sept. 9-11:** Building Community Retreat at Hidden Acres Camp for persons with disabilities and their supporters. Trudy Beauline will speak on "Belonging and contributing." For information or to volunteer, contact Mariette at 519-569-8723 or professor\_flatbread@yahoo.ca.

**Sept. 21:** Peace Day at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**Oct. 20-22:** Ten Thousand Villages fair trade craft sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (20, 21) and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (22). Call 905-627-4132 for information.

**Oct. 22, 23:** Pax Christi Chorale kicks off its 25th anniversary season with Salieri's *Mass in D-Major* and other works performed by the Chorale, Youth Choir, orchestra and soloists;

## UpComing

### Wall of Remembrance to be dedicated

WINKLER, MAN.—The official dedication of the Wall of Remembrance at Bethel Heritage Park in Winkler will take place at 3 p.m. on Sept. 11. The program will include greetings from church representatives and a brief report on the background of the memorial, as well as special music. The Wall of Remembrance is more than a memorial to the witness of conscientious objectors of World War II; each of the 3,021 bricks in the wall represents a young Manitoba man who chose alternative service in time of war. At the same time, it is intended as a teaching opportunity for future generations.

—Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship

### Proposals sought for 2012 writers conference

A call for papers for the next Mennonite/s Writing Conference, "Solos and Harmonies," to be held at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., from March 29 to April 1, 2012, has been issued by the Center for Mennonite Writing. Proposals for scholarly papers, creative writing presentations and panels are sought for the sixth in a series of conferences on Mennonite writing in the U.S., Canada and beyond. The conference will both celebrate and examine this rapidly developing literature across borders on the North American continent and as it develops worldwide. Papers that address the relationship of the artist and communities—solos and harmonies—in ethical and aesthetic dimensions, are particularly welcome. To view the full call for papers, as well as submission guidelines, visit [emu.edu/mennos-writing](http://emu.edu/mennos-writing). Proposals should be submitted electronically using the link on the website by Nov. 1.

—The Center for Mennonite Writing



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(22) at Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, Barrie, at 7:30 p.m.; (23) at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m.

**Oct. 29:** Menno Singers present Faure's *Requiem* and other works by various French composers, at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m. Tickets available from Mennonite Savings and Credit Union branches and choir members.

**Nov. 12:** MCC Ontario annual conference, at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ont.

**Nov. 18:** Spirituality and aging lecture at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Speaker: Dr. Steven Sandage. Topic: "The role of forgiveness in psychological and spiritual well-being in late life." For more information, or to register, e-mail [infocguc@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:infocguc@uwaterloo.ca).

**Nov. 21:** MennoHomes' 10th anniversary celebration and annual general meeting, at Elmira Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. Celebrate 10 years, 100 units and \$10 million of affordable housing.

**Dec. 3, 4:** Pax Christi Chorale presents Britten's *St. Nicolas* plus traditional

Christmas carols, motets and the world premiere of a new composition by artistic director Stephanie Martin, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (3) 7:30 p.m.; (4) 3 p.m. With the Youth Choir, orchestra and soloists.

**Dec. 10:** Pax Christi Chorale presents *The Children's Messiah*, at Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Toronto, at 4 p.m.

#### U.S.A.

**Nov. 3-6:** MEDA annual convention—Business as a calling: Enduring values/ Lasting impact—in Lancaster, Pa. Plenary sessions feature Tom Wolf, Joyce Bontrager Lehman, Kim Tan, Ervin Stutzman and the MEDA year-in-review. For more information, or to register, visit [BusinessAsACalling.org](http://BusinessAsACalling.org) or call toll-free 1-800-665-7026.

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**



#### FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGER

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a church-based relief, development and peace organization with international and local programs that seeks to demonstrate God's love by serving among people suffering from poverty, conflict and natural disasters. MCC B.C. has approximately 100 workers, over 2,000 volunteers and an operating budget of approximately \$10 million. The Finance and Business Manager for MCC B.C. reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for planning, organizing, reporting and directing all accounting functions, including the supervision of accounting staff and ensuring compliance with MCC policies, government regulations and generally accepted accounting principles. This position is also responsible for administrative functions, including the management of office equipment, information systems, buildings, insurance and administrative staff. This is a full-time position based in Abbotsford.

MCC workers share a personal commitment to Christian faith, active church participation and nonviolent peacemaking. Other qualifications for this position include: support for the mission of MCC, familiarity with MCC and our supporting churches, certification in a professional accounting association preferred, 5 years of related experience in a management role, knowledge and experience related to the not-for-profit charitable sector, proficiency working with computer systems and accounting software, experience with policy development, ability to work effectively in a collaborative team environment, and strong inter-personal and administrative skills.

Please send a cover letter and resume to:  
Attention: Marie Reimer, HR Director (confidential)  
MCC BC, Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 3T8  
Or by fax: 1-604-850-8734 or by e-mail: [hrdirector@mccbc.com](mailto:hrdirector@mccbc.com)

Interviews will continue until a qualified candidate is found. Check [www.mcc.org/bc](http://www.mcc.org/bc) for more information on MCC and a detailed job posting on this and other positions.

## Classifieds

### Employment Opportunities



#### MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE REGION V (CANADA) MANAGER

Due to the resignation of Lois Nickel, who is moving on to a position at another institution, MDS is seeking someone to fill the full-time position of Region V Manager beginning immediately.

The Region V Manager works out of the MDS Canadian office in Winnipeg, Man., supervising two staff persons, managing the office, overseeing Region V disaster response in Canada and the U.S. (through Binational office), and coordinating promotion of MDS in Canada. The Region V Manager works closely with the Region V board executive and carries out its work plan.

The right person for the job will have knowledge of the Anabaptist constituency, strong communication skills, proven leadership experience, and a vision for growing this ministry of responding to people affected by disasters. The applicant will fully embrace the Anabaptist faith and peace position. Experience with a non-profit or volunteer agency would be an asset. Post-secondary education is required. MDS Region V employs only Canadian citizens and those non-Canadian citizens authorized to work in Canada.

Mennonite Disaster Service is a volunteer network of Anabaptist churches that responds in Christian love to those affected by disasters in Canada and the United States. While the main focus is on clean-up, repair and rebuilding homes, this service touches lives and nurtures hope, faith and wholeness.

E-mail resume with a cover letter to [jobs@mds.mennonite.net](mailto:jobs@mds.mennonite.net). To view the full job description, go to <http://mds.mennonite.net/about-us/employment>. Applications will be considered until the position is filled.

### Announcement

#### ABNER MARTIN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

This annual scholarship is awarded by the Menno Singers to a student who is affiliated with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and is, or will be, in a full-time program of music study, graduate or undergraduate, during 2011-12.

Applications must be mailed by Sept. 15, 2011. For application documents or further information, contact:

Lewis Brubacher, 16 Euclid Avenue, Waterloo, ON N2L 6L9; phone: 519-884-3072; e-mail: [lbrubacher@sympatico.ca](mailto:lbrubacher@sympatico.ca).

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PHOTO COURTESY OF HUGO TIESSEN



*Perfect weather and great course conditions prevailed for the ninth annual charity golf tournament hosted by the Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home at Leamington's Erie Shores Golf and Country Club on June 18. Thirty-four foursomes—including the women's winners, pictured: Mary Derksen, left, Lisa Fehr, Cheryl Rutgers and Liz Peters—helped raise \$36,500, which will go towards the purchase of a pick-up truck and a toolbox for the home that has served the needs of seniors in Leamington since 1964 and is the only not-for-profit charitable long-term-care facility in Windsor-Essex County. Over the nine years the tournament has raised \$233,500.*

**God at work  
in the World**

**snaps  
shots**

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



*Nhien Pham, front row, left, has been ministering in Canada for 30 years, but finds more open and fertile ground for the gospel in Vietnam. Pham; Hinke Loewen Rudgers (Middle East), front row right; Darnell and Christina Barkman and son (Philippines), back row left; and Lillian and Norm Nicolson and daughter (Burkina Faso), back row right, prepared themselves to represent Mennonite Church Canada in international ministry settings at this summer's mission seminar in Pinawa, Man., an event designed to orient new and returning workers. Participants received teaching on Anabaptist spirituality from C. Arnold Snyder, history professor emeritus at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.; learned about itineration, finances, donor relations and newsletter writing; and worshipped together.*