

Daily Blessing

Welcoming God, may our hearts be responsive to joyfully receive the gift of unity in Jesus Christ that you offer us as we come together from each Area Church, each congregation, and each family. —Sven Eriksson

Approximately 200 volunteers will work to make this assembly a success. If each one volunteers just 8 hours (and many will do more than that), 1,600 person hours will have been invested in the church by the time the assembly concludes (not including advance planning time). Thank-you to all the local hosting volunteers of MCBC! According to 2006 records, there are 3592 members in Mennonite Church British Columbia.

Number of the Day
200



THE VALLEY TAB

THE DAILY NEWSLETTER OF MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, ABBOTSFORD, BC

Book donation greeted with enthusiasm

The arrival of a series of *Believer's Church Bible Commentaries* and fifteen additional Anabaptist theology titles were greeted with much enthusiasm by library staff at the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa on May 18.

The Commentaries – which represented twenty selected Old and New Testament books – and other titles were donated by the congregations of Waterloo North, Hawkesville and Cassel Mennonite, and by C. Arnold Snyder of Pandora Press.

Dan Nighswander, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa – and former General Secretary of MC Canada – facilitated the contribution.

“Thanks to all who contributed money and energy to this project. I personally am happy to have access to the books, as there are several I haven't read yet,” commented Nighswander in an email the following day.

(continued on page 3)



Dan Nighswander (left) delivers 33 Anabaptist books to Annette le Roux, librarian at the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa. Looking on are Yvonne Snider-Nighswander and Ken Chisa, Assistant Librarian.

today July 3, 2007

Welcome to Abbotsford 2007!

Welcome to all who have chosen to attend this assembly. May our worship, discernment, and fellowship reflect who and what God wants us to be!

The **evening worship service** begins at 7:00 in the Secondary School Gym. Adults, youth and children will begin worship together. Partway through the service, adults and children will depart and go to the Middle School Gym to continue worship. Wednesday and Friday evening worship services for the adults and children will be in the Middle School Gym. Junior youth are invited to join senior youth for the entire service on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings as well.

Offering: Tonight's offering will be designated for pastoral and leadership development, meeting Mennonite Church Canada's priority of "Growing Leaders for the Church." MC Canada is working closely with our related institutions of higher education to develop training programs and resources that empower the church at every level for the work to which God calls us. Thank-you for your partnership in committing tonight's gifts to the highly valued work of pastoral leaders.

Mennonite Disaster Service Alumni & Friends Gathering Wednesday, 8:30pm – 10pm. Come out for a time of fellowship, sharing, stories, Greensburg KS DVD and coffee/snacks in the Middle School Room 130 (the staff room) on the MEI campus. See you there!

(more announcements on page 3)

A Taste of Africa

The Bassa people of Liberia have a proverb that says: “One cannot eat a delicious meal for another.”

With these words of encouragement, eighty people lined up behind tables laden with mouth-watering food at “A Taste of Africa,” a fundraising supper in support of literacy in Burkina Faso.

The May 12 event, sponsored by Mennonite Church Canada and hosted by Holyrood Mennonite Church, featured authentic African food and music by members of Holyrood’s African community, many of whom come from Liberia.

Senior Pastor Werner De Jong tested listeners with several African proverbs, encouraging them to deduce their meaning. One proverb said, “An egg should not wrestle with a rock”; another said, “When you see a turtle on top of a fence post, you know he had some help.”

Guest speakers Lillian and Norm Nicolson, MC Canada Witness workers in Burkina Faso engaged participants with informative linguistic gymnastics and presentations on their

ministry. Lillian has served six years in the West African country, and her new husband Norm will join her when they return in January, 2008.

Lillian taught some basic greetings in the Siamou language – a language she helped to put into writing. Two of Lillian’s Burkina friends in Canada to work for a year taught a simple sung blessing in their native tongue, the Samogho language. Over sixty languages are spoken in Burkina Faso, a country of 12 million people. Lillian’s new challenge will be to translate the Bible into Siamou.

Lillian also led the participants in a crash course on linguistics. Her passion and enthusiasm for this work were infectious, and before people knew it, they were attempting to decipher the meaning of Siamou words by comparing simple sentences with each other. Everyone developed a new appreciation for some of the basic rules that govern the structure of languages, not to mention the challenge of linguistics.

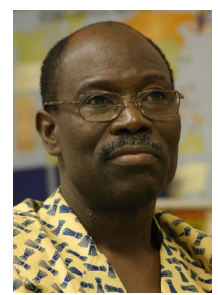
Norm shared images of an audio studio under construction. Norm

designed the studio, and when they return he plans to use it to record Bible stories and Bible teaching in various Burkina languages, which can then be transmitted over the radio. Radio and audio cassettes are the most popular medium in Burkina Faso.

About \$3000 was raised for the Witness worker team in Burkina Faso. The event was perfectly expressed by a proverb of the Fulani people of Burkina Faso: “One finger alone cannot milk a cow.”

Other congregations have held similar events in support of MC Canada ministries in other countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, supporting the MC Canada priority of “Becoming a Global Church.”. If your church would like to host a “Taste of...” event, or learn more about how to become a congregational partner with an international ministry, contact Hinke Loewen-Rudgers, Congregational Partnerships Coordinator, at 1-866-888-6785 or email hloewen-rudgers@mennonitechurch.ca.

–Marvin Baergen



Lillian and Norm Nicolson, Anne Garber Kompaore, Donna and Loren Entz, and Jeff and Tany Warkentin comprise the MC Canada Witness worker team in Burkina Faso. Siaka Traore, Mennonite Church leader from Burkina Faso is attending this assembly with his wife Claire. Traore will be the featured guest speaker at the closing worship on Friday evening.

From the Archives

“Willkommen zur Konferenz der Mennoniten in Kanada 3-7 Juli 1954”

When the annual sessions were held in Abbotsford in 1954, delegates were warmly greeted with this banner at the meeting venue. Our spoken languages may have changed, but warm greetings are still expressed and experienced. At the 1954 sessions the delegates approved a proposed building plan for a Bible College, to begin in the spring of 1955. Today those buildings are part of the Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.

–Alf Redekopp, photo from Mennonite Heritage Centre Photo Collection



(continued from page 1)

“[ESSA] Dean Harold le Roux, in looking at the books, immediately noted several that he wants to use in his reformation history course in the next teaching module. Earlier I had loaned my copy of the Believer’s Church Bible Commentary on 2nd Corinthians to a student who was studying 2nd Corinthians 5, and he now wants his own copy. I’m sure other students will also find these books to be very significant in shaping their understanding and beliefs as they prepare for ministry in various parts of Africa,” Nighswander added.

–Dan Dyck

announcements (continued from page 1)

Special Meeting: The Mennonite Church Canada General Board will host a meeting of friends and family of gays lesbians, bisexual, and transgendered persons on Wednesday evening after worship. As MEI needs to be locked up at 10 pm, the meeting will be held at the Best Western Regency Hotel, 32110 Marshall Road. Please check with the Information Desk for driving directions or assistance with transportation.

On Thursday July 5, 7:30 - 8:30 AM come enjoy a **free breakfast** in the main dining hall and learn about the work of JoinHands Church Building Program of Mennonite Men. Get your admission ticket (work glove) from “White Hard Hats” circulating Tuesday evening and during coffee breaks Wednesday.

Young Adult Conversation on Wednesday, July 4th. Join us for an evening of conversation with young adults and those interested in learning more about young adults in the church. We’ll meet in the foyer near the MC Canada display immediately after evening worship (9 pm) and then move to nearby Emmanuel Church. After watching the documentary *BikeMovement—A Young Adult Perspective on Church* we’ll have time to socialize and discuss concerns, hopes and visions for the Mennonite Church in Canada.

Reader submissions welcome!

Heard an interesting quote in the meal queue or in the hall? Want to share a relevant insight or story about your experience here this week? We welcome reader submissions, and will do our best to print what we can, as space and time permits. (Editors reserve the right to discern appropriate content and edit submissions for length.) Deadline is 6 pm.

Abbotsford 2007 Officers

Every assembly benefits from the help of several gifted persons who assist delegates and leadership with an extra set of eyes and ears. Our parliamentarian helps us manage processes and keep things on track. The Listening Committee helps reflect back what they are hearing and sensing. The Resolutions Committee helps bring clarity to decisions and actions. Take a moment to express your thanks to these individuals for sharing their gifts with us.

Parliamentarian – John Sawatzky (Peace Mennonite Church, MCBC)

Listening Committee:

- Kelvin Dyck (Covenant Mennonite Church, MCM)
- Nicole Cober Bauman (Tavistock Mennonite Church, MCEC)
- Artur Bergen (Eben Ezer Mennonite Church, MCBC)

Resolutions Committee:

- Lucille Marr (Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, MCEC)
- Ed Janzen (Emmanuel Mennonite Church, MCBC)
- Ted Janzen (Rosthern Mennonite Church, MCSask)

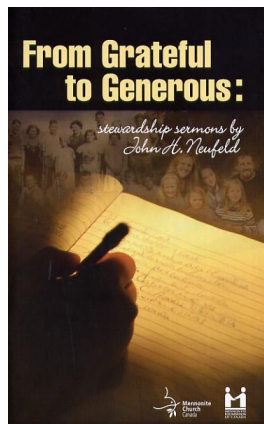
Deadline for daily announcements is 6 pm

New study resource on money

Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Foundation of Canada are excited to announce the publication of *From Grateful to Generous: Stewardship Sermons* by John H. Neufeld. The book contains six sermons on a topic seldom tackled by preachers: money. Each sermon is followed by some discussion questions, making the book a superb guide for individual or group study as well as an excellent resource for preaching. The book fits well with MC Canada’s priority of “Growing leaders for the church.”

John H. Neufeld has been a pastor, and is Professor Emeritus and past president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University). The book has been published jointly by MC Canada and MFC, in recognition of the fact that stewardship of material resources is an important faith issue, and needs more attention in our churches. The book is available at Assembly in limited quantities at the Resource Centre and Mennonite Foundation displays, and upon request from either source.

– Dave Bergen



Invitation

Dear delegates and friends,

Warm greetings to all of you at this Annual Assembly, and a special welcome to representatives of our multi-cultural Mennonite congregations. To those of you who represent the majority, please take a moment to approach and introduce yourselves to our brothers and sisters who are in the cultural minority at this assembly. Some are here for the first time. They may feel lonely and slightly uncomfortable in this English speaking and largely Caucasian Canadian gathering. However, these people wish to know more about the diverse family of Mennonite Church Canada and very much want to be part of it. Your warm welcome and greetings to them will be appreciated. Thank you.

–Samson Lo, Director, Multi-cultural Ministry

Building up and tearing down facilitate peace

For Daniel Pantoja, bringing the peace of Christ to the Philippines involves both building up and tearing down.

The Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker views peace as a “multi-layered, holistic ‘shalom’” that requires an outer framework of political security and economic stability. Constructing that framework will facilitate interaction between Muslim and Christian communities in Mindanao, building trust and ultimately tearing down the walls between them.

Daniel and Joji Pantoja are in the Mindanao region to practice their theology of peace in the midst of violence. A longstanding conflict stemming from issues of land distribution and other injustices has the indigenous Lumad people, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at war with each other. Part of the Pantoja’s objective is to train sustained peace building teams to work in high-conflict areas, encouraging the development of relationships among the three groups.

Peacebuilders Community and Bantay Ceasefire, a civilian ceasefire monitoring group, are constructing “peace houses” in the ceasefire zone between the MILF and the AFP. About the size of a single-car garage, these simple structures will facilitate discussions about ceasefire progress and may eventually hold conflict resolution seminars. The cost of materials for each unit is CAN \$250 and there is no shortage of enthusiastic volunteers to provide labour. Peacebuilders intend to build three such facilities this year.

The Pantojas and Gordon Janzen, Mission Partnership Facilitator for Asia and Middle East, toured the troubled area. In the small village of Sumbulawan, one clash had left bullet holes in houses and palm trees.

Fearing for their lives, more than 2000 families from the village and surrounding areas took flight, setting up tents away from the hostilities. Janzen estimates over 14,000 people were displaced as the result of one skirmish. He wondered “why the world does not know more about this war that continues to disrupt the lives of so many people who are caught in the crossfire.”

“How long will the people stay away from their homes?” Janzen asked a youth leader living near the battle area. “The armies need to move away,” she replied quickly. “They need to move away from our homes and the soldiers on both sides need to comply with the ceasefire.”

Many local Christians have little relational experience with Muslim people. As a result they try to stay out of predominantly Muslim areas where they feel unsafe. Upon learning of the tour taken by the Pantojas and Janzen, an Evangelical Christian

Pastor responded, “Wow, you are brave. But you don’t really love your life, do you?”

Others are more optimistic. A Christian Filipino businessman in Mindanao was excited by Pantoja’s vision of peace building. He wants to explore the possibility of developing a banana-exporting business with Muslim producers in Magindanao. This would create an avenue of communication between Christians and Muslims while providing economic benefits.

In the meantime, the construction of peace houses between two armies is a sign of hope for the troubled region.

Daniel and his wife Joji are members at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, BC. They are in attendance at Abbotsford 2007 and are eager to meet their brothers and sisters from across the country. See a brief profile on the Pantojas on page 5.

—Deborah Froese



Scent sensitivity excludes woman from Abbotsford Assembly

Melissa Lesser has to be careful where she goes. A whiff of perfume or any other scented product can literally take her breath away.

Lesser suffers from Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) with reactions to scent that include headaches, loss of muscle control, dizziness,



Dann & Joji Pantoja

Partnership key to Pantoja peace ministry

In January 2006, Daniel and Joji Pantoja began a partnership with several church organizations to develop a community of peace building teams in Mindanao, Philippines. Peacebuilders Community strives to promote lasting peace by inspiring awareness and initiative in others, and offering the training required to take peaceful action.

The Pantojas will be in Canada in July and plan to visit churches across the country from mid-October to November.

Supporting partners of Peacebuilders Community are Peace Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church Canada and WAVES Community Development Resources.

—Deborah Froese

fainting and the inability to breathe. There is no cure for MCS. Lesser must avoid exposure to scented products or wear a carbon filter mask.

Because Lesser presents no visible signs of illness, many people are skeptical of her condition. "I tell them one in five people has some level of MCS," Lesser says. She is surprised by the number of those who haven't heard of MCS but recognize symptoms in themselves.

Encountering large groups almost guarantees exposure to fragrances. For that reason, Lesser won't be able to attend the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Abbotsford this summer with her husband, Terry Lesser, who pastors at Springridge Mennonite Church. The Pincher Creek couple is expecting their first child and although Melissa's reactions have tapered off with pregnancy, the risk associated with attack-related falls has increased.

"Melissa is very involved at Springridge," her husband says. "It's frustrating that she can't get involved in the wider church."

Springridge posts notices of their scent-free policy on their web site, asking visitors to avoid scented personal care products. In addition, regular cleaning of the facility takes place when Lesser isn't around. Larger cleaning projects are planned with her knowledge so that she can avoid any fumes. "It's a small church," she says. "That makes it easier."

Lesser is appreciative of those who have gone out of their way to help her and knows that it's tough to regulate a scent-free environment. Education



Terry and Melissa Lesser

is crucial. She refers to her younger brother who has had a severe peanut allergy all his life. When he was a child, peanuts were hard to avoid. Since then, public awareness has grown and most schools and children's facilities are nut-free.

Until similar strides are made for those with MCS, avoiding crowds and public venues is the only sure way Melissa Lesser can breathe easily.

—Deborah Froese

MCS Awareness Growing

Awareness of MCS is growing and several public institutions across Canada have become scent-free, including some Mennonite churches and schools. If your church is interested in developing a scent-free policy, check out the following web pages for more information:

http://www.cmu.ca/studentlife_10.html
http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/scent_free.html
<http://www.mcscanadian.org/>

Prepare now for assembly reporting later (Part 1)

After much planning and anticipation, the Abbotsford Assembly is finally here. For the next few days, you will be immersed in activities designed to encourage, challenge, and support church life. Although Assembly 2007 – will come to a close, construction will continue.

As a church delegate or other representative, part of your responsibility includes sharing the “Built to Last” construction tools you picked up along the way. While others need access to details of resolutions and activities, simply itemizing them will not share the essence of “Built to Last.” Go beyond the facts. Share issues or encounters that made lasting personal impressions. That approach will bring the assembly to life for those who did not attend.

Planning ahead makes sharing easier. Here are six points to consider as you

experience the assembly:

1. Jot down the highlights of each day, including any major decisions that were made and any experiences that have affected you personally.
2. Make a point of getting to know new people from our family of congregations across the country and reflect on their perspectives.
3. Consider the elements of worship services that leave an impression on you. Don’t forget to take note of special music or prayers – or an effective order of worship.
4. Ask yourself the following questions about your experiences, especially in regards to the discernment sessions:
 - What is God showing me here?
 - What is this experience telling me about God and the assembly?

- What from this experience is particularly relevant for my church, for me?
5. Debrief daily. Speak with other delegates from your church to share what you saw, felt, sensed and heard. Different events or encounters will stand out to each delegate, but together, you can paint a broader portrait of the assembly.
 6. Take pictures. Or, you can download images from www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68. These are copyright free images from the Assembly photo gallery that you are free to use.

Enjoy the assembly – and make sure to pick up a copy of the Valley Tab final edition where you’ll find tips for preparing written and verbal reports.

-Deborah Froese

Summer fun is in the cards

Many teachers in the education system encourage parents to help their children keep reading, writing, adding and subtracting so their skills don’t get rusty over the summer. Now there’s a new resource that helps kids (and adults) keep their Biblical knowledge and spiritual development from getting rusty over the summer. The Gather ‘Round curriculum project of Mennonite Publishing Network has released a deck of 78 colorful “Parable Cards” to play at home or on the road in conjunction with the summer material on the parables of Jesus.

The cards offer a question, suggestion, or prayer corresponding to a particular parable. For example, a card for the parable of the rich fool who builds new barns to hold all his produce asks, “What does it mean to be rich toward God?” Another card asks that you tell about a time you decided you needed more storage space for something you were saving.

Twenty-six “Any day cards” suggest activities that apply to any parable, such as “Take the characters from your favorite television show and make up an episode that tells the same story as this parable.” The game is a helpful way to build on Mennonite Church Canada’s priority of “Forming a people of God.”

Talkabouts are take-home items that offer families a way to bring up the weekly Gather ‘Round scripture texts in conversation and simple activities.

“Families with children and youth can use these cards any time, at home or on vacation—or in the van on the way to sports events,” said Eleanor Snyder, Christian educator and director of Faith & Life Resources. “Everyone in the church can use the cards to learn about the Parables this summer, and long after. I encourage all congregations—even those without a regular summer Christian education

program—to provide Parable cards to their members.”

To order, call Mennonite Publishing Network at 800-631-6535 or order online at www.mph.org. Mennonite Publishing Network is the joint publishing ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

-MPN Release



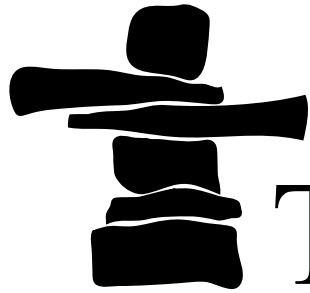
Daily Blessing

Mentoring God, we draw near to be named, shaped and blessed so that we may together serve you with open and compassionate hearts in our broken world.

—Sven Eriksson

53% (117) of MC Canada congregations are represented at this assembly. 34.3% (298) of total possible delegates are represented at this assembly. These numbers could change as delegate certificates and registration forms are rationalized. A total of 377 adults, 22 children, and 427 youth and sponsors are registered to participate in the assembly (numbers as of June 28).

Number of the Day
53



THE VALLEY TAB

THE DAILY NEWSHEET OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, 2007, ABBOTSFORD, BC

It's not just about the money you make

When Michael Jantzi moved into the field of Socially Responsible Investing in the 1990s, a mentor shared his greatest fear with Jantzi – that “SRI would go mainstream, but nothing will have changed.”

Jantzi, President of Jantzi Research, and Gary Hawton, President of Meritas Mutual Funds were two of the guest speakers at a special pre-assembly event on Tuesday called “Putting your money where your faith is.”

John H. Neufeld, professor emeritus at Canadian Mennonite University, provided inspiration from Biblical texts that speak specifically to SRI,

drawing together several Old and New Testament texts.

Neufeld said we are in a time of exile, much like the Babylonians, yet our cultural gods have become more supple and subtle. The priorities of the church are no longer the shared priorities of society. “Covetousness is now the hallmark of our society... we have deified dissatisfaction.”

Both Hawton and Jantzi spoke of SRI as a personal journey of faith. Though their stories were different, both were led to a place where their faith and Bay Street intersected. Jantzi himself now says, “I got into doing what I do to change corporate Canada.”

(continued on page 4)



About 100 participants – about half of whom were pastors, gathered for a special pre-assembly event called “Put your money where your faith is.” Small group discussions became animated as participants pondered insights such as “It's not just about the money you make, but how you make the money you spend” – one of many nuggets of wisdom shared by the presenters. Photo by Dan Dyck.

today July 4, 2007

OFFERING: Tonight's offering will help support Mennonite Church Canada ministries in Burkina Faso, and specifically the ministry of Lillian and Norm Nicolson and their work of translating God's Word into the language of the Siamou people. The next phase of this work will begin when Norm and Lillian return to Burkina Faso in January, 2008. Their work will put God's still unfolding Biblical story into the hands of local people, and spark a new imagination for life aligned with God. —*Al Rempel*

Youth Assembly Offering: Tonight you have an opportunity to help buy audio players for people in Burkina Faso. For the people there, radio and recorded audio are the most popular medium for sharing information and entertainment – but even then it's tough because only some people have electricity. Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers like Lillian and Norm Nicolson are using a sort of wind-up IPOD – a hand-cranked, wind-up audio player to share Bible stories in the language of the Siamou people. The Nicolsons also use the device for literacy training in a previously unrecorded and undocumented native language. In a different region of Burkina Faso, Witness workers Donna and Loren Entz use the audio medium for re-telling Biblical stories in local languages, plus they are recording Siamou cultural music to help these people preserve their culture and history. One of these tools costs approximately \$15. Your gift today will help bring this communication tool to a people who are eager to learn. —*Al Rempel*
(more announcements on page 3)

A short path from bullying to genocide

It's a short path from bullying to genocide, said noted parenting author Barbara Coloroso at her May 31st presentation and book signing at a large Winnipeg synagogue.

Extraordinary Evil: A brief history of Genocide effectively illustrates the line from the personal dynamics of bullying to the social dynamics of hate crimes and genocide, as well as defining the differences between war and genocide. She approaches this daunting topic from her perspective as a former nun, a mother, and as one who cares deeply about society's children.

Coloroso presents reflections on three major genocides in the 20th century from her experience as a volunteer with Stephen Lewis in Rwanda and Darfur, her efforts to connect with and support the lost boys and girls of Sudan, and with refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Coloroso claims that, as in bullying, a critical requirement for stopping genocide is seeing and naming it for what it really is as early in the process as possible. She challenges the international community to get

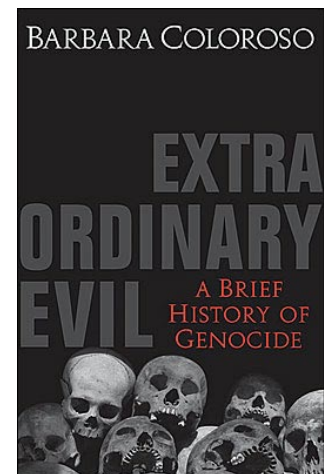
involved and help rewrite the script, rather than take decades to name the genocides of the past and then say "never again," while remaining blind to the evolving genocides of the present. If she were speaking to our assembly this week, I'm sure she would see this task as integral to the MC Canada priority of "becoming a global church."

Coloroso's commitment to "deep caring," to moral formation and almost nonviolent intervention, make her book a must read for those of us who tackle issues of genocide from a peace church perspective. The most unique contribution of *Extraordinary Evil* may be the way it straddles the microcosmic and macrocosmic approaches, enabling those of us who feel more comfortable with the microcosmic arena to tackle one of life's hard macrocosmic questions and helping those with a macrocosmic view get to the microcosmic heart of the matter.

As a former elementary school teacher, I am familiar with Coloroso's respected work on raising children, effective discipline in the home and classroom, and, more recently, on bullying. Many Mennonite Church

Canada members have borrowed her 1989 video *Winning at Parenting, without Beating your Kids* and her 2002 book *The Bully, The Bystander and Me* from the MC Canada Resource Centre. In *Extraordinary Evil*, Coloroso once again raises the bar in a way that extraordinarily connects the local with the global. *Extraordinary Evil* is published by the Penguin Books through Viking, Canada, and is available at popular bookstores.

—Elsie Rempel



Mennonite Publishing Network Assembly Specials

20% off regular price for:

- Meeting Our Multi Faith Neighbors
- Even the Demons Submit
- The North End Lives
- Politics Under God
- God's People Now
- Plant a Seed of Peace

From the Archives

Happy Birthday to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada! In the fall of 1987, the Mennonite Conference of Ontario & Quebec, Western Ontario Mennonite Conference and Ontario Conference of United Mennonite Churches signed an amalgamation agreement that formed the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada (MCEC). The signing took place at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church. Everyone had to sign multiple copies of the agreement. Around the table from the lower left: Robert Snyder (lawyer); Lester Kehl (MCOQ moderator); David Kroeker (MCOQ secretary); John Cornies (UM moderator); Edwin Epp (UM Secretary); Gerald Good (WOMC moderator); Roy Scheerer (WOMC secretary).

—Sam Steiner, photo from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario





Anne Campion (youth hosting volunteer) welcomes jubilant youth sponsors Randy Hildebrand and Kristin Wieler of Steinbach Mennonite Church to the Abbotsford 2007 Youth Assembly. Photo by Dan Dyck.



Kids Registration: Debbie Klassen, Dana Honderich, and Sandra Kuepfer during a quiet moment on Tuesday afternoon were pleading for more children to register for the Kid's Assembly. Photo by Dan Dyck.



Liturgical dancers interpreted the praise and worship music led by Dan Loewen and friends while worshippers sang and clapped to the lively tunes. Over 900 people (estimated) packed the gym at the Mennonite Educational Institute Secondary School on opening night of the 2007 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Abbotsford. Photos by Dan Dyck.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued from page 1)

Mennonite Disaster Service Alumni & Friends Gathering Wednesday, 8:30pm – 10pm. Come out for a time of fellowship, sharing, stories, Greensburg KS DVD and coffee/snacks in the Middle School Room 130 (the staff room) on the MEI campus. See you there!

Come on, should Christians really get involved with environmental issues?

Spend some time on Thursday afternoon walking to a local park, enjoying a part of God's creation, and discussing creation care from a Mennonite perspective along the way. Several facilitators will be included in the group. *Because transportation will need to be coordinated for all upon our return to MEI, you will need to sign up for the walk at the Mennonite Creation Care Network display, where you will find further details.*

On Thursday July 5, 7:30 - 8:30am come enjoy a **free breakfast** in the main dining hall and learn about the work of JoinHands Church Building Program of Mennonite Men. Get your admission ticket (work glove) from "White Hard Hats" circulating Tuesday evening and during coffee breaks Wednesday

Young Adult Conversation this evening (Wednesday, July 4th). Join us for an evening of conversation with young adults and those interested in learning more about young adults in the church. We'll meet in the foyer near the MC Canada display immediately after evening worship (9 pm) and then move to nearby Emmanuel Church. After watching the documentary *Bike Movement—A Young Adult Perspective on Church* we'll have time to socialize and discuss concerns, hopes and visions for the Mennonite Church in Canada.

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Book Signing

Morning Coffee Break: Book Signing Event at Mennonite Publishing Network Book Table: *Half in the Sun: Anthology of Mennonite Writing*. Meet Angelica Dawson, Louise Bergen Price and Robert Martens, contributors and editors of this new anthology of Mennonite writing.

Afternoon Coffee Break: Book Signing Event at Mennonite Publishing Network Book Table: Brice Balmer, author of *Meeting Our Multi Faith Neighbors* Hugo Neufeld author of *The North End Lives*

BBQ & Activities Thursday, July 5, Trinity Western University.

6:00 pm BBQ supper (check at information desk if you don't yet have a ticket).

7:00 pm silent auction – check out the crokinole board at the MC Canada display table

Preach-Off – Ever wanted to preach about the significance of being bald (from Leviticus 13:40-41)? Sign up for some extreme preaching (individuals and teams welcome) at the info desk. You'll get your scripture text when you sign up, and you'll have three minutes to impress the gathered cloud of witnesses with your brilliant and insightful preaching on Thursday evening.

8:00 pm Various activities – Sand volleyball, basketball, circle games, visiting in the cafeteria

9:00 pm Shuttles for adults return to hotels. Youth continue with late night activities.

MAX Canada (Mutual Aid Exchange) will begin providing mutual aid property insurance to the Anabaptist Community in British Columbia in September. Pick up your introductory packet at the MAX Canada exhibit.

Special dessert. In honour of their 10th anniversary, *Canadian Mennonite* will be sponsoring a dessert after lunch on Wednesday, July 4th. Look for *Canadian Mennonite's* new logo featured on top of the cakes!

Forming disciples and growing leaders

Whether in elementary, secondary or post secondary education, our church schools are valued partners in ministry. On Wednesday July 4 delegates to Assembly 2007 will hear from a panel of our church school leaders as they talk about the ways they assist the church in fulfilling our priorities of forming a people of God, becoming a global church, and growing leaders for the church.

Panel members include Ron Penner, newly appointed President of Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford B.C., Loren Johns, Acting President, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Gerald Gerbrandt, President of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg Man., Darryl Loewen, Chair of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools and Principal of Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna Man., and Henry Paetkau, President of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. The panel, which takes place Wednesday afternoon, will be facilitated by Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary for Christian Formation.

Reader submissions welcome!

Heard an interesting quote in the meal queue or in the hall? Want to share a relevant insight, story, or photo about your experience here this week? We welcome reader submissions, and will do our best to print what we can, as space and time permits. (Editors reserve the right to discern appropriate content and edit submissions for length.)

Deadline for daily announcements is 6 pm

A completely unique travel opportunity

In 2003, Mennonite Church Canada began formally offering international Learning Tours to help connect the church in Canada with the ministries it supports abroad.

Participants in past Mennonite Church Canada Learning Tours consistently say they have experienced a country and a people they never would have encountered as a tourist. MC Canada Witness workers help host travelers, visiting places to which ordinary tour groups have no access. If you are interested in a truly unique travel experience together with other members of Mennonite Church Canada, contact Al Rempel at 1-866-888-6785 or via arempel@mennonitechurch.ca. Experience what God is doing beyond our Canadian borders!

Coming in 2008

Cuba – Join Jack and Irene Suderman for a dynamic tour of this island and its varied people. Jack has been interacting with the Evangelical

Missionary Church of Cuba since the mid 1980s. In recent years the EMCC has adopted the Confession of Faith in



Alexander and Aisha are a pastoral couple in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba who are eagerly learning everything they can about Anabaptist theology. They would be eager to meet Canadian Mennonites on a Cuba Learning Tour. – photo by Dan Dyck, 2005 Cuba Learning Tour.

a Mennonite Perspective as their own. Tentative tour date is January.

South Korea – Erwin and Marian Wiens are former MC Canada Witness workers in South Korea. Erwin, currently pastor at Trinity Mennonite Church (Calgary), and Marian will take you to their favourite places as you meet an eager and thriving Anabaptist community in an economic powerhouse of a country that began its transition to democracy in 1992. Tentative tour dates are in May.

Coming in 2009

Mennonite Church Canada, in partnership with TourMagination, is planning a Tour to South America for the summer of 2009 that includes the Mennonite World Conference Assembly. Please see www.tourmagination.com or call 1-800-565-0451 for preliminary details of this unique tour.

(continued from page 1)

Jantzi noted that SRI is not a recent invention; Quakers in Victorian England first began to speak out against the inconsistency between the church's values and what was being done with their assets. Later, in the 1970's, during the Vietnam War, the Episcopalian church stood up to corporate America. The trend continued with a variety of groups refusing to have financial relationships with companies working with the racist regime in South Africa.

SRI's have grown dramatically. In 2004 there were \$65 billion in SRI assets. In 2006, the number jumped to \$503 billion. Both Hawton and Jantzi said that SRI's are the way of the future and major corporations are beginning to take note of the fact that investment dollars are shifting to companies that are becoming more socially responsible in their

operations. Some of those are having an easier time borrowing money. Both Hawton and Jantzi believe the trend will continue.

One pastor in attendance observed, "we live in a way that we are trying to balance our desire to do good things with our money, and the potential we have to be driven by greed." Many pastors struggle with the topic of money, said Neufeld. "In our struggle, we have avoided the topic," he added, noting that many of us have not looked to the church when making financial or investment decisions.

Neufeld called for a renewed emphasis on preaching and teaching in the area of Stewardship.

Perhaps faith communities can once again become strong agents of change in the world of finance.

–Doug Klassen

What is SRI?

Traditionally investment companies evaluate businesses by looking at their financial records and then drafting a report about the company's performance. With SRI, there are other factors that are considered, such as the company's environmental record, its treatment of its workers, whether or not the company produces tobacco, weapons, etc.

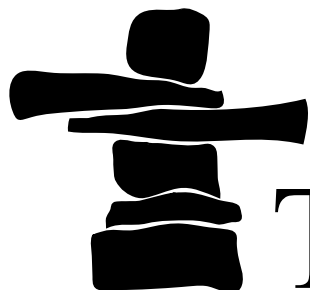
Hawton and Jantzi are clear that none of the companies they deal with have perfect track records in all areas of concern. Some are well down the road, others are starting to make changes that go in the right direction. But many were surprised to hear Jantzi say that it was no longer the faith-based groups who were guiding SRI. "The major players now are totally mainstream," he said. –Doug Klassen

Daily Blessing

Reconciling God, may the peace of Jesus Christ free us, to bring the work of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace to each other and to the world. —Sven Eriksson

2900 meals will have been consumed by Assembly participants by the time the assembly winds up. Thanks to the caterers, chefs, servers, and dishwashers, and anyone else involved in keeping everyone nourished!

Number of the Day
2900



THE VALLEY TAB

THE DAILY NEWSHEET OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, 2007, ABBOTSFORD, BC

Young adults “IN” the church

A Mennonite Church Canada affirmation statement on Young Adults in the Church (page 69, Assembly Report Book) received wide acceptance when delegates raised their hands affirming it as an intentional direction in which the denomination must move.

Discussion facilitators Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary of MC Canada Formation, and Lisa Carr-Pries, pastoral team member at St. Jacobs MC (Ont.) took care to ensure that the discernment topic for Wednesday afternoon focused on young adults in the church rather than young adults and the church.

The session opened with panellists Hinke Loewen Rudgers, Peter Epp, Darren Kropf, Alissa Bender, and Nicole Cober Bauman responding to questions about what lights them up about church life. Some expressed confusion about whether or not they could self identify as a young adult – or even if they felt like one. Their responses to the church life questions were liberally sprinkled with ideas and experiences about community, hospitality, good listening, feeling supported, freedom to ask tough questions, opportunities to use their gifts, inter-generational integration – and more.

(continued on page 3)



David Driedger wondered what was “behind” the Young Adult affirmation statement discussed and approved at the afternoon discernment session. Photo by Dan Dyck.

today July 5, 2007

Book Signing

Morning Coffee Break: Get your signed copy of Jack Suderman’s new book, *God’s People Now*

BBQ & Activities Thursday, July 5, Trinity Western University.

6:00 pm BBQ supper (check at information desk if you don’t yet have a ticket).

7:00 pm silent auction – check out the crokinole board at the MC Canada display table

Preach-Off – Ever wanted to preach about the significance of being bald (from Leviticus 13:40-41)? Sign up for some extreme preaching (individuals and teams welcome) at the info desk. You’ll get your scripture text when you sign up, and you’ll have three minutes to impress the gathered cloud of witnesses with your brilliant and insightful preaching on Thursday evening.

8:00 pm Various activities – Sand volleyball, basketball, circle games, visiting in the cafeteria

9:00 pm Shuttles for adults return to hotels. Youth continue with late night activities.

MC Canada audio-visuals presented during the discernment sessions will be made **available for download** from www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68. Delegates are encouraged to use these presentations for any helpful congregational or other use.

Thanks on behalf of the MC Canada Assembly Planners to Lydia Friesen for creating all the beautiful flower arrangements!

(more announcements on page 3)

WORK for PEACE... STOP PAYING for WAR

A ten-minute DVD being created by Conscience Canada will illustrate the dilemma of Conscientious Objectors: obey tax laws and pay for war – or follow their conscience and redirect those taxes to peace. Its producers say “Work for Peace... Stop Paying for War” will bring into focus:

- The proposed Conscientious Objection Tax Act
- The responsibility of citizens to obey their conscience
- Some of the peaceful interventions available for defence and security
- The personal experience of a former Conscience Canada board member

and active conscientious objector to military taxation.

- Practical steps for objecting to military taxation

Work for Peace... Stop Paying for War features former BC Supreme Court Justice Thomas R. Berger, MP Bill Siksay, Hon. Jean Augustine, former MP and currently Fairness Commissioner of Ontario, Jane Pritchard, family physician, peace tax advocate, and member of Christian Peacemaker Teams, Joshua Goldberg, second-generation war resister, and Bruna Nota, President of CC. The title will be produced in English with French subtitles. Order forms for the free video

are available at www.consciencecanada.ca, or via Conscience Canada at 901-70 Mill St. Toronto ON M5A 4R1; phone 416-203-1402; e-mail consciencecanada@shaw.ca. Work for Peace... Stop Paying for War will also be posted on YouTube (www.YouTube.com) for public viewing. The video is free, but donations are welcome.

Work for Peace... Stop Paying for War is scheduled for release in mid-September. Conscience Canada invites interested persons to become a member for \$10/year.

—Dan Dyck with files from Conscience Canada



Arvid Bergen (left) and Joshua Kuepfer enjoy the strategy game “Battleships” at the Kids’ Assembly. Photo by Dan Dyck



Sina Moradian of First United MC (Van.) was caught painting bleachers at Abbotsford Exhibition Park – one of several Youth Assembly service projects. Photo by Dan Dyck

Worship in the West – Opening night

Worshipping together, youth and adults sang in more than one language and prayed in the Mennonite Educational Institute gym Tuesday night at the first gathering of the Abbotsford 2007 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly July 3.

Flavours from around the world permeated the evening, from learning a new four-part South African song, “Ameni,” to singing “King of kings” in French, to a dramatic Taiko drum performance accompanying a paraphrased rendition of Genesis 1. An interpretive dance group performed movement to the chorus “Glory, glory, alleluia, he reigns.” Adding to the evening’s variety, a choir from Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond presented two international songs.

Those assembled also learned sign language for the three words “Built on Christ,” theme of the evening. A large inukshuk, symbol of this assembly, dominated the front of the room and reminded

everyone of the overarching theme of “Built to Last” based on I Cor. 3:11.

A roll call of participants from the six different regions of MC Canada brought pep rally-style cheers, seeing who could be the loudest, with the enthusiasm of the youth assuring that things never got dull.

Halfway through the worship time, adults moved to another gym where Jorge Hoajaca, pastor at First United Mennonite in Vancouver, challenged the congregation to put Jesus words into action.

“It’s useless to go to a doctor without following his instructions,” said Hoajaca. “Jesus was an expert in Scriptures and in life,” he said. “We must hear [the Word], and do what we hear.”

The evening concluded with an outdoor ice cream social on the M.E.I. grounds.

—Amy Dueckman

(continued from page 1)

During the small group discussion time, Bergen and Carr-Pries selected several small group representatives to summarize their conversations at the microphone for all delegates to hear. While there were plenty of affirmative comments, a few speakers also challenged and questioned the statement.

For some the affirmation statement felt like motherhood and apple pie.

Small group respondent David Driedger wondered, “What is behind this affirmation statement?” Stephen Cox was encouraged by the desire of the denomination to listen to young adults. Justus Zimmerly, age 20, observed that he missed the demographic by two years.

Patrick Buhr of First MC, Edmonton, was one of three visible delegates who opposed the statement – not because of its intention, but because of its expression. Buhr felt the very consideration of a statement targeting a specific demographic felt like segregation. We should be thinking about and affirming ways in which we can integrate all generations, he said.

—Dan Dyck

Starting with the big picture

Mennonite Church Canada is much bigger than the office at 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg. That was the message national church general board member Hilda Hildebrand and Executive Secretary Robert Suderman gave at the opening delegate discernment session on Wednesday morning.

The church isn't just the staff, councils and programs people associate directly with MC Canada. It's also the five area churches and 33,000 church members. Going further, MC Canada has a role in governing a group of more than 20 church-related organizations, including church schools, service organizations, and publications. Beyond this, the church has relationships with the national churches in 16 other countries and mission organizations in many countries.

The pair also shared some numbers. Church attendees together give about \$40 million a year to their local churches. That's about \$1,200 each, or almost five times more generous than the typical Canadian. (The \$40 million figure doesn't include direct individual giving to any other Mennonite organizations or charities, just giving to and through local congregations.)

Green Seminar Bursting with Ideas

Almost 60 people crowded an environmental seminar titled "Being Good Stewards of the Earth's Energy."

All age ranges attended, from youth to senior. The group heard that Mennonites have been discussing environmental concerns for 30 years, but have been slower to take concerted action.

Participants had no trouble coming up with a list of actions that their congregations have done, or could do, such as composting, using washable plates, investing in energy efficient equipment, installing bike racks, and adopting fair trade practices.

But participants also opined with the famed Sesame Street puppet, Kermit the Frog, who crooned "It's not easy being green." Sometimes it's difficult to convince fellow church members that

As a group, MC Canada congregations spend 79% of their funds on ministry within the congregation, 16% on ministry in the region or nationally, and 5% on international ministry.

Delegates were asked to discuss and respond to the general question of how the church body is doing. A number responded to the five percent international ministry figure. "We also identified a concern and opportunity that much of our focus is local and yet we are thankful for the global connections and want to enhance those. Five percent doesn't seem to reflect our commitment to that," said Eleanor Epp-Stobbe of Erb St. Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

Craig Frere, from Living Water Community Christian Fellowship in New Hamburg, Ont., said that comparative figures from two or five years ago, as well as information on demographic information like how old church attendees are, would be good have. Suderman responded that MC USA had just conducted an extensive demographic study of its congregations, and that some of that information would also be true for Canada.

the environmental crisis is real. Others may confuse positive greening actions – taken out of reverence for God's creation – with nature worship.

Participants agreed that our affluence allows us to be wasteful. People were encouraged to show humility and find fun ways to do creation care. One youth joked that, unlike Hummers, Smart Cars just aren't cool because you can't pick up more than one date. Parents, on the other hand, may think that's not such a bad thing.

The seminar was hosted by Jane Snyder (Greening Sacred Spaces), Darren Kropf (MCC Environmental Promoter) and David Neufeld (Mennonite Creation Care Network).

–David Neufeld

Many noted an increased sense of optimism at the area church and denominational levels – though one delegate also observed that such optimism has not yet filtered down to some congregations.

–Tim Miller Dyck

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued from page 1)

I can't really do anything to make a difference in all this environmental stuff, can I? Join a group this afternoon to walk to a local park, enjoy a part of God's creation, and discuss how Christians can get involved in caring for creation along the way. Several facilitators will be included in the group. *Because transportation will need to be coordinated for all upon our return to MEI, we must ask all participants to sign up for the walk at the Mennonite Creation Care Network display, where you will find further details.*



Just as the "Putting your money where your faith is" pre-assembly event was winding down, the latest issue of *Leader Magazine* from Mennonite Publishing Network on the theme of "Money and the congregation" was making its way to

Abbotsford. The Fall 2007 issue of *Leader* can be found at the book store in the display area for \$8 (for non-subscribers).



"Yes!" is the answer to the question by Assembly goes who are wondering if they can take home the *Sing the Story* songbooks included in

delegate tote bags. People are encouraged to share the songbook with their congregations. Two complementary resources – a *Sing the Story* CD and *With Heart and Hands*, a book of piano arrangements – can be purchased in the book store in the display area. The book store closes at 3 pm on Friday.

Reader submissions welcome!

Heard an interesting quote in the meal queue or in the hall? Want to share a relevant insight, story, or photo about your experience here this week? We welcome reader submissions, and will do our best to print what we can, as space and time permits. (Editors reserve the right to discern appropriate content and edit submissions for length.)

Deadline for daily announcements is 6 pm

MC Canada retirement services provider changes name

Belton & Grom Financial Services of Winnipeg, the provider of Group Retirement services to Mennonite Church Canada, will now operate under the new name of Ardent Retirement Group Ltd. with Bryan Grom as President.

“Our new name expresses how we’ve always felt about our business, passionate and intensely devoted to our clients. As always, we remain committed to being independent, accountable and technically excellent and innovative in order to provide you with the best service possible,” said an Ardent news release.

The Group Benefit & Retirement consulting team will remain intact, and several experienced staff have been added, said Ardent.

Almost 900 Mennonite Church Canada pastors, congregational and denominational staff have pension plans serviced by Ardent. Those approaching their retirement years are encouraged to seek advice and counsel from Ardent regarding income alternatives including those associated with the Mennonite Church of Canada Pension Plan and with other government benefits.

Ardent Retirement Group Ltd. services are available to all members and constituents of Mennonite Church Canada for personal financial planning and retirement services. Ardent can be reached at 1-866-943-5658 ext.#4 (local 204-943-5658) or at advice@ardentfinancial.ca.

—Dan Dyck



Military not the only solution to combat fear, distress, chaos

At this morning’s discernment session on the militarization of Canada, delegates will have an opportunity to act as well as discuss.

Ushers will be distributing military recruitment postcards – but with a protest message on the back in place of the original recruiting invitation. All assembly participants are invited to add a personal comment to their signature on the card, and mail it to their MP and Prime Minister Harper. Politicians’ addresses will be available at a table at the back (mail to Canadian politicians does not require a stamp).

The idea came from members at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg when several members received a military recruitment postcard in the mail inviting them to “Fight Fear, Fight Distress, Fight Chaos.” Canada’s military wants to recruit 13,000 regular troops by 2010.

The “Fight” motif had also been showing up on Winnipeg billboards, and military recruitment was one feature at last fall’s Grey Cup game in Winnipeg.

These actions, and the cards, got Sargent member Gerhard Neufeld thinking. With help from a local quick copy shop, Neufeld copied the card, but substituted a protest message on the back: “Contrary to the message on this card, we believe war creates fear, distress and chaos.”

He and others approached their church leadership to discuss the

idea, and subsequently a morning worship service was planned that invited worshippers to sign and mail the card.

“Thanks to Sargent MC for sharing this idea and initiative with the rest of MC Canada,” said Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary of MC Canada Witness.

—Dan Dyck

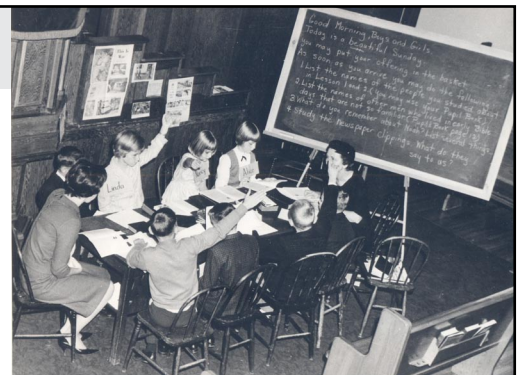


Gerhard Neufeld and pastor Marla Langelotz of Sargent Mennonite Church in Winnipeg took issue with Canadian military recruitment cards. Photo by Dan Dyck

From the Archives

In this Mennonite Sunday School class from the 1960s, the evils of war and militarization could not be forgotten nor overlooked in the education of even the younger children in a congregation: a photo display on the back wall carries the title, “This is War.”

—Alf Redekopp, photo from Mennonite Heritage Centre Photo Collection



Daily Blessing

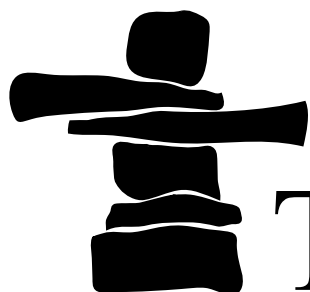
Creating God, your sustaining care for creation surrounds us and gives us life; may the gospel of Jesus Christ motivate us to care for creation as the stewards you have called us to be.

—Sven Eriksson

221 is the number of congregations in Mennonite Church Canada, say our most recent statistics. This represents about 33,000 members. Some speculators suggest that average Sunday morning attendance in MC Canada congregations is around 50,000.

Number of the Day

221



THE VALLEY TAB

THE DAILY NEWSHEET OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, 2007, ABBOTSFORD, BC

Delegates strongly affirm peace statement

Delegates lined up several people deep behind mikes on Thursday morning to speak in support of the draft affirmation statement against militarization in Canada and to share ways to act on it. The session closed with delegates unanimously passing the statement.

“Our group can report that they definitely say yes,” said Ed Lehming of Wide-man Mennonite Church in Markham. Lehming suggested speaking to MPs one-on-one, encouraging a letter-writing campaign in favour of bill C-460 (which allows taxes to be used for non-military purposes), and to emphasize the peacekeeping stance with other faith groups.

“Our group was very much in favour of the statement,” said Henry Patkau of Hope Mennonite Fellowship in North Battleford. “It was suggested that we make known to Stephen Harper our disappointment in a continued increase in militarization.”

“For 50 years, Canada has not been in a war. Now we need to look at it again,” said Earl Smith of Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham, Ont. Several others also spoke in favour of the statement and spoke of the importance of being peacemakers.

(continued on page 3)



Nak-Sun KIM, soon to be appointed leader of the Korean fellowship at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church (Van.), pays close attention in his small group discussion on the increasing militarization of Canada. In Korea, two years of military service is mandatory.

Photo by Dan Dyck

today July 6, 2007

OFFERING: Your offering tonight will help to pay the costs associated with Mennonite Church Canada's partnership with Meserete Kristos College, Bethel Mennonite Church (Elora, Ont.), and Dianne and Fanosie Legesse. Meserete Kristos College is a Mennonite school where Fanosie will teach. Ethiopia has the fastest growing Mennonite church in the world, but the church is having difficulty training pastors and leaders fast enough. Your gift will touch the lives of many individuals as the students in Fanosie's classes grow and learn, and help Mennonite Church Canada be a dynamic partner in this and other partner projects around the world.

Book Signing

Morning Coffee Break: Book Signing Event at Mennonite Publishing Network Book Table:

Loren Johns, coeditor of *Even the Demons Submit*
John Redekop, author of *Politics Under God*

Lunch Hour: Book Signing Event at Mennonite Publishing Network Book Table:
John Redekop, author of *Politics Under God*

Afternoon Coffee Break: Book Signing Event at Mennonite Publishing Network Book Table:

Rebecca Seiling, author of *Plant a Seed of Peace*
Thomas Trzyna, author of *Blessed are the Pacifists*

(more announcements on page 3)

Creation Care and Mennonites: A brief, recent history

With the media attention given to environmental issues in recent years, it has become almost fashionable for individuals and institutions to pay attention to issues of creation care.

A quick search of historical records indicates that creation care has intermittently received some attention at various Mennonite gatherings. Here's a brief look at some of these events and statements of years past:

1975, Swift Current: A resolution expressing concern "for the peaceful use of nuclear reactors and technology" included this oblique creation care reference: "... that 'the 'earth is the Lord's.'" This resolution also referenced the "Declaration on Nuclear Power adopted by the General Conference in 1959."

1977, Toronto: During the energy crisis of the 1970s, a "Social Concerns" resolution regarding development in Canada's north included the following eco-friendly words and phrases:

- "encourage the development of traditional economies based on renewable resources;"
- "ensure that the environment will be protected before proceeding with industrial development;"

- "monitor Canada's energy resources and energy needs in a way that is not dependent on the private interests of commercial enterprises;"

- "keep placing before the Canadian people the need for and ways by which conservation of energy can be realized."

1978, Gretna: The introduction to a resolution seeking stronger action to a 1977 statement included this comment: "A resolution concerning Christian stewardship of energy resources was presented and accepted at the Bluffton General Conference session in 1977... Be it resolved that: The congregations of CMC take seriously the resolution passed at Bluffton..."

1983, Winnipeg: A delegate session included the following words as part of a long resolution on peace: "...because as Christians we believe that we are to be stewards of life, health and God's creation, and we are to love our enemies."

1988, Winkler: A resolution about the impact of low level military flight training produced this statement: Whereas the Department of National Defence together with the NATO allies are making low-level military flights over Innu and

Inuit-occupied land causing distress to the people and damage to the environment." (excerpted)

1990, Edmonton: A Canadian Conference of Mennonites proposed mission statement included this reference: "This includes the promotion of biblical faithfulness in worship, in evangelism, in service, in peacemaking, and in the stewardship of God's creation."

1991, Saskatoon: The 1990 mission statement was broken down and focused on specific actions, one of which was, "Nurture renewed commitment to thoughtful biblical faithfulness in worship, outreach, service, peacemaking, and in stewardship of finances, time, talent and God's creation."

It has been said that peace is "Harmony with God, harmony with oneself, harmony with others, and harmony with God's creation." It is interesting to note the timing of the above historical references, and that creation care was frequently connected to issues of peace.

—Thanks to Alf Redekopp at the Mennonite Heritage Centre for the research.

Jesus loves us – in any language

A favourite children's hymn proved to be a powerful lesson for adults at the Abbotsford Assembly 2007 Wednesday evening worship service.

"Jesus Loves Me" may never have been through so many variations. Worship leader Heidi Epp began with an original soulful piano arrangement of "Jesus Loves Me," but it didn't stop there. With help from a trio singing a jazz version and youngsters from Peace Mennonite Church playing it on piano, trombone, violin and trumpet in their own styles, Epp and her crew managed to make the simple point: Jesus loves all and accepts genuine expressions of love in return, no matter how the "song" is sung. A number of adults found themselves singing the simple children's hymn with new appreciation as they also joined in.

"Built in Love" was the theme of the evening, with Mennonite speaker Siaka Traore of Burkina Faso presenting the message. Traore talked of the importance of loving one's neighbour, while admitting this was often a challenge with difficult people. "Do we love God with all of our strength, heart and being?" he asked. "If so, we will also love our neighbour. Where there is no love, there is no life."



Photo by Dan Dyck.

Traore's wife Claire also shared a story of a Christian woman whose next door neighbour repeatedly threw garbage in her yard, but who won the woman for Christ by choosing not to get angry, but loving her and praying for her. "What are we doing to show love to our neighbours?" she concluded.

Again the worshipers were reminded of the international character of the church. The Traores' testimonies were presented in French with translation. A group of musicians with Latin American backgrounds led the congregation in learning Spanish versions of a number of familiar hymns.

The evening's offering went for ministries in Burkina Faso.

—Amy Dueckman

(continued from page 1)

In one case, the statement was felt to be not strong enough. "We're friends with a military chaplain and he would even agree with this statement, which raises a question in my mind. Although I affirm this statement and want to move forward on it, I think it is too soft," said Tym Elias of Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

However, Ken Quiring, of Grace Mennonite Church in Brandon, said his group was not convinced that the wider church would be "completely with" the statement. "A lot who come to these events would be, but a lot in our congregations would be more conflicted," he said. He added that the church is far too hesitant to be clear about from where its peace position comes. "Our calling in this comes through Jesus Christ who brings us peace from God. This doesn't come from some generic humanism or from a nice liberal democracy."

"Our congregation in Brandon, we often feel very alone living next to the now enlarged [military] base in Shilo. We would like to ask for resources ... on knowing how to get to know the families of soldiers, rather than polarizing materials."

There was also a caution on how Mennonites talk about peacemaking. "We also need to be careful not to ostracise those that have made other choices but who are still willing to engage in conversation," said Clare Neufeld at First Mennonite in Kelowna. "We need to be peacemakers in our personal relationships. Someone observed rather astutely that some are quite militant in our peace stance," he said.

—Tim Miller Dyck, *Canadian Mennonite*



Dann Pantoja, MC Canada Witness peace worker in Mindanao, Philippines, shares how he became a believer in peace theology. Photo by Dan Dyck.

Call to action and prayer: Justpaz – Colombia

On June 14, 2007, computers containing sensitive information were stolen from Justpaz, a Mennonite Church Canada partner peace agency in Colombia. The computer files contained details on murdered and tortured victims of guerrilla groups and people displaced by violence. The theft will again increase levels of threat and danger for those documented individuals who remain alive.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness has prepared a documentation package that congregations and individuals can use to advocate on behalf of Colombians caught in this situation. Included is a template letter advocates can use to send to their elected representatives.

This information can be found at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/420.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued from page 1)

Thank you...

to all the local volunteers, speakers, presenters, workshop hosts, MEI board and staff, planners, worship and music planners and leaders, seminar hosts, MCBC and all its congregations, caterers, delegates for their dedicated work, volunteer writers and photographers, audio-visual technicians and many more. If you pass any of these people in hall, please extend a hand of gratitude. May this assembly help us all build a church that lasts.

A few deserve a special thank you...

Adult Assembly

Local Hosting Coordinator – Marijke Olson

Facilities – Fran Hofenk

Hospitality – Linda Peters

Food Services – Janette Thiessen, Erna and Jake Janzen, Eleanor Wiebe

Tours – Waldo Neufeld

Transportation – Hans Hofenk

Guest Services – Marie and Gotthardt Rehler

Ushering – Elli Guenther

Registration and Lodging – Peter Andres

Treasurer – Eldon Krause

Worship – Heidi Epp

Kids Assembly – Emily Nighswander, Fong Spyker, Heather Rempel, Debbie Klassen, Rebecca Seiling, Monika Neufeld, Sandra Kuepfer, Agnes Pun, Dana Honderich, Irene Penner

Adult Program Committee – Marijke Olson, Karen Schellenberg, Mildred Roth, Dan Dyck (staff), Karen Peters (staff), Elsie Rempel (staff), Pam Peters-Pries (staff)

Youth Assembly

Community Life Facilitator – Anne Campion

Service Projects – Rod Wiebe

Late Night Activities – Russ Klassen

Worship Planning Larissa Friesen

Tech Support and Worship Planning – Tim Froese

Worship Leaders – Jason Feick, Katie Schmidt, Jen Nickel, and Dan Loewen and his worship band.

Special thanks to all youth sponsors, and to all the youth who trekked to the west coast to learn more about what it means to be Jesus' disciples, and to be the church together in BC for four days.

At Thursday morning's worship and discernment sessions, Dann Pantoja shared a compelling story of peace building in the conflicted Mindanao region of the Philippines, and thanked Mennonites for their theology of peace. **A documentary DVD called A Revolutionary Faith** (approx. 18 minutes) featuring the Pantoja's ministry can be requested for free from the MC Canada Resource Centre. The video is an excellent discussion starter for peace conversations in any setting. A Revolutionary Faith is one of several titles on the MC Canada Compilation DVD #2. Find it at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/156.

MC Canada audio-visuals presented during the discernment sessions will be made **available for download** from www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68. Delegates are encouraged to use these presentations for any helpful congregational or other use.

IMPORTANT: Resolutions, decisions, and actions of the Abbotsford 2007 MC Canada assembly will take place during the final discernment time on Friday, July 6, expected to end at 5:30 pm. To include these items in a hard copy final edition of the *Valley Tab* will not be possible, so **the final edition of the Valley Tab will be posted only online** at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68. This final edition will be especially helpful for delegates who are reporting back to their congregations. Resolutions, decisions, and actions of the Abbotsford 2007 MC Canada assembly will take place during the final discernment time on Friday, July 6, expected to end at 5:30 pm.

All editions of this newsletter, a photo gallery of the assembly week, and more can be found at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68.

Heard an interesting quote in the meal queue or in the hall? Want to share a relevant insight, story, or photo about your experience here this week? We welcome reader submissions, and will do our best to print what we can, as space and time permits. (Editors reserve the right to discern appropriate content and edit submissions for length.)

Deadline for daily announcements is 6 pm

Important Peace (and other) Resources

Several delegates at the microphones during Thursday morning's discernment sessions on the militarization of Canada observed that there are individuals in their congregations who struggle with or even disagree with Mennonite peace theology. Many of these speakers asked for more resources. The good news is that there already are plenty of resources available. Arlyn Epp Friesen, Manager of MC Canada's Resource Centre put together this list for readers. Arlyn adds that the MC Canada Resource Centre in the display area here at the assembly has put together collections on this assembly's three main themes: the militarization of Canada, creation care, and young adults in the church. The Resource Centre display closes at 3 pm on Friday.

Children:

Raising Peaceful Children in a Violent World:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/408

Praying with Our Feet:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/409

Rhythms of Peace video series:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/410

Planting Seeds of Peace – new children's book soon to be listed at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resource-centre/Home

Other children's peace resources: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/411

Christian Peacemaker Teams resources: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/412

Conscientious Objection:

Bill C-460 resource bundle www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/413

Read about and hear conscientious objectors share their experience at MC Canada's Alternative service website – www.alternativeservice.ca

MCC "Armed and Ready" website – <http://mcc.org/canadaarmed/>

Other conscientious objection resources - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/414

Peace - general

Church Matters radio program/podcast on the theme of Militarization, Canada and the Church:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/316

Second Mile curriculum:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/416

Other:

A broad collection of peace resources. Find out what our church and the wider church is doing:

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/184

Campaign to establish a Canadian Department of Peace:

www.departmentofpeace.ca/

Conscience Canada:

www.consciencecanada.ca/Home/

Find your Member of Parliament by postal code: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/358



Faithful volunteer Marie Rehsler, age 70, has served at four BC assemblies. Why does she do it? "Because I love the Lord and I want to help!"
Photo by Dan Dyck



Gary Horst (left), pastor of Wilmot Mennonite Church, Doug Horst (centre) and Andrew Horst (right), all related, made the delegate sessions a week-long stopover in their thousand kilometre bike trip from Victoria to Calgary. Gary Horst spent six months training for the ride over the Rockies and is making the trip as part of a larger effort to cycle across the country. "Get 'er done," is the group's motto, according to Doug Horst.
Photo by Tim Miller Dyck.

From the Archives

Young adults engaged in the work of the church by attending this annual session in Toronto in 1977. Who are these folk? Where are they today? Creation care was also a concern at this gathering, where delegates resolved to support Mennonite Central Committee's "Statement on Industrial Development in Northern Canada," which included protecting the environment and conserving energy.

—Alf Redekopp, photo from Mennonite Heritage Centre Photo Collection



**Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of
Denominational Minister/Director of Leadership
Development**

Accountable to the Executive Secretary of Christian Formation, the Denominational Minister/Director of Leadership Development is responsible for building up the ministry of MC Canada and its area churches through pastoral and other leadership development and support, and serves as minister to the denomination.

This full-time position, located in Winnipeg, MB, provides key leadership for the denomination, is part of the Executive Staff Team, and requires a person of vision with strong leadership and administrative capabilities. Travel across Canada is a requirement of the position. For a complete list of key duties and qualifications please see the job description posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church.

Inquiries, applications and nominations for this position can be directed to Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources at kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca, Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4 (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Applications will be processed starting October 1, with a preferred start date in the first quarter of 2008.



Scott Albrecht of First MC (Kitchener, Ont.) made a strategic error by choosing his own Preach-Off text from Mark 14: 51-52: "And when the men grabbed him, he left the cloth behind and ran away naked." Although she was extremely cute, Albrecht's straight man – infant daughter Anna – was not able to help him pull his theme out of the laundry. Photo by Katharina Nuss.

Penner fleeces Plenert of title

Carol Penner of First Mennonite Church in Vineland (Ont.), trounced the 2006 reigning Preach-Off champ Steve Plenert of Springstein MC (Man.), surprising the congregation with a creatively composed call-and-response sermon song.

In an ironic twist, Penner chose to set her lyrics – based on a scripture reference to two bears that maul 42 boys – to the tune of "All creatures of our God and King" – number 48 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. Penner took home a prize in the form of a dinner with Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

The lyrics, loosely based on 2 Kings 2:23, reference Elisha as a bald headed man being teased by a large group of young boys. "Go away, baldy! Get out of here!" shouts the group in the Biblical text. Elisha curses the boys, and immediately two bears leap out of the forest and mauled 42 of them.

Penner, labelled the "Princess of Prose" by Preach-Off host Bud Kehler, interacted with the congregation by teaching the chorus – and many readily joined in. The sermon song ends with the phrase, "Now we know why God has called/ Many prophets who are never bald."

Fifteen participants voluntarily signed

up for the competition that challenges preachers and speakers to exegete an obscure scripture reference in three minutes or less. The youngest was 15 years old.

The first ever Preach-Off was launched at the MC Canada assembly in Edmonton in 2006.

–Dan Dyck



Carol Penner easily snatched the 2007 Preach-Off title from Steve Plenert at last night's competition. Photo by Katharina Nuss

Turning dreams into realities

On Wednesday night 11 young and not-so-young adults gathered at Emmanuel Mennonite Church to watch most of the documentary *BikeMovement: A Young Adult Perspective on Church*. The documentary follows a group of young adults on a cross-country USA bike trip with discussion stops at churches along the way.

Participants offered various young adult perspectives: community and the church, questions about God, transience and other pertinent young adult concerns.

Suzanne Bender appreciated the vocalization of common young adult concerns like transience in regards to the church. Some thought that the documentary

could have delved even more deeply in the hard questions that the church faces such environmental cares and issues of Mennonite suburbia.

The 11 participants explored the idea of moral and spiritual absolutes and discussed the increasing trend of such absolutes being replaced by ambiguity. Is this a result of our current culture that celebrates disconnectedness and ambiguity or is it a result of our transience and increasing global travel? In true young adult style, the discussion left the group with more questions than answers.

Nicole Cober-Bauman was one of several young adults who expressed some

frustration at the repetitive nature of discussions regarding young adults and wondered about practical next steps for young adults and others in the church. Where do we go from here? How do we practically apply our dreams, hopes, and visions for the integrated health and wholeness of a church based on the example of church in the New Testament and centred in Christ?

The hope is that discussions inspired in spiritual communities like these will lead the church to creative ways of making dreams into tangible realities.

—*Hinke Loewen-Rudgers*

With each annual assembly, staff are excited to have the opportunity to collect photos for possible use in various ministry communications and the mennonitechurch.ca website, after the assembly is over.

Sometimes we are asked about permissions – often from the perspective of photographers who like to take pictures in their own congregations. People wonder, “Is it OK to include a photo without permission of the subject? Will the people in the picture sue me when they see their faces on the Internet or on the cover of the church newsletter?”

Legally, the rules for the use of news photos are much less restrictive than many people think. These rules are based on the protection of a free and independent press and upon long-established privacy guidelines.

What do you do with all those pictures?



Like all news media, church newsletters and newsmagazines are not required to ask permission from any of the people who appear in news pictures or stories. Getting permission would often destroy the integrity of the news and would make production and delivery impossibly slow; a “free and independent press” would become meaningless. Church news media generally print any news-

related photos without permission unless doing so would violate one of four rules that guide all responsible journalists (see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/435 for some plain language advice on these rules).

There are some common sense exceptions to the “permission not required

rule.” Respect a person’s privacy; do not appropriate a photo of any person for any commercial use (such as advertisements, brochures, or even for illustrations months after the news event) without permission. That would be a commercial use, even if you give all the brochures away for free (although there are even exceptions to this exception).

At Mennonite Church Canada, we do our best to seek permission from subjects to use their photos in promotional items after an event. If the subject is a child, we seek parental consent. Usually, though, parents wonder why we used Jamie and not Hannah for a particular application! And if you want to place a picture of a minor on your church web site, then the freedom of the press rules hold – as long as the picture is related to a news story (example: the youth camping retreat).

But not everything that is legal is wise. Churches, schools, clubs, and summer camps are wise to develop their own policies that balance the freedom of the press with the protection of children. Most camps and ministry programs today – like most schools – require a signed permission form from parents or adult subjects themselves to use photos for promotional purpose.

—*adapted from an article by Gerry Chudleigh and Kermit Netteburg*

Daily Blessing

Faithful God, as we depart, help us to be faithful to you, to each other and to the commitments that we have made these days; protect us and bless our journeying. Amen

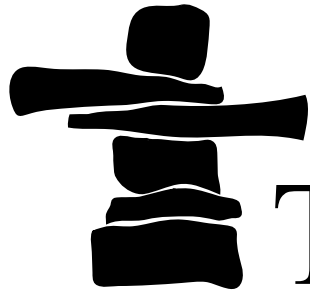
—Sven Eriksson

\$1192.13 is the amount of money raised by the Kids' Assembly for MC Canada Witness ministry in Borabu. See story inside.

10984 Hits on the Abbotsford related web pages of the Mennonite Church Canada web site for the days Monday through Friday this week.

Number of the Day
\$1192.13

FINAL EDITION



THE VALLEY TAB

THE DAILY NEWSHEET OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, 2007, ABBOTSFORD, BC

Delegates debate caring for creation

What does God's command to subdue the earth and have dominion over every living thing (in the famous language of the King James translation of Genesis 1:28) mean for the Mennonite church today? "We seem to be stuck [with these words]," said Scott Brubaker-Zehr of Rockway Mennonite Church, Waterloo, reporting for his group. "We have to realize more and more, we are dependent on the systems of the earth and we don't know as much as we think we do."

The church's Faith and Life Committee (FLC) provided theological reflection on how they see the church relating to the environment and then delegates responded, passing the related creation

care statement and suggesting specific responses.

FLC recognised that Mennonite concern for how we care for the air, water and soil is not new. In particular, they recognized the work of Mennonite Creation Care Network, which has been bringing attention to this issue for many years.

FLC itself presented a 20-point theological response to this issue.

In summary, first, Scripture teaches that God created the heavens and the earth and creation still belongs to God and has value in God's eyes. Our "dominion" over the earth doesn't mean we

(continued on page 3)



Delegates huddle together in small groups intently discussing the popular affirmation statement on Creation Care. One delegate challenged, 'We've made many statements over the years, but have we acted on them?'
Photo by Dan Dyck

today July 6, 2007

MC Canada audio-visuals presented during the discernment sessions will be made **available for download** from www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68. Delegates are encouraged to use these presentations for any helpful congregational or other use.

Looking for resources (studies, statements, activities, worship resources) on our discernment themes? Resource Centre is your one-stop location:

Peace resources:
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/184

Creation care resources:
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/79

Young adult resources
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/189

CORRECTION: Supporting partners of Peacebuilders Community are Peace Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church Canada and WAVES Community Development Resources. CPT and MCC are not official partners as stated in the July 3 valley tab.

Anticipation of assembly draws puzzled looks

This week I will be enjoying the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, a national gathering of eight hundred plus people that will be held in Abbotsford July 3-6. There are children's activities, a youth conference that includes various service opportunities, seminars, delegate sessions, fellowship events, worship times. Discussion and discernment topics will include young adults and the church, the militarization of Canada, and creation care.

When I tell people that I look forward to this annual event in my denomination, I am often faced with puzzled looks and questions. Sometimes I wonder myself, in a world that has seen more than enough denominational and religious conflict, can denominations still play a positive role? In an age where denominations are challenged from within and without, are they still relevant? Or has their time long passed?

For myself, alongside of these questions, I can identify at least three reasons why I continue to value my church denomination.

For me, being part of a denomination means being part of a community of support. As people of faith, we are not alone; instead, we are part of a church body where we can support one another. In the same way, as a local church, we are not alone; instead, we are part of a denominational body where we can support one another. It helps me to know that other churches are working at similar issues, that we can learn from the experience of others, and that we also have something to contribute.

Joining together with others in this way also helps me to enlarge my vision of ministry. Ministry, service, and mission, are not only about my own congregation of 250 people, not only about our setting here in Abbotsford, but extend throughout our province, across our country, and also around the world. Through Mennonite Church Canada, we have a national and international ministry, a whole world of witness including Africa, Asia and the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America.

With this breadth of ministry and mission, it is also important for a denomination to be firmly grounded in Scripture, history, and theology. For the Mennonite Church, this means the Bible as our fully reliable guide to faith and life; the history of God at work in the world, in the church, and in our own lives; a theology that is faithful to Scripture and addresses the real world. Certainly no denomination is perfect. In this world, we are too human, still too much in progress. Yet I think we can be grounded in these things more nearly together than we can each one going our own way.

And so by God's grace and mercy, I'll be a part of this year's Assembly and look forward to what God will do among and through us.

—April Yamasaki

This article first appeared in Thursday's edition of The Abbotsford News. April Yamasaki is the pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford.

Denomination is 'in the black' - leaders grateful

Delegates may have lost track of the number of times Randy Wiebe, Director of Finance for MC Canada, said thanks to delegates for their support of Mennonite Church Canada ministries and programs.

But the gratitude was sincere – a response to a second consecutive year of positive financial results.

Wiebe reported a surplus of \$82,518 for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2007. The surplus – due mostly to under expenditure – was used to recharge the reserve fund.

A 2007-08 budget projecting a slight increase in anticipated revenue over the 2006 figures was easily passed by the delegate body (see Report Book page 61).

Wiebe also reported positive year-to-date figures. As of June 30, income was \$179,000 ahead of projections for this time of year.

Outgoing treasurer Clare Schlegel was unable to attend the assembly, but wrote an encouraging email read by Moderator Henry Krause. Schlegel noted a significant risk reduction since Mennonite Publishing Network and Canadian Mennonite University have repaid all debts owed MC Canada.

Schlegel also cautioned against complacency. "Additional reserves must be built slowly, over time," he wrote. "Finances are necessary, but the work of

the Kingdom is our focus," he added, encouraging delegates to consider bequests, and continued loyalty for individual and congregational giving.

—Dan Dyck



*Randy Wiebe, director of Finance, presents the budget.
Photo by Dan Dyck.*



Helen Kruger of Zion MC in Swift Current speaks to the creation care issue at the mike. Photo by Dan Dyck.

(continued from page 1)

can abuse nature. We need to follow how Jesus Christ humbled himself even when he was our Lord. Like Jesus, we are to carry out God's intentions for creation by being stewards and caregivers of the earth and its inhabitants.

Second, God's salvation plan isn't something that happens just in a new heaven and earth. Part of God's saving activity happens here and now. Part of our call to justice, peacemaking and loving our neighbour comes out in how we care for the earth. Our desire for oil leads us into wars. Increasing use of corn-based bio-fuels raised the price of corn and lead to much hardship among

the poor in Mexico. Climate change leads to more drought in Africa.

Third, God desires to redeem both us and creation. Revelation 22 shows the heavenly city descending to earth, not us leaving earth to go the heavenly city. "Our responsibility is to work to end the suffering of creation, even as we wait for God to redeem it," said Betty Pries, FLC member.

Clare Neufeld, of First Mennonite Kelowna, suggested we take advantage of the "knowledge and personal passions for the environment" our young adults have. Helen Kruger of Zion Mennonite in Swift Current, said that we had things to learn on this topic from native peoples, Amish and Old Order Mennonites. Delegates requested resource material to help with theological clarity and practical applications. "Let's move onto applications," said Kathleen Rempel Boschman of Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Jason Hildebrand, Hope Mennonite in Winnipeg, suggested asking for a voluntary \$20 contribution on next year's assembly application form as an emission offset that would go towards helping congregations do energy efficiency renovations.

-Tim Miller Dyck

Invitation to congregations – FLC

Let the church together proclaim that "the earth is the Lord's" and affirm our Christian responsibility to care for our environment and all of life.

Accordingly each congregation is encouraged to take the following actions:

- develop and practice liturgy and celebrations honouring God and God's creation;
- develop and use curriculum which encourages careful use and sharing of the earth's limited resources;
- develop and practice good stewardship of church property including energy-saving practices, low impact, low maintenance landscaping styles , and limiting the amount of pavement;
- foster a sense of connection to the soil and food production as well as to local fields, woods and water courses, through tree planting celebrations, community gardening, and by spending time learning about and enjoying nature in our local communities.

Individual congregations are invited to report on their stewardship activities to the larger church-wide body at future Assemblies and gatherings.

-FLC



Just a few of the intrepid volunteers who helped to make this Assembly possible (left to right: Fran Hofenk, Marijke Olson, Janette Thiessen, Lydia Huebert and Leah Huebert) Right: Part of the traffic control team. Photos by Dan Dyck.



From the Archives

It's been said that peace means, "harmony with God, harmony with one's self, harmony with others, and harmony with God's creation." The registration at the 1975 annual session in Swift Current, Saskatchewan involved many volunteers fellowship among delegates from across Canada. At this meeting, delegates reaffirmed the sacredness of life in again taking a stand against Capital Punishment, an issue which was "again ravaging our country."

-Alf Redekopp, photo from Mennonite Heritage Centre Photo Collection



Assembly Reporting, Final Tips (Part 2)

The Abbotsford Assembly has come to a close but through effective reporting, the experience can continue. Sharing what you have witnessed may inspire others to actively discuss and support assembly visions and resolutions. Consider the following ten suggestions as you prepare your report.

1. Plan or outline the highlights of your report before you leave or as you travel home, before fresh images and insights have time to fade. Consider the discernment sessions. What have you been inspired to do, to share? What has God shown you about MC Canada and its relationship to area churches and member congregations? Have you gleaned any new insight on creation care or the needs of young adults in the church? How were you affected by details of increased militarization in Canada in contrast with the peace building efforts of the Pantojas in the Philippines? What have you learned about financial stewardship and our theological responsibility for creation care?
2. Avoid a chronological review of the schedule. A detailed list of the events you attended will seem dry and colourless, but comments on responses to them can encourage others. In the words of Jack Suderman in his opening statements, create a painting for your congregation that uses broad strokes to give shape and texture to your experiences.
3. Stick to important highlights, decisions and actions. Make sure to acknowledge the acceptance of the affirmation statements on page 69 of the Assembly Report Book regarding Creation Care, Young Adults and Militarization. Refer also to the Resolution of Creation Care that will help shape the environmental stewardship of future assemblies.
4. Share what you've learned from discernment sessions and discussions with members of other congregations across the country.
5. Report on personally transforming moments. How will you, as an individual, respond to the actions and decisions we made together at the assembly? Are you ready to take Sargent Mennonite Church's challenge to send politicians postcards protesting war? Will you change the way you invest for retirement or approach your lifestyle regarding creation care?
6. Meet with all of the delegates from your church to plan report presentations. Sharing a variety of ideas and insights will add depth to your presentations and expose your congregation to the mood and attitude of the assembly. Sharing experiences from different seminars attended will also enhance reporting.
7. Meet with other church members to incorporate significant themes into church programming for the coming year. How can your church respond to issues of creation care, young adult needs and peace building theology?
8. Create a written report – perhaps to share in your church newsletter – and a verbal presentation supported by visual images. While a written report may convey more detail, a verbal presentation and pictures can enhance your congregation's understanding and engagement with the Assembly experience.
9. Provide an opportunity for fellowship and discussion after report sharing by planning a presentation that includes refreshments.
10. Recreate a worship service that includes meaningful elements from Assembly Worship. An Assembly Sunday worship resource is available at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/238. It draws upon the themes of Assembly worship and includes music, a children's item and references to other resources.

Many more resources, including a photo gallery, liturgies, presentations, audio recordings of sermons, and the Abby Tab can be found at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68. Congregations are encouraged to use these freely.

By engaging your congregation in the ideas of *Built to Last*, you can help to ensure construction continues.

- Deborah Froese



Youth volunteer at Abbotsford MCC thrift and furniture store on Friday. Clockwise starting from left: Rachel Enns, Mandy Turner, Mike Enns (Youth Sponsor), Wayne Hounsome, Breanna Arnold (all from Sargent Ave MC in Winnipeg), Lucas Poetker and Josh Good of Breslau MC, Ont. Photos by Dan Dyck.

Kids' Assembly buys two cows for ministry in Thailand

The enthusiasm of youth and adults for the Inukshuk necklaces made by children at the Kids' Assembly were superseded only by the enthusiastic sales strategies of the makers.

The July 6th sub-theme of "Built for Purpose" was clearly taken to heart by the young sales team, raising \$1192.13 for the MC Canada KidsPak project "Thai Christians Gather 'Round in Borabu", a Witness Ministry in Thailand.

The funds raised can buy two cows for Witness workers Pat and Rad Houmphan's cow lending library in Thailand – or help fund transportation for worshippers to attend church, purchase Bibles, or emergency medical supplies (see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/209 for details).

To respond to the great interest in the Inukshuk necklaces, instructions for making your own necklaces, will be posted on the Mennonite Church Canada website www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/209. Congregations are encouraged to use this activity to extend the spirit of the "Built to Last" Assembly with their congregation.

Perhaps this will encourage Mennonite Church Canada youth to learn about the youth in Borabu, a story told in "Thai Christians Gather'Round in Borabu". Perhaps this activity will lead to more fund raising efforts to help the Thai church build a Christian temple in a city resplendent with Buddhist temples. Will your church embrace this project as enthusiastically as the children at the "Built to Last" assembly did?

–Elsie Rempel



Katrina Epp, wearing one of the inukshuk necklaces the children made and sold to raise funds for a project in Thailand. Necklaces sold out quickly, raising enough money to buy two cows in Thailand. Photo by Deb Froese.

Resolutions – Abbotsford 2007

In addition to the following resolutions, delegates also approved the affirmation statements on Creation Care, concerns regarding the Increasing Militarization of Canada, and Young Adults in the Church found on page 68 of the Abbotsford 2007 Report Book (see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/68) – Dan Dyck

Creation Care

Whereas the earth is an expression of God's love and Christ calls us to be stewards of God's precious handiwork,

Be it resolved that Mennonite Church Canada develop guidelines to reduce the consumption of energy and other resources when planning future assemblies.

Thanks...

We recognize the significant amount of organization and work necessary for a successful assembly. This week we have been inspired and challenged. We have worked together and played together. We have listened to stories, sung of our faith and made progress in building Christ's church - a church *Built to Last!*

- Thank you to the staff of MC Canada and to every person on each committee who planned this assembly.
- Thank you to the local congregations who have welcomed and embraced us with open arms, and for their many hours of careful planning and implementation.
- Thank you to those who planned and resourced the Pre-Conference session on Putting Your Money where Your Faith is.
- Thank you to those who assisted in providing transportation and food for the body.
- Thank you to the many volunteers who always greeted us cheerfully and provide information and direction as needed.
- Thank you to the child care workers who eased our minds and provided learning and entertainment for our children.
- Thank you to those who organized the Youth Conference and to all the sponsors who supported it.
- Thank you to all the members of the boards and councils and especially the Moderator and the General Secretary.
- Thank you to the leaders of worship, those who shared their musical gifts and those who spoke words of exhortation and inspiration.
- Thank you to the seminar leaders and those who provided and staffed the resource displays for educating and informing us.
- Thank you to the caterers, and MEI & Trinity Western University for the use of their facilities.

All have contributed tirelessly to the ongoing work of Building Christ's church - a church *Built to Last!*

–Resolutions Committee



Mennonite
Church
Canada

CHURCH matters

***A radio program that explores the life of the church,
at home, across the street, and around the world.***

In Manitoba at 8:45 am, 3rd Sunday of the month
CFAM 950, Altona, AM 1250, Steinbach, and CJRB 1220 Boissevain
On the web at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/158

Inukshuks courtesy Peace Mennonite



The giant Inukshuk's that graced the fronts of both worship halls this week were designed and built by a group from Peace Mennonite Church. The Inukshuks mimic the logo for this assembly, designed by Lynette Schroeder Wiebe (staff, MC Canada).

Thank you for your gifts of time and talent!

Best wishes, Sven!

Assembly goers had a chance to say thanks to Sven Eriksson, Denominational Minister for MC Canada for the past five years.

Eriksson was acknowledged for growing a “culture of call”, and “helping prepare the ground for the development of pastoral leaders” said Sue Steiner, Chair of MC Canada’s Christian Formation Council. “Thank you for tending the soul of our church in so many ways,” added Steiner.

Eriksson responded with encouragement for the wider church. “It is our task to live into the unity that Jesus Christ has already given us,” he said.

—Dan Dyck



Sven Eriksson, an avid gardener, received a symbolic hoe and leather work gloves in honour of his contribution to the “garden” that is MC Canada. Eriksson is planning to retire from his role as Denominational Minister early in 2008.

Photo by Dan Dyck.



Promising young preacher Adriel Brandt, age 15, of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford was the youngest contestant in the Preach-Off on Thursday. Photo by Katharina Nuss.