

## Daily Blessing

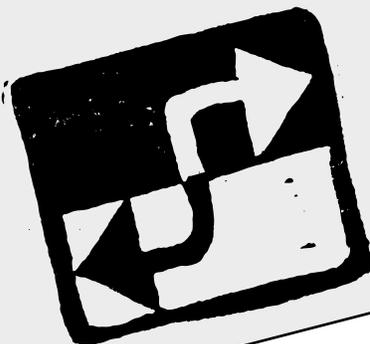
"God of anticipation, open our hearts to receive your wisdom and grace, as we gather with sisters and brothers from across North America to honour your name and be renewed in spirit and understanding."

As of 11:30 am on July 3, 575 people have registered to attend the Summit, and 495 for the Assembly. Of these, 58 are children participating in the Kids' Assembly & Summit; 16 registrants have identified as Young Adults; 13 have said they are attending for the first time. Walk up registrations may inflate these numbers. A special welcome to all those who came from beyond Canada.



THE DAILY NEWSHEET OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, 2008, WINNIPEG, MB

# CROSSROADS CURRENT



today  
July 7, 2008

### Welcome to Assembly 2008!

Welcome to everyone – whether Winnipeg is your home town, or you've traveled to get here. Please make yourself comfortable. Meet and greet your brothers and sisters with the Peace of Christ. May our worship, discernment, and fellowship reflect who and what God wants us to be!

**Resource Centre:** You may have talked with us on the phone or by email. You may have searched our online catalogue. Now come browse our physical library – and enter a draw for a new resource! We're open today from 8:30-7:00 on the south campus.

**The Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre** (South Campus) is open each day until 7 pm.

- Thriving Pastors – Healthy Churches: For related resources on this morning's discernment topic visit [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/504](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/504) and [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/606](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/606)
- Greening the Life of Our Church: For online resources related to this afternoon's discernment topic, see [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/79](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/79)

MC Canada General Board will host a **gathering for LGBT people and their friends and family** at 9:00 pm, Monday, July 7, in the MC Canada Board Room in the basement of the MC Canada offices, South Campus.

(more announcements on page 3)

We hope that this little news sheet will help make Assembly 2008 more informative and welcoming to each of you. This year we've called it *Crossroads Current* because: it is part of our theme – *At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril*; Winnipeg is at the centre – or crossroads – of a historic continental east-west and north-south route; Winnipeg is located at the confluence – or "crossroads" of two rivers: The Red River and the Assiniboine River, which have been an historic crossroads for Aboriginals, Settlers – and even early Mennonites who arrived at this intersection by boat. "Current" because: Winnipeg is located at the confluence of two rivers that 'flow' – i.e. "current", we will be covering 'current' issues and news of the Assembly and Summit. Finally, cross is at the centre of the gospel – put together with the road of the Christian "Way", it makes a good Anabaptist metaphor.

## Thriving pastors; a shared responsibility

–by Deb Froese

What makes pastors thrive?

That question was at the heart of a Pastoral Trends Survey Colloquium facilitated by Mennonite Church Canada's Christian Formation Council earlier this year. The subject will be addressed during the 2008 Assembly/Summit as a discernment issue and a learning track topic.

Survey data pointed to significant trends emerging among Mennonite pastors in Canada. Declining numbers of new pastors, an aging pastoral population, more associate pastors and fewer youth pastors may not be surprising discoveries, but the col-

loquium discussion about these factors revealed the significance of shared responsibility in developing and maintaining a healthy pastoral leadership.

(continued on page 3)



Dr. Dieter Schönwetter discusses some of the statistics revealed in the 2008 Pastoral Trends Survey. Photo by Deborah Froese



# Greening our assembly

—by Dan Dyck

At Abbotsford 2007, delegates passed a resolution that called on MC Canada to develop guidelines to reduce the consumption of energy and other resources when planning future assemblies.

In partnership with the Mennonite Creation Care Network (MCCN), draft guidelines have been developed and will be discussed at this assembly (see the Discernment item on pages 52-53 of the Report Book).

Pam Peters-Pries is the lead planner of the assembly and identified some challenges of meeting all the guidelines identified by MCCN.

“We need to balance creation care alternatives with other values such as cost and accessibility of venues. If we were to implement all the MCCN guidelines our choice of venues would be very, very limited. For example, finding facilities that are LEEDS certified and are within walking distance of primary lodging would mean a narrow choice of cities and venues.” LEEDS is an energy efficient building certification.



T-shirts sporting positive messages are available for purchase at the Resource Centre (South Campus). Blue: “Reduce violence, Reuse kindness, Recycle Generosity;” Brown: “Seek peace and pursue it. – Psalm 34:14” Sleeve: “Mennonite Church Canada” and dove logo, small. \$12 each, while supplies last. The Resource Centre is open each day until 7 pm.

David Neufeld represents the Mennonite Creation Care Network. He responded, “There is no question that there are fewer venues that will be available and meet all the requirements. In the past we have not factored in the environmental costs of our meetings. We may see some marginal cost increases on the financial side. If we do our cost accounting to include the cost to the environment, then there will be savings.”

When asked if the MCCN guidelines could cause a decline in attendance, Neufeld said the guidelines were drafted with the assumption that it is good to meet together. “How far can we push ourselves to make our events have the smallest environmental footprint possible? I don’t think we’ve gotten anywhere near the point where we would be faced with that dilemma [of declining participation].”

Peters-Pries notes that one of the biggest environmental impact of MC Canada assemblies is the transportation choices people make to travel to the event. “We did an informal poll of people asking if they would consider traveling to the assembly by bus. The results indicated that, overwhelmingly, people were not prepared to travel that way. Although we can attempt to influence the choices people make, we cannot control them. And, we need to also invest our planning energy in places where we believe we will have the greatest environmental benefit.” Some experts say that travel by bus is far less environmentally intrusive than travel by car or airplane .

Peters-Pries noted that the 2007 resolution was passed after the 2008 venue had already been selected and booked, making some criteria impossible to meet. For example CMU does not have enough dinnerware to serve 5-600 people; renting dinnerware was investigated, but it would have had to be trucked in clean and trucked out dirty – several times per day.

“We also could not get enough copies

of our Sing the Story song books, so we’ve had to choose music perhaps a little more carefully and selectively copy [on paper] some music.”



**Some steps have been taken at this assembly in response to the 2007 resolution on greening the assembly. Items listed with an asterisk have been wholly or partially implemented in previous assemblies.**

- Paperless/electronic registration for the assembly is an option\*
- Near paperless promotion of the assembly\*
- Assembly print materials produced on recycled paper when possible\*
- Compostable dinnerware will be used for meals at this assembly.
- Organic food waste will be collected and composted.
- Recycling bins available on campus
- Worship graphics/banners and song lyrics will be projected on a screen rather than being printed\*
- Not serving bottled water; participants have been encouraged to bring their own water bottles/ coffee mugs
- Re-useable signage\*
- Primary lodging within walking distance; Concord Hall is most energy efficient of its kind in Canada
- Coordinated shuttle service for those staying off campus and arriving from the airport\*
- Camping facilities have been identified for those who want that option\*
- Billeting options have been provided\*
- Educational seminars on creation care and outdoor walks\*

Three elements emerged as primary tools; platforms for calling people to ministry, access to education, and support systems designed to sustain pastors over the long term. The positive impact of “shoulder-tapping” or personal invitation to ministry was identified, demonstrating the vital role congregations play in developing leaders.

“In the past congregations called pastors, but the more recent trend has been to let schools do this,” said Sven Eriksson, MC Canada’s recently retired Denominational Minister. “We need to reconsider the significance of congregations in pastoral formation.”

Although pastors participating in the survey revealed a common desire for ongoing training including access to mentors and spiritual coaches, the most powerful motivation for continuing in pastoral ministry was spousal support. An engaged, supportive congregation was also important.

Social psychologist Dr. Dieter Schönwetter who gathered and interpreted the data noted that more pastors leave their positions for positive reasons such as continuing education, geographical moves, career advancement, church plants and maternity leave, than for negative motivations such as leadership or congregational conflict.

To explore this issue further, Assembly Delegates are invited to attend a Monday afternoon discernment session, “Thriving Pastors: Healthy Churches.” At the Summit, a series of six seminars under the theme “Developing Leaders for the Church in Today’s World” will be featured in a series of six seminars. See your Assembly Report Book and/or Summit Program Book for further details.

To read more about the Pastoral Trends Survey Colloquium, see <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/672>

*announcements (continued from page 1)*

**Manitoba’s Passion Play:** A brochure in your Assembly tote bag contains details... Depending on how many are interested, a bus will be chartered from the CMU campus to La Riviere, leaving Winnipeg at approximately 4:00 pm on Friday. If you require transportation to La Riviere for the evening performance on Friday, July 11 please sign up at one of the Assembly Hospitality Desks by Wednesday evening 7:00pm.

**PIT–Peace it Together, Facing Your Fears**

Bullying, domestic violence, school shootings, bomb threats...these are the kinds of things today’s youth worry about. These are also topics to be explored in Facing Your Fears, the March 6-8, 2009 PIT youth & young adult conference at Canadian Mennonite University with speaker Tony Campolo.

Let youth at your church know about this exciting event!

**Postcard Project:** A “Postcard Project” that invites fellow MC Canada folks to express their ideas about becoming a welcoming church to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) Mennonites, is on display at the Shaftesbury High School (across the street from CMU, South-East corner of Shaftesbury and Grant) The sponsoring group invites you to engage the display and stop in for conversation on:

- Tuesday, July 8** - 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 9** - 12:00 noon - 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, July 10** - 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

**BMC Display:** A display of resources of the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests is open at the Shaftesbury High School (across from CMU, South-East corner of Shaftesbury and Grant) on:

- Tuesday, July 8** - 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 9** - 12:00 noon - 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, July 10** - 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

A **BMC Luncheon** and conversation will be held at the same location on Wednesday, July 9, at 12:00pm . Bring a bag lunch or call 204-299-7355 or email [bmc@bmcilgbt.org](mailto:bmc@bmcilgbt.org) to reserve a sandwich.

**Lost Books:** Three books and a CD were found in one of the seminar rooms after the assembly in Abbotsford last year. If you lost these items last year, please pick them up at the Hospitality Desk.– Marijke Olson

**Meet the Author** events to take place at lunch-time at Mennonite Publishing Network Display Table in the Great Hall (North Campus):

- Tuesday July 8th:** Gary Harder–*Dancing Through Thistles in Bare Feet*
- Wednesday, July 9th:** Paul Redekop–*Changing Paradigms*
- Thursday, July 10th:** Wilma Derksen – *The Emerald Angel*

**An Invitation**

**Dear delegates & friends,**



Warm greetings to you at this assembly, and a special welcome to representatives from our multi-cultural Mennonite congregations. No matter which part of the country you are from, please spare a moment to greet our friends who are from linguistic and cultural backgrounds that may be quite different from yours. As a diverse family in Christ, we feel the need to support and be a blessing to one another. In spite of our diversity we desire to build one church with many peoples. We need one another in seeking and obeying God’s will on this faith journey. Your warm welcome and greetings to these peoples will be very much appreciated. Thank you.

–Samson Lo, Director, Multi-cultural Ministry, Mennonite Church Canada

**Notables...**

At each Mennonite Church Canada Assembly (and this year at the Summit) we have participants, delegates, observers, and guests that will particularly pique the interest of many among us. Make a point of introducing yourselves an getting to know these folks: Raquel Contreras, President of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Chile; Peter Rempel Enns, President of the Council of the Mennonite Conference of Mexico; Lucy Roca, originally from Colombia, is currently a church planter in Sherbrooke, QC; Jaime Meza, also from Colombia, is leading a Hispanic ministry in Saskatoon; Jim Schrag, Ron Byler, Jorge Vellejos, Iris deLeon Hartshorm, and Patricia Shelly, all of Mennonite Church USA; Bruce Clemenger, President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; Rev. Paul Johnson, representing the Canadian Council of Churches; the Korea Anabaptist Fellowship in Canada, held its meetings on July 5 and 6 in Winnipeg in order to also participate in the Assembly and Summit.

## Announcing Canadian Mennonite photo contest winners

By Tim Miller Dyck, Canadian Mennonite Editor/Publisher

Two of the themes from last year's Mennonite Church Canada national assembly in Abbotsford are beautifully expressed in the photographs of the two winners in Canadian Mennonite magazine's photo contest.

Celebrating the magazine's tenth anniversary, Canadian Mennonite launched a contest at the start of the

year asking readers to submit photos on the past assembly, with results to be announced at this year's assembly. Now, the two winners are being publicly announced here for the first time.

Jon Janzen's photo of a young person with upraised hands won the "Young adults in our churches" category. Janzen attends Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver.

Todd Hanson, Mennonite Church

Canada Witness worker in Nanchong, China, won the "Caring for God's creation" category with his photo of light bulbs being recycled.

Congratulations to these winners and thanks to all those that entered their work. The winning photos, as well as honourable mentions, will be featured in an upcoming Canadian Mennonite issue and on the magazine's web site at [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org).



## From the Archives

1968: Diligent denominational staff collate the daily news bulletin, still hot off the press, for distribution to the delegates meeting in Calgary. Included are General Secretary Jake Letkemann, Menno Wiebe, Rudy Regehr and Ed Enns. At these sessions, the delegates gave the Board of Missions the mandate to initiate a long range program at Little Grand Rapids, Manitoba, after having received an "urgent call from the chief of the Indian Reserve to begin a mission".

—Alf Redekopp, photo from Mennonite Heritage Centre Photo Collection

# Kids to get on track with God's people

-by Elsie Rempel

Kids and junior youth will have plenty of opportunity to learn about God at this year's Kids' Assembly & Summit.

Children will explore Bible texts and sub-themes emerging from the adult gathering, including mercy, faith, discernment and nourishment - both spiritual and physical. The closing worship service on Thursday evening will include a special segment engaging children as active participants.

Leaders will engage children with crafts, music by Bryan Moyer Suderman, field trips (Tuesday and Thursday), puppets, and a special fund raising project for earthquake survivors in China.



## Kid's for Sichuan Earthquake Relief

During the Children's Assembly, kids will make bracelet-sized prayer beads to distribute in exchange for donations for MC Canada's Sichuan Earthquake Appeal. (see [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/668](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/668)) These prayer bracelets offer a connection to the Assembly/Summit theme text from Deuteronomy, which affirms God's people as a wise and discerning nation.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-8, Israelites are reminded to keep God's commandments in their hearts, to "bind them as a sign on your hand." Prayer beads, an old prayer practice tool, can serve as reminders of God's faithfulness – and it's all in the number of beads. *Stay tuned to find out how counting beads can remind you to count on God.*

## Counting Prayer Beads

Each prayer bead bracelet contains 33 beads – one for each year that Jesus lived on earth. Within these 33 beads there are beads of different sizes and grouped in different numbers which symbolize other aspects of our faith. Stay tuned for the number seven!



## Witness workers attending this assembly

There are several Witness workers with us at this assembly. Todd and Jeanette Hanson and their daughters Claire and Kate (China). The Hansons will begin a two year North American ministry stint while Todd studies. Gerald Neufeld and family (Japan) have ended their international term. Gerald has been called to pastor the Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey, B.C. Palmer and Ardys Becker have accepted a special assignment in Bethlehem (Jan. – May, 2009). Scott Bergen will be a preparation volunteer for the Mennonite World Conference 2009 in Paraguay (Sept. 2008 – Aug. 2009). Please take a moment to especially welcome these workers.



Todd and Jeanette Hanson, with Clare and Kate.



Gerald and Rie Neufeld with Jay, Irene and Rena.



Palmer and Ardys Becker



Scott Bergen

## Additional Witness Worker News:

**Rebecca Willims, Dorothea Toews** will be preparation volunteers for the Mennonite World Conference 2009 in Paraguay (Sept. 2008 – Aug. 2009).

**Julie and Philip Bender** have agreed to renew for another term in China.

**Tim and Cindy Buhler** have agreed to renew for another term in Macau.

**Jeff and Tany Warkentin, Danika, Asher, and newborn Kenani Lukas** (pronounced KEE-nigh) have transitioned from being International Volunteers (Burkina Faso) to Long Term Workers.



# Home Street youth help out



Eight youths from Home Street Mennonite Church, together with Associate Pastor Kathy Giesbrecht spent one of their first school holidays stuffing over 500 Assembly and Summit tote bags on June 25. The youth will also assist event-goers at meal times, and provide a snack concession during Wednesday's Outdoor Celebration. l-r: Maxine Wagner, Jessica Klassen, Joel Rempel-Burkholder, Eric Siemens, Tonya Wagner, Allison Baergen, Emily Braun, Peter Sawatsky, and Associate Pastor Kathy Giesbrecht. —Dan Dyck

## THE MC CANADA RESOURCE CENTRE

...linking families and churches to available Christian resources.

### A loaning library

#### An electronic library

“It is great to be able to borrow books for leisure reading, preview resources before deciding whether or not to purchase them or lend out the centre’s resources to people through our own Church library—all this from the comfort of my own home!”

~Ruth Boehm, pastor at Faith MC

# Pacifism in Action

by Deborah Froese

For Neill von Gunten, pacifism is not passive. The co-director of Mennonite Church Canada’s Native Ministry knows from personal experience that standing for peace demands action.

Von Gunten, who grew up in Berne Indiana, first took a stand for pacifism when he was 18 years of age and chose to enter the conscientious objectors program instead of fighting in the Vietnam war. He was harassed for his choice and called names.

Two years later, von Gunten and his wife Edith – currently the co-director of Native Ministry – moved to a Chicago ghetto to participate in the Mennonite Voluntary Service program. It was there, serving together at Woodlawn Mennonite Church, that the von Guntens became involved with the Martin Luther King civil-rights movement.

Von Gunten, who participated in several peaceful protests with King, speaks highly of the man’s commitment to pacifism. “When he was hit in the head with a rock, he would say ‘we need to love our brothers and sisters because they don’t know what they’re doing’...I often wondered what my own response would be if I were attacked personally.”

He found out during an anti-war demonstration in downtown Chicago.

“I was walking with another fellow carrying a sign that said ‘Peace is the Answer.’ These men jumped us. Neither one of us fought back. I had my glasses smashed. I got punched and then the police rushed in and grabbed the men. But I refused to fight back. That was my response.”

He recalls wondering why the young attackers were so angry with him and toward the cause of peace. “I wondered what kind of background they had and how they were misled.”

During his time in Chicago, Neill saw cars thrown upside down and set on fire. He was the target of rocks and cherry bombs. He remembers riding on a city bus with his black friends as rocks crashed through windows. The bus careened through a red light in a white neighbourhood to avoid a large group of young men threatening to surround and sway the bus until it tipped.

The von Guntens observe that many in the church today, and particularly young adults, have not had the same opportunities to engage in conscientious objection in the way that he did. He worries that the younger generation of Mennonites know the talk, but wonders how many would be able to sustain their words with action if push came to shove.

“I’ve felt the fear and I’ve seen the anger and the hatred that people have in their hearts toward other cultures. And that hurts,” Neill said.

Neill and Edith von Gunten have been active in Aboriginal communities in Manitoba for more than 40 years.



Neill von Gunten.  
Photo by Deborah Froese