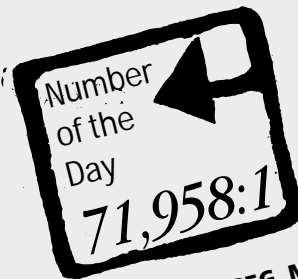


Daily Blessing

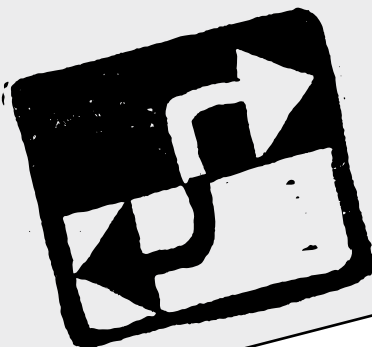
Guiding God, cleanse us and revitalize us through your Holy Spirit, so we may be empowered daily to choose your path in the midst of the many bewildering options before us.

If you think it's hard to find a family physician where you live, ponder this tidbit from the 2008 Guinness Book of World Records (page 70): "On average, there are 71,958 patients for every doctor in Kinshasa, Congo, the highest patient to doctor ratio. African nations dominate the chart of patient-doctor ratios, holding the top 13 places."



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

CROSSROADS CURRENT



today
July 9, 2008

Offering: Today's offering will go to support the Leadership Training Initiatives of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada to help ensure that the church continues to have strong leaders who will guide the church in engaging the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ. Please give generously to the critical task of leadership training. Canadians may make checks payable to "Mennonite Church Canada" to receive a Canadian tax receipt. Americans may make checks payable to "Mennonite Church USA" to receive a US tax receipt.

Learning Track Update: Please note that the Learning Track *Developing Leaders for the Church in Today's World* will be presented as a two part workshop today and tomorrow. The revised schedule is as follows:

Wednesday July 9, 10:15 am: Lee Weaver Schmucker: "Values Based Leadership: Five Practices of Effective Leaders"

Wednesday, July 9, 1:30 pm: Nelson Kraybill: "Anabaptists Lead with Grace and Authority"

Thursday, July 10, 10:15 am: Lee Weaver Schmucker: "Values Based Leadership: Five Practices of Effective Leaders"

Thursday, July 10, 1:15 pm: Nelson Kraybill: "Anabaptists Lead with Grace and Authority"

These workshops will be located at the same place as listed in the program book on page 18: Lecture Hall South Campus.

(more announcements on page 3)

Promoting the peace message

—By Tim Miller Dyck, Canadian Mennonite Editor/Publisher

Delegates discussed peacemaking, passed a peace proclamation motion, and heard testimony about Anabaptist peace theology in their two morning delegate sessions on the second day of the national church assembly in Winnipeg.

While Mennonites have a 500 year history of peace theology, the strongest delegate reaction of the morning—a standing ovation—came in response to someone speaking for a church that has adopted these priorities much more recently.

Raquel Contreras, President of the Baptist Union of Chile, a hundred-year-old group of about 500 churches in Chile, told delegates about her denomination's decision to step onto a new

theological path for their next hundred years: Anabaptism.

"We looked and looked and we realized that our identity, our roots came from the Anabaptists. We thought that that was history, that that was not alive now. Then we realized that Anabaptists were still alive, that Anabaptism was not history, that Anabaptism was what really identified us as Baptists, that we shared common roots," she said.

(continued on page 2)



Gordon Allaby, pastor at Osler Mennonite Church, brought the assembly's only resolution. Photo by Dan Dyck

(continued from page 1)

“We adopted this as one of our main principles. This has changed many ways in our convention. We realized that we can have a different lifestyle that shows peace, understanding, good manners, a different way of living.”

Contreras described how she as head of the church had just turned down a government request to come bless a new warship, how congregations are declaring themselves sanctuaries of peace in their neighbourhoods and providing shelter for abused women and children, how the church has established a centre for Anabaptist studies and for publishing Anabaptist material and how the church is working against bullying at school. She also said the church was putting peace theology into practice internally in their churches, stating “peace also means to eliminate gossip.” Delegates responded with vocal agreement, followed by applause.

“We are very grateful to the Canadian Mennonite Church,” she concluded. “We are learning from you. You are showing us that to live as an Anabaptist is real and you can do it. You are showing us that this is alive, and this is possible and we can live in a world

where Jesus Christ can be the Prince of Peace and we can be for peace in our world.”

Delegates also shared their concerns over signs of militarism in Canadian society. Marilyn Rudy Froese, of Kitchener, Ont., said that the issue stopped being theoretical for her when her 10-year-old son came home from a school trip with a military poster and promotional hockey puck distributed to children by the Canadian Armed Forces. “It’s really important that we speak in the public square. They are targeting our children,” she said.

Delegates unanimously passed a resolution, with slight wording changes, presented by Osler (Sask.) Mennonite Church. It stated, in part, that, “Realizing that we are called to bear witness for Christ and his message, we request that the staff of MC Canada develop a proposal for promoting the peace message in the ‘public square’, and that it is

presented at the 2009 annual delegate assembly.”

Lorne Buhr of Edmonton, passing on a comment from someone else who was not at the assembly, said that the Osler resolution seemed to be within the mandate of MC Canada and the Confession of Faith already and questioned why there was a need for a motion at all. “If MC Canada needs to have a mandate on what it believes and to act on its belief, organization ineffectiveness may prevail,” he said.



Raquel Contreras. Photo by Dan Dyck

At the Crossroads: Come, follow me

—By Deborah Froese

Given the chaos and confusing messages that surround us, what is it that draws us together as people of God? When pastor April Yamasaki was invited to address that question as a plenary speaker for the 2008 People’s Summit for Faithful living, she knew how she had to respond.

“Jesus is what holds us together,” she says. “That may sound like an overly simple answer, but I think that is actually what we need.”

The Summit theme, “At the Crossroads; Promise and Peril,” expresses a sense of urgency and examines how the church can live faithfully in a global community bombarded with contrasting messages.

“We’re not at a simple crossing where you turn left or right,” Yamasaki muses. “We’re at a much more complex centre, more like the intersection of a number of different highways. The super-charged highway, the information highway, the internet highway... it’s not a simple ‘this way’ or ‘that way.’ There are many voices and many different directions. I think that’s part of our challenge.”

April Yamasaki has been the lead pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford for 15 years. She has written a number of books about Christian living. For more information about her publications, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/611



Submitted photo.

New Moderator

—By Aaron Epp, Canadian Mennonite National Correspondent

Providing an environment where the general board can work at whatever issues arise is what Andrew Reesor-McDowell hopes to accomplish as moderator of Mennonite Church Canada.

Along with his tasks of moderating the delegate assembly, chairing the board and executive committee, and being the legally responsible person out of MC Canada, Reesor-McDowell says he hopes to create an atmosphere where the “general board can carry out its task, and where we can be open and gracious with each other so we can deal openly and graciously with whatever confronts us.”

Reesor-McDowell, 59, has been a member-at-large on MC Canada’s general board since 2003. Prior to that, he spent three years as moderator of MC Eastern Canada. He lives in Stouffville, Ontario, with his wife Joanna. The couple have two grown sons, Martin and Allan, and attend Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham.

Forming a people of God, connecting with the global church, and growing

leaders are three priorities Reesor-McDowell sees for Mennonite Church Canada in the coming years.

He says he has great respect for what Henry Krause has done as moderator in the past six years, and he’s pleased with what the general board has been able to accomplish. Those things are part of the reason why he’s agreed to let his name stand.

“I feel so good about the way the pieces fit together,” he says. “I have been so impressed with the way the general board has been operating, and I hope to continue that.”



Garth Ewert Fisher, Vice Moderator, introduces Andrew Reesor-McDowell, MC Canada’s next moderator, at the closing discernment session of Assembly 2008. Photo by Dan Dyck

Going Green

—Dan Dyck

When the men at Floradale Mennonite Church began a men’s group, the first thing they wanted to do was encourage environmental stewardship in their congregation.

As a result, they purchased 250 re-useable fabric shopping bags, added a ‘green’ logo designed by a youth, their church name, and the words “Let’s go green!”

Fred Redekop, pastor at Floradale, credited two of the senior men for the initiative. The bags sell for \$3 each—but members are also encouraged to give them away to others. About half the bags have been sold, reported Redekop.



Fred Redekop displays his church’s “Let’s go green” re-useable shopping bag. Photo by Dan Dyck

announcements (continued from page 1)

The Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre (South Campus) is open each day, starting immediately after the morning worship service and until 7 pm. Stop in to see us today and enter the draw for a basket of resources, which will take place on Thursday afternoon.


April Yamasaki: Tonight’s speaker is also a prolific author. For a list of her work, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/611

Meet the Author at Mennonite Publishing Network Display: Paul Redekop—*Changing Paradigms*. Luncheon at MPN Display, Conference Room, South Campus.



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 7:00 pm.

Gretna Berghaler Mennonite Church celebrates 50 years: Oct. 11-12, 2008. RSVP by Sept. 15 to CeCe Fehr (204-327-5350; canneconnery@hotmail.com or Ruth Siemens (204-324-8196; siemens@mts.net. All past and present members, friends are invited.

Meet the Author at the CMU Bookstore: Tom and Christine Sine - “The New Conspirators”/”God Space”. Break Time, CMU Bookstore display, Conference Room, South Campus. (Ed. Note: Sorry—the submitter didn’t say which break time...so visit the bookstore display at all break times.)



CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 

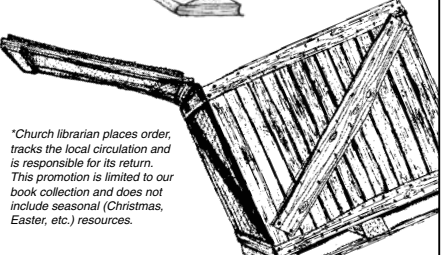
A bulk-loan option for church libraries

Order 12 books of your choice for an extended 6-week loan*

- Expand your selection—enhance your collection
- No limit to the dozens of possibilities
- Free shipping both ways



*Church librarian places order, tracks the local circulation and is responsible for its return. This promotion is limited to our book collection and does not include seasonal (Christmas, Easter, etc.) resources.

Assembly ends, Summit begins

—Dan Dyck

The final 90 minutes of the Mennonite Church Canada 2008 assembly included delegate affirmation of the nomination slate, an open floor for delegate comments, questions, and concerns, reports from the Listening Committee and Resolutions Committee, and a few words from incoming moderator Andrew Reesor McDowell.

McDowell spoke of how his parents have inspired his life of service to the church, and the important support of his wife and mother, both of whom were present.

The Listening Committee (Sue Schantz, Judith Doell, Randy Klaassen) emphasized the model of Raquel Contreras, church leader from Chile, and her peace witness, affirmed the church's efforts to green its operations, acknowledged the efforts of incorporating worship into many aspects of the discernment sessions, and pondered whether the delegate assembly is a safe place to hear contrarian views. Doell, who also served on the Prayer Team, led a prayer of confession.

Hilda Hildbrand, representing the Resolutions Committee, said thanks to all whose participation made the

assembly a success — from leaders to volunteers to delegates.

Questions and concerns from the delegate floor during open mic time paralleled the discernment topics (peace church, pastoral trends survey, Christianity in a pluralistic world) to a large degree.

Russ Klassen, 27, (Youth Pastor at Sherbrook MC, Abbotsford) invited delegates to encourage more youth and young adults from their respective congregations to attend annual assemblies. "I've gotten a lot out of being here," he said.

Henry Funk, delegate for MC Saskatchewan, responded to Darren Kropf's (Ont.) challenge to delegates to resist paying war taxes. Funk said that many in Saskatchewan have found a unique alternative by donating to the Canadian Food Grains Bank: each donation is quadrupled by the federal government and goes to feed hungry people around the world. He called it "An effective way to pay a peace tax."

How this alternative might actively and directly address and change systemic political thinking about violence as a solution to conflict was not discussed.

Did you know?

Sept. 11, 1958 marks the anniversary of the death of Kornelius Isaak, reported to be the first Mennonite martyr of Latin America (Paraguay). The Kornelius Isaak Endowment for the Study of Peace and Anabaptist Theology has been established through the Mennonite Foundation of Canada. Kornelius' brother, Helmut, is attending the gathering in Winnipeg.

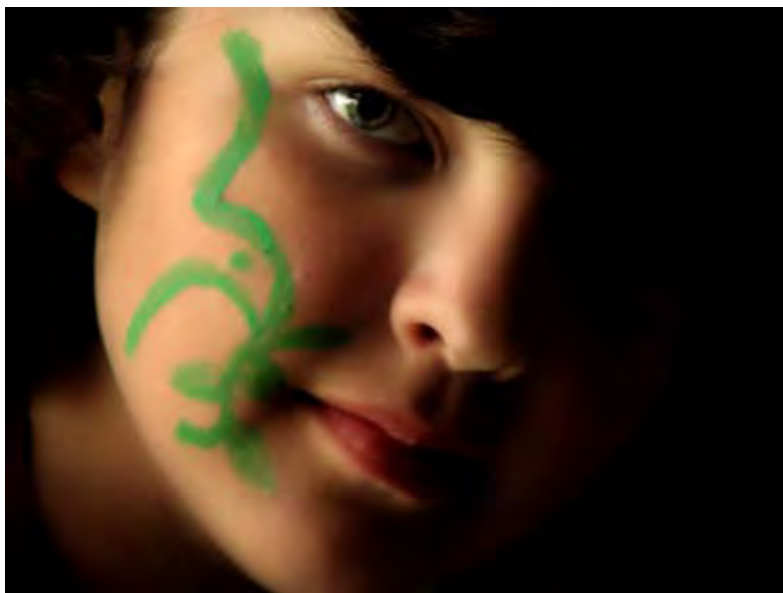
THE MC CANADA RESOURCE CENTRE

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

A national centre

"I live in Leamington which doesn't have a theological library and so it is invaluable to me to have access to the resources of materials and people at the resource centre in Winnipeg. Thanks for a job well done!"

~Ruth Boehm, pastor at Faith Mennonite Church



Enjoying the Kids Assembly: Claire Hanson, "branded" with the MC Canada dove. Photo by Todd Hanson

Counting Prayer Beads

There are four groups of seven beads. Seven signifies the goal of wholeness or completion to God's discerning people, but it also represents the days of Creation, or "weeks."

Stay tuned for four!



Kids are getting on track

—By Deborah Froese

Kids are everywhere. They're chasing each other over damp grass playing a game of "bulldog," or digging in paper bags, blindfolded, to describe the object they feel inside of. Others sort through colourful bins beads to string prayer bracelets, craft butterflies from clothespins and coffee filters artfully decorated with wax-crayon colours, or create sand-art covers for their Assembly/Summit journals. Even toddlers are busy, scooting around the chapel of Canadian Mennonite University on plastic trikes, chasing balls or playing with other toys.

On Monday evening, some of the older children participated in a Scavenger Hunt to search for red pamphlets detailing some of the projects Mennonites are involved in, from food and medical relief to peace and justice issues. On Tuesday they shared on video tape just what it means to be a Mennonite.

Activities may vary between age groups, but once a day, every day, children of all ages gather in the student lounge of Poettcker Hall for worship, where the Children's Assembly/

Summit theme, Getting on Track with God's People, draws them together as the Body of Christ. With puppet shows manned by Tym Elias and Ken Neil, music by Brian Moyer Suderman, and the opportunity to learn sign language for the Lord's Prayer, the kids are attentive to the message.

"From sitting I learned about God and from singing," says five-year-old Aiden Boch.

On Tuesday, Jeanette Hanson, a long term Witness worker based in Nanchong, China, was on hand during worship to share the experience of being caught in an earthquake. "Have you ever been on a trampoline with a bunch of other people jumping on it? That's what it's like to be in an earthquake – but instead of being on a trampoline, you're on a football field."

This vision of an earthquake ties in with the children's service project; the creation of prayer-bead bracelets to sell to raise money MC Canada's Sichuan Earthquake Appeal.

"I had fun getting this praying bracelet," says four-year-old Mei Stoez Guthro. "I just run around with it. I love my bracelet."

The children hope you'll love their bracelets too! They will be on sale during break times.



Above: There is something for kids of all ages at the 2008 Children's Assembly/Summit. Photo by Deborah Froese

Below: Signing the Lord's Prayer—"Our Father, who art in Heaven." Photo by Deborah Froese.



Puppets and Stones

—By Deborah Froese

What does it mean to be "stook?"

Kids at the Children's Assembly know. "Stook" is what happens when your finger gets caught under a rock – and it's all the more painful when your friend won't help "unstook" it because he's too busy looking for mercy.

Derek-the-puppet puts a bright yellow ice-cream bucket over his head so that he doesn't have to look at the world's problems. José tells him that he is looking through the wrong eyes; he needs to see through eyes of faith to recognize the wonderful things that God is doing in the world.

Puppets are sharing Christian values with children and junior youth through

a series of daily worship plays written by Pastor Tym Elias of Home Street Mennonite Church. At the end of each play, a stone is placed on the altar table to represent the lesson of the



day—from "mercy" and "faith" to larger issues of "discernment" and "Pass-over." Following this, Brian Moyer Suderman accompanies the group in singing, "What do these stones mean?"

What *do* these stones mean? Make sure you attend the Thursday evening worship service at 7:00 in the Loewen Athletic Centre, CMU North Campus to find out.

Derek learns that there is more than one way of "seeing". Photo by Deborah Froese



MC Canada supports Dept. of Peace

On April 19, 2008, the Mennonite Church Canada General Board approved a Christian Witness Council recommendation for the denomination to become a supporting organization of the Canadian Department of Peace Initiative (CDPI).

As outlined on the campaign website (www.departmentofpeace.ca), the primary mandate of a CDPI would be to rejuvenate and enhance Canada's traditional peace building role in areas of non-violent conflict resolution, human rights, and social and economic justice. As a central coordinating agency, this department would have the potential to "infuse all departments and agencies of government with an ethic of peace."

Several board members recognized MC Canada's endorsement of the campaign as an important response to growing militarization in Canada. Others suggested that MC Canada support might encourage other Canadian churches and individuals to follow.

Plenert said that the variety of organizations supporting the campaign for a Canadian Department of Peace – from Christian and interfaith groups to non-faith groups – is a strong indication of the common desire among Canadians to see the government adopt an ethic of peace.

Some may be surprised to find Mennonites involved on a political level, since Mennonite polity supports the separation of church and state. "There will be others who will come back and say that we've always been political. So there are different perspectives," Plenert said. "Is this political or is this not? Because we believe in separation of church and state does not mean we should ignore the state."

She is encouraged by the grassroots nature of the CDPI campaign. "I find it quite inspiring and motivating, because as Mennonites we also talk about the Church being the People."

As a grassroots, Anabaptist church, we believe that the Holy Spirit inspires all people and not just the hierarchy." She acknowledged that although MC Canada's General Board has given blessing and hearty endorsement to the proposal as a supporting organization, grassroots involvement is needed to provide hands and feet for the effort.

On a national level, MC Canada's role will be to disseminate information to congregations and individuals, encouraging them to create local chapters to strengthen the campaign and intensify its influence on the government.



Janet Plenert.
Photo by
Dan Dyck

From the Archives



The bi-national Mennonite Church met in Winnipeg for the first time in 1956. The bi-national Mennonite Church met in Winnipeg for the first time in 1956. The venue was Young United Church (Furby & Broadway), current site of Crossways in Common where Hope Mennonite Church currently gathers in space shared with Young United. The General Conference Mennonite Church Board of Christian Service reported on significant developments in the area of peace. In addition to several Peace Study Conferences among Mennonites in North America, they were also involved at a conference of Christian theology in Europe which was bringing peace church thinking to "interact with those of the state church stream." A year earlier, in 1955 the Mennonite Church met in Hesson, Kansas and passed an extensive resolution entitled "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations" which addressed the racial segregation and discrimination dominant in the USA.

—Alf Redekopp, photo from Mennonite Heritage Centre Photo Collection

God not limited to any one story or culture

—By Aaron Epp, Canadian Mennonite National Correspondent

If the Apostle Paul visited modern day Canada, what would he observe about the average Canadian's spiritual views? That was the question explored in a dramatic monologue by Arlyn Friesen Epp, manager of Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre, during yesterday afternoon's delegate sessions. The monologue was part of the fourth discernment session, "Confessing Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world."

"I've seen how restless your souls are for God in every way," Friesen Epp said in character. "Almost everyone I've talked to, from B.C. to Newfoundland are asking the ultimate questions: Where do we come from? Why is there suffering? What happens when we die?"

He went on to note that 80 per cent of Canadians claim to believe in a God who loves them personally, and three out of four Canadians acknowledge that they pray privately.

"Our searching would not be in futile desperation, because God in fact is close to everyone of us," he said. "So if this is unknown to you, I want to make it plain: That this very God you grope after, this God who stirs up the restlessness in our souls and who is as close to us as the breath we breathe, this same God comes to each one of us ... through Jesus Christ."

After the monologue, the MC Canada Faith and Life Committee, led by Rudy Baergen, presented a document it has been working on to address how Canadian Mennonites can confess Jesus Christ when "there are trends in society which challenge [their] missional urge."

Baergen noted that what one learns from the Bible is that God is present and active in the whole world, and not limited to any one story or culture. Canadian Mennonites "must value the

universal and the particular work of God," because "God is active in all the cultures of the world, often in unexpected ways and places."

"We acknowledge that God is greater than any human construct," added Karl Koop, Associate Professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite University and a Faith and Life Committee member. "While other religions and spiritualities might appear foreign and strange, and may even offend us, on closer observation they may offer new and valuable ways of understanding who God is and how God is at work."

The committee outlined three implications:

- We are called into a respectful dialogue with those who profess a different faith.
- We are called to proclaim faithfully and courageously the gospel of God's grace.
- We are called to live in peace with those of a different religious persuasion.

The committee acknowledged issues requiring further reflection, such as: What is the place for the biblical theme of judgment? What does it mean to engage our neighbor in matters of faith? Delegates spent 30 minutes discussing these and other questions at their tables.

Four delegates reported back, including Harold Peters-Fransen of Winnipeg.

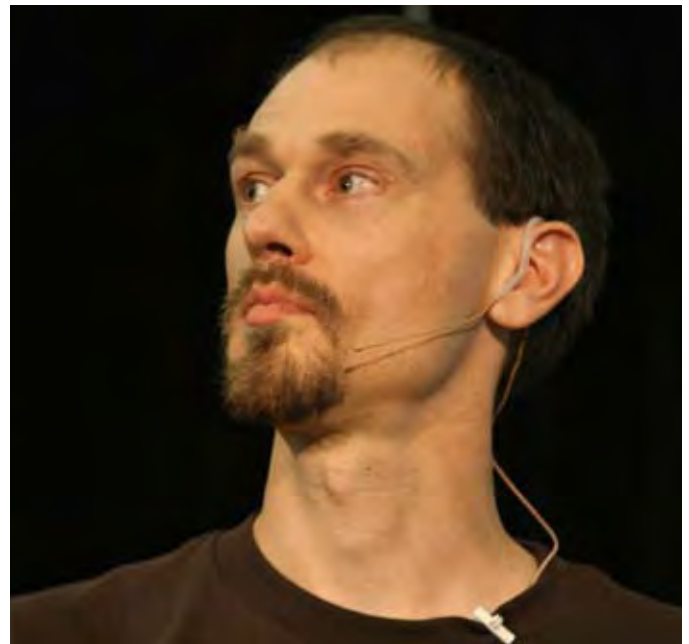
"We weren't sure whether the tilt of the committee was

that Jesus Christ was the only way, or whether we are to learn from other faiths," he said, adding it would be useful if MC Canada supplied congregations with materials to grapple with these questions.

"As we confess Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world, we find ourselves apologizing a lot for the history of the church," noted Doug Klassen of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary. "In general, there's distrust of religion in society."

Baergen ended the session by thanking delegates for their comments, adding that they will be used to revise the document his committee presented. "We see this as a complex issue, and this was just a beginning," Baergen said. "So, we will continue to work at."

The document, as presented at yesterday afternoon's session, can be viewed online at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/688>.



Where do we come from? Why is there suffering? What happens when we die?" Arlyn Friesen Epp explored these questions of faith in a dramatic monologue in the discernment session, "Confessing Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world." photo by Dan Dyck



Assembly 2008 generated this resolution:

Be It Resolved:

Our nation is at war and we are becoming a more militaristic culture. The principles of “redemptive violence” are being aggressively promoted to justify the increase in military spending and the shedding of blood by and of Canadian soldiers. Christ’s message of peace, reconciliation and grace needs to be heard in our country.

Realizing that we are called to bear witness for Christ and his message, we request that the staff of MC Canada develop a proposal for promoting the peace message in the “public square”, and that it is presented at the 2009 annual delegate assembly.

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

We are very concerned about the increased militaristic propaganda in the mass media, such as recruiting commercials and military presence at televised sports events, and we strongly feel that we must counter this by getting the peace message out to the general public. What we envision might include the use of mass media like newspaper, radio, T.V. and internet. Since we understand the cost involved in this, we suggest MC Canada may want to combine resources with other peace organizations (independent and those that are branches of other denominations). We feel a positive message, such as using the Golden Rule, would be most effective.

–Submitted to the MC Canada office on May 13, 2008 by Osler Mennonite Church, Saskatchewan

Come to Saskatoon in 2009!



Renata Klassen, Moderator of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, invited everyone to Saskatoon for Assembly 2009, June 5-7. The theme will be “Living Inside Out” (Colossians 3:12-17). In announcements later, lead assembly planner Pam Peters-Pries noted some perceived confusion about the date. “No, this is not a mis-print,” she emphasized. While the June date is a departure from traditional early July dates, MC Canada hopes that holding the Canadian assembly earlier will encourage more people to attend Mennonite World Conference Global Assembly in Asunción, Paraguay, July 14-19, 2009. Photo by Dan Dyck

Responding to a Pandemic

–By Kirsten Schroeder

What would you do if a pandemic struck? How would you and your loved ones meet your basic needs? How would your church respond? Earning a living, going to school, feeding families and caring for ill loved ones, and finding fellowship could be difficult in the face of service disruptions and possible governmental restrictions.

Because Mennonites have a history of helping out in times of crisis – from responding to natural disasters to establishing hospitals and health care institutions around the world – it seems natural for the Mennonite Church to respond to the increasing possibility of a pandemic.

MC Canada has called together a taskforce to plan how the church can prepare for the next pandemic. Believed to be the first such national church effort in Canada, the taskforce has prepared materials to guide churches in their responses to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of congregants and neighbours.

In the midst of national disruption, the church can provide the world with a sense of hope. We encourage you to start exploring this topic by:

- **Visiting**
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m_Hw_tyqkQ
- **Attending** the summit track on pandemic preparedness (see Program Book for times and locations)
- A still under-construction **web site** can be found at
www.churchpandemicresources.ca