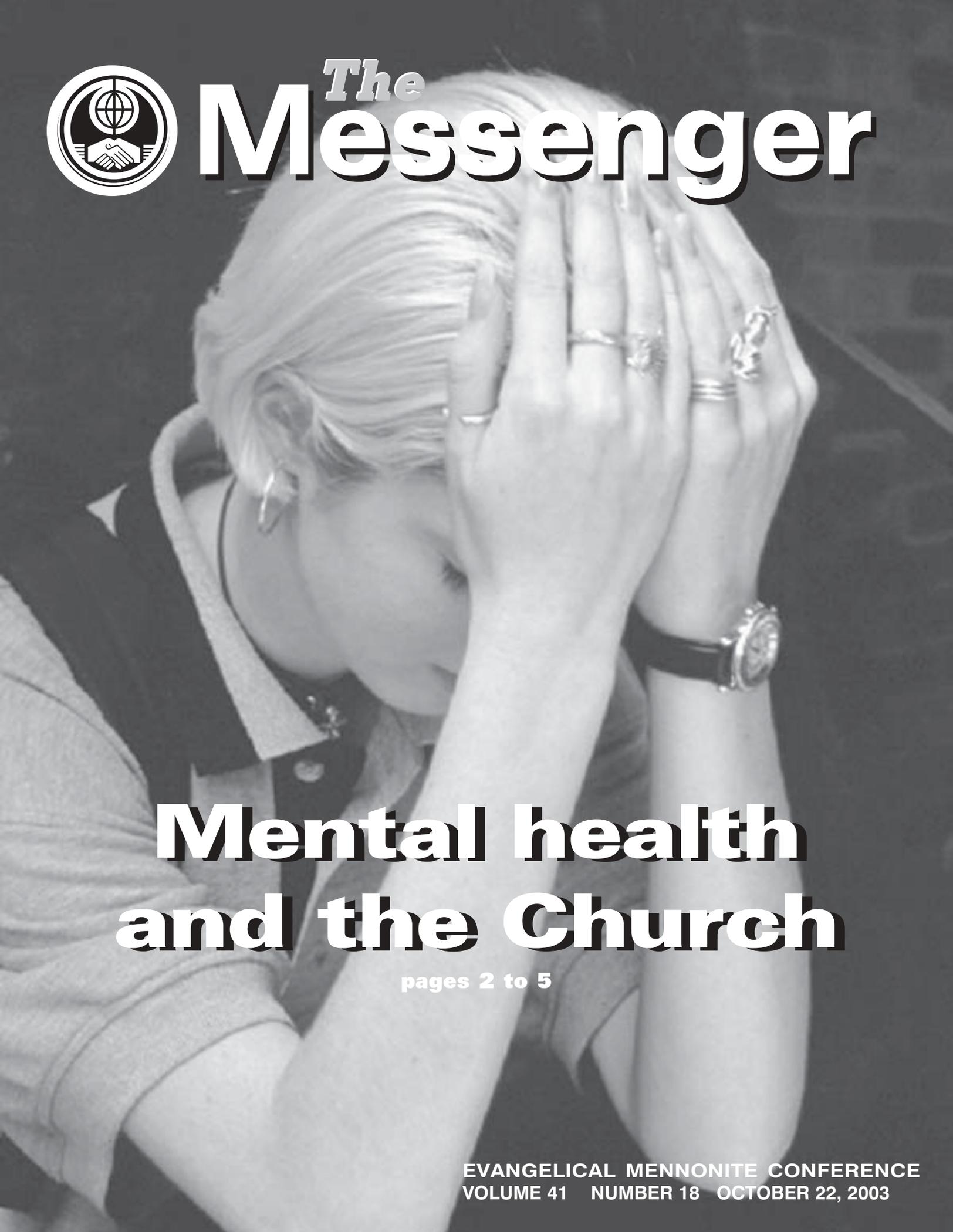




The **Messenger**

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, light-colored hair. She is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored collared shirt. Her hands are pressed against her face, covering her eyes and forehead, a gesture often associated with grief, stress, or emotional pain. She is wearing several rings on her fingers and a watch on her left wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.

Mental health and the Church

pages 2 to 5

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE
VOLUME 41 NUMBER 18 OCTOBER 22, 2003

Mental illness, you don't say?

IN RESPONDING to people with mental health issues, the Church is still learning.

During the Second World War, some conscientious objectors worked in mental institutions and became so concerned about patient treatment that they became advocates for change. Many church-based institutions and programs have been developed—among them, Eden Health Care Services and Mennonite Central Committee's efforts.



Further, some pastors have gained training in counselling, exploring in depth the necessary relationship between theology and psychology. That's helpful.

Yet in too many church circles, mental health struggles affecting families are still not easily talked about. A friend says we might think it would be easier to talk in church, but it isn't.

I've read that the Christian Church has been

described as the only army that shoots its own wounded. That's only a half-truth, for the Church also binds up many wounded. But the reality remains that pacifists do some of the shooting.

The friend told me bluntly that he could not be convinced that the Church is interested in hearing of people's struggles with a mental health issue. His experience and frustration are important to hear.

Responding to mental health needs involves commitments by individuals, family, church, and wider community. Families, pastors, and churches can become weary. It's tough to pace oneself while staying involved. More training and support services are needed in the Church and wider society.

Unintentionally, some pastors add to misunderstandings about mental health issues. They sometimes separate theology and psychology in unhelpful ways. But they, too, can learn and their congregations can be increasingly helped through them.

Terry M. Smith

Don't feel connected to the conference?

AS I move within the EMC, some leaders say some people don't feel connected to the conference.

Some folks are new Christians, they might say, or weren't raised in the EMC. "The conference" is the national office in Steinbach, Man. Meetings are held far away.

Such a statement might be heard in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. Each region—nine in all—could think of itself as unique. Church leaders might say that closeness is mostly decided by geography. Yet some families live near each other and are distant emotionally.

Rather than accept a lack of connection and reinforce it by inaction, we need to take up the task of staying connected! Any denomination spreading larger than the backyard of its first church has to consciously work at connecting. There is no auto-pilot here.

Consider where EMC conventions have been held or planned for over a five-year period (2001–2005)—Tillsonburg, Ont., Swift Current, Sask., Morris, Man., Swan River, Man., and Region One. That's five regions and four provinces!

Some Canadian denominations are scattered from sea to shining sea, not only

halfway as is the EMC. Compared to such denominations, are the distances travelled to national events unusually long for EMCers? Not really.

Our conference, like any denomination, is made up of regions of churches that *choose* to connect with each other. As we start more churches, many of our members and adherents should and will come from backgrounds outside of the conference. This is a reason for more conference involvement, not less.

Pastors, elders, deacons, and other leaders need to provide the example and atmosphere that encourages connecting to happen. And many do.

Togetherness takes effort from many sides—national staff, boards and committees, local churches and members. And many efforts are being made.

Who is the conference? Not churches in Manitoba, nor our national office in Steinbach. The conference is EMC churches from B.C. to Ontario. Together, we are the conference.

If we work at connecting, the feelings will follow.

Terry M. Smith

The Messenger

EDITOR

Terry M. Smith



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Rebecca Buhler

THE MESSENGER is the publication of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. It is available to the general public. Its purpose is to inform, instruct and inspire: inform concerning events and activities in the denomination; instruct in godliness and victorious living; inspire to earnestly contend for the faith.

Letters, articles, photos and poems are welcomed. Unpublished material is not returned except by request. The views and opinions expressed by the writers are their own and do not necessarily represent the position of the Conference.

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(copy due Nov. 07)

Spirituality and mental health

Rev. Lorne Friesen

FAITH, HOPE, rest, acceptance, trust and love are all values that are essential for mental health and for recovery from mental illness. These values are essentially spiritual, though not exclusively Christian.

These values are gifts from God, even as our salvation, our faith, and the structures of our religious life are gifts from God. A perversion of these values may be an indication of poor mental health.

To speak with a person who has mental illness of the gifts of God's grace frequently leads to the hard questions of *why* and *how long*. These questions are echoed in the Psalms. The mentally ill feel abandoned and sometimes rejected by God and the church. I have found it important to validate the thoughts and questions and to remain confident of God's redeeming love.

A healthy spiritual life

The elderly apostle John wrote, "I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 2). A person may have a healthy spiritual life even though he may experience illness in body or mind. We live in a secular world, grounded in our perception of reality and the sciences. Health care has been defined by the scientific knowledge available to us.

Unfortunately, our society has minimised the importance of one's spiritual life in defining one's health. We have been taught that to be cured is the same as being healed. The scientific expertise may cure us of our diseases, but to be healed requires a spiritual journey. Someone may have a terminal illness which cannot be cured, but that person may die healthy and joyfully because of his healthy spiritual life. This spiritual journey includes one's relationship to God, one's understanding of how one has changed in the light of this illness, and one's place in community.

A person with healthy faith invites examination

The Psalmist prayed, "Test me, O Lord and try me, examine my heart and my mind" (Psalm 26:2 NIV). Every person's behaviour reflects the beliefs and circumstances

of their life. The mentally ill often choose the best behaviours possible, given the nature of their illness. Mental illness robs some people of the ability to make wise choices, while other people's mental illness takes them on a spiritual journey that leads them to a rich and mature faith, though the journey may be very painful.

Some people are so out of touch with reality that they may imagine themselves to be a great religious figure, while others struggle to accept their personal worth in the eyes of God. Some people use religion and spirituality as a defence mechanism to cover up their mental illness and may distance themselves from their community, while others are compelled to search for the integrity of our faith and its expressions.

One of the saddest verses in the Scriptures is Judges 17:6— "Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." Healthy people live in community and recognise the role of the community. Healthy communities build in structures for accountability. The Psalmist's prayer is essential for people with healthy minds and for those who aspire to mental health.

Healthy communities are an essential resource for the health of us all. We choose to be part of a faith community that contributes to the health of our life and our family. "Unhealthy faith is as dangerous as no faith at all, and sick religion is as deadly as dependency upon alcohol and drugs. Fear to admit fear is not faith, it is cowardice. And failure to confess doubt is not belief; it is deceit" (source unknown). Healthy faith communities encourage accountability, and resist the efforts of the mentally ill to use spirituality to disguise their illness.

Mental illness: breakdown or breakthrough?

Mental illness has for decades been described as a breakdown. One psychiatrist suggested that such illness is better understood as an opportunity for a "breakthrough." Illness, whether physical, emotional or mental, becomes an opportunity to review the priorities of one's life. A mental illness may become the occasion to discover the work of God in our lives. It is a great joy to observe people coming to faith in a place of "hopelessness."

Faith is no guarantee of mental health

Some people teach that we can always prevent mental illness by maintaining rigorous spiritual disciplines. It is true that a healthy spirituality is important in recovering our mental health. It is also true that a healthy spiritual life can give us an anchor in the midst of life's turbulent times.

However, even the most faithful of God's servants

The mentally ill feel abandoned and sometimes rejected by God and the church.



Lorne Friesen serves as chaplain at Eden Mental Health Centre, Winkler, Manitoba. He is an ordained Mennonite minister.

experience mental illness. The famous preacher Charles Spurgeon, who lit the fires of nineteenth century revival movement, struggled so severely with depression that he was forced to be absent from his pulpit for two to three months a year.

In 1866 he told his congregation of his struggle; "I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go [through]." He explained that during these depressions, "Every mental and spiritual labour...had to be carried on under protest of spirit" (Dwight L. Carlson, *Christianity Today*, Feb. 9, 1998).

The hymn writer William Cooper who wrote about 80 hymns, some of which we still sing today, also suffered from severe depression which drove him to attempt suicide. Some of David's psalms also reflect the anguish and despair of depression.



True guilt versus false guilt

One of God's gifts to his community is the capacity to feel guilt. Some forms of guilt are healthy, but then there is unhealthy guilt. If you have violated your relationship with your community and you feel guilty, the guilt is a sign of health. What is unhealthy is to violate your community and feel no guilt, or to conduct yourself appropriately in your community and still be plagued with guilt.

This form of unhealthy guilt is often a product of depression. Depressed people try to analyse their lives to discover the reason for the depression.

Since they are depressed, it does not take long for them to feel that they have discovered the cause of their depression and then to fixate upon certain aspects of their lives.

The depression is a reality, and trying to discover the cause of their depression is only human. But in a depressed state, people often fix the cause of their depression on things that have nothing to do with the reason for their depression.

Judgment or compassion

People with mental illness have a strong need to belong, to be part of a family and community. The mentally ill and their families have too often been mistreated by the church. Often the church does not understand the struggles of those impacted by mental illness. Churches and church members have often spoken a word of judgment, declaring the illness to be evidence of some secret sin.

Instead, Jesus invites us to love unconditionally. Helmut Thielicke once wrote, "Tell me how much you know of the suffering of your fellow man, and I will tell you how much you have loved them. Every time we fail to see the secret and perhaps consciously concealed suffering of another person, we hear the Lord of the Last Judgment saying to us: 'You failed to love him'".

It is important for the church to address the nature of

sin and its consequences. Dr. Karl Menninger, a psychiatrist, said "it does little good to repent a symptom, but it may do great harm not to repent a sin...it does little good to merely psychoanalyse a sin, and sometimes, a great harm to ignore a symptom."

The church has a history of condemning those things it does not understand, attributing them to the devil. Diseases of the brain are very difficult for us to understand, even though our knowledge of the brain doubles every three to five years.

In the spirit of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 8, I encourage believers with healthy minds to go the second mile to understand those whose minds are diseased. People with illnesses such as depression, manic-depression, anxieties and phobias, psychotic thinking cannot be treated by demanding that a person "just try harder" or "just pray harder."

Schizophrenia, for example, is a devastating disease that most frequently occurs in people in their late teens to the mid twenties, and most often remains with people for their lifetime. As one's mind begins to scramble one's thinking process—to see, hear, feel, smell or taste things that are not real—they will go to great lengths to hold onto reality.

Some young people have pursued religious or spiritual paths with great urgency, only to have their minds sink further and further into the illness, while others resort to street drugs to deaden the images. The church needs wisdom to understand the behaviour of those who are struggling, whatever the cause the struggle may be.

"While the church should never condone wilful sin, it must learn to accept that faithful people may suffer from emotional symptoms that are not the result of personal unconfessed sin, as many proponents of the emotional-health gospel suggest," says Dwight L. Carlson. "We must take seriously Paul's injunction to 'encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men'(I Thess. 5:14)" (*Christianity Today*, Feb 9, 1998).

God models healthy boundaries.

People with good mental health have a sense of confidence that allows them to respect themselves and others. To take away from someone their ability or opportunity to function independently is another way of diminishing their personhood. In the mental health field we speak of boundaries as the personal and private space needed by each person to function well.

I believe that God models healthy relationships for us. Healthy relationships require that we respect each person's individuality, including their right to make choices, and to develop their own personalities. As I study the scriptures, I am impressed with the ways that God respects the integrity of each person. God does not violate our personal space. God invites his faith community to be similarly compassionate.

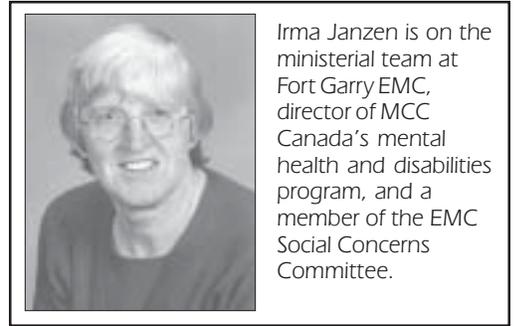
The church, when it is faithful, is a great provider of love, compassion and a vehicle for healing. The church is God's gift to a broken and hurting world. May God teach us to be faithful to his vision of the church and to serve each other in our journey to wholeness! ■

Note: "EM Conference is part owner of the Eden family of ministries," Glen Klassen, board member.

Sometimes we try too hard

Better spiritual and mental health amid everyday stresses

Irma Janzen



WE ALL have plenty of stress! Although we need some stress in our lives, many people wish they had less because, over long periods of time, stress takes a toll on our lives.

But what can we do to live a healthy life, both spiritually and mentally, amid the tensions of life? We know that we have some control by choosing what we do or don't do. Sometimes our situations develop differently than we had planned. Others come to us completely unexpected.

If it is our desire to move toward better mental health, we need to understand the principles that constitute good mental health. We must be aware of issues that affect our lives and appreciate the ways in which they affect us, acknowledge those issues and work constructively to address them.

Good mental health is important for both reducing and handling stress. This helps us to act in proactive ways rather than in a reactive manner when we are in conversation with people. Good mental health frees us to be who we are so we do not have to pretend or become paralysed by fear. Good mental health lowers the danger of burnout. Good mental health gives us balance when we are searching for meaning in life.

People who do not have good mental health may be unaware of the issues that affect their lives. Perhaps they are aware but avoid the problem or they may try to handle their difficult situations alone. Too often the result is inappropriate behaviour toward others because of personal frustration.

Some Christians may have obstacles that hinder them from finding better mental and spiritual health because of what they have been taught and what they believe about their faith.

The Bible and the teaching around faith encourage us to do many things. Verses such as "Be you therefore perfect," "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," "present your bodies a living sacrifice," and "to him who knows to do good and does not do it to him it is sin," teach us to do and to do well. Sometimes these verses have been stressed so much that we try too hard and don't learn to stop.

Those verses need to be balanced with other verses such as, "rest in the Lord," "be still and know that I am God," and "wait on the Lord." We need to find balance between doing, letting go and being if we want good mental and spiritual health.

As Christians we believe that we can make a difference by what we do. Contemporary cultures also encourage doing more and having more. People are acclaimed and recognized for what they do. Churches recognize youth leaders, missionaries, cooks who cook for church dinners, hockey coaches and people who treat their parents well.

All this is good, but it also encourages people to be very busy. Church-attending people are really challenged to be even better at what they do, plus to do more than non-attending people. Rarely does a church encourage people to be, and maybe even more rarely does it affirm people who cannot do what we see as successful church work.

Obviously the needs around us and in the larger world are many and often overwhelming. These needs create stress for us. We can't control them. Some are urgent, some are big, some are trivial, some are routine, some are important, and some come because we don't know how to prioritize or manage our time.

There are our own basic needs such as a need for security, a need for significance and a vacuum deep within our souls that needs to be filled. Sometimes we try to meet these needs by trying to do too much, by trying to control other people, by blaming, by trying to fix things or find quick solutions, by running because we cannot handle silence, through an unwillingness to be vulnerable or by trying harder and harder.

We may try to be busy so we feel important, we may lose touch with who we really are, and just do what we think we need to do. Often this works for us as long as things go reasonably well. But for most people there comes a time "when the well runs dry."

Sometimes it is only when we get to that point that we are willing to let go of the way we have been doing things and move to better mental and spiritual health. It's good if we do it then, but even better if we move toward it before we get to a crisis.

So, then what can we do? I'd suggest that we begin by being very vulnerable with ourselves, with God, and a few trusted people about things in our lives, especially about our deep needs, the emotions, the questions, the things we can't easily talk about. David and Habakkuk are two Old Testament characters that modelled that. They expressed questions, their frustrations and their negative emotions.

We can also let go of blame. Blaming ourselves, God or others hinders growth and peace. We need to accept responsibility for what we need to and let go of what others have or have not done. When others have hurt us badly this becomes a long process but it needs to happen so we do not remain stuck or become bitter.

We also need to learn to set boundaries. We need to decide what is important and spend time with those things and clear our schedule of things that are not important. That may mean time to be and to listen more and to do less. We need to find balance, balance between the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual, balance between solitude, people and God, and balance between being, giving, and receiving.

We need to let go of what we can't control by dropping it into God's hands. We may even need to allow others to help us!

For some people it may mean accepting God's unconditional love and with that accepting themselves with their strengths and weaknesses. It may mean accepting God's forgiveness and letting go of guilt, it may mean living for God's glory first and not for our own or others' needs.

It may mean learning to keep the Sabbath holy, finding a way of taking time to rejuvenate and renew, a time just for God on a regular basis. In fact that may be the most important thing in finding good mental and spiritual health because when we do our focus is on God and we have time to listen to Him.

On the long term that may be what keeps people from burnout as well as growing. In the short term it may be what gives focus, joy and meaning to both relationships and work. Finding a way to do Sabbath will require creativity so it fits for each individual and self-discipline to make it happen but the rewards make it well worth the effort.

Learning to develop and maintain better mental and spiritual help takes time and effort but the dividends outnumber the time and effort involved. ■

Mexico missions trip 2003

Anola, Man.: On August 7, 16 youth and leaders (and a three-person camera crew doing a documentary on the trip) boarded a Greyhound bus headed south.

After two and a half grueling days and nights spent on crowded buses and in a variety of bus depots, we finally arrived in San Diego, where our hosts, Yugo Ministries, met us and brought us the rest of the way down to Campo de Suenos in Ensenada, Mexico.

In four days our group completed a 16 by 20-foot house for a family that could never afford to build one themselves. It was a good eye-opening experience for all who

went and, although most of us have vowed never to ride a public bus that far again, it is a project that many have set their hearts on doing again.

Julianna Wollman, one of the youth who participated in the project, had this to say about it:

“Mexico was something that changed me mentally and spiritually. Nothing has changed the way I look at life more than the moment that we passed the border. What a beautiful country, but the poverty is unbelievable. You hear about it, see it, but never know it what it’s like till you’re there—when it’s right in front of you. The

bus ride was worth it for that one moment.

“We got to meet the family who would live in the house and actually dedicated it to them ourselves. We had awesome food, met a lot of nice people who came to do the same thing we did, and had so much fun doing everything from work to shopping. We worked together really well and got our mission done!

“It was pretty hard to leave. It was weird to come back home and see clean roads, nice houses and trees. I wanted to stay longer and help out. There is so much poverty there, that you almost feel helpless, but thanks to Yugo Ministries, we got to do something. Even if it’s only one family, it makes a big difference.”

Val Koop



The team in front of the finished house: (back) John Plantz, Kristian Broadbent, Danny Melnyk, Art Koop, Angie Martin, Lindsey Wollman, Peter Hall (youth leader), Scott (Yugo missionary); (middle) Thelma Koop, Val Koop, Susan Wollman; (front) Kyle Klappert, Seth Plantz, Alicia Klappert, Lorelle Christian, Tyrone Wollman, Julianna Wollman.



A “before” picture: the striped blanket to the left of the foundation covers the previous home of the family who received the new house.

Fall course at SBC

Helping Hurting Parents

A course for those wishing to help parents who are hurting because of children who have divorced, died, or discarded parental teaching.



November 6 to 8
Thursday and Friday 7 to 10 p.m.,
Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Call SBC’s office at 204-326-6451 or visit
www.sbcollege.mb.ca for information.

NICARAGUA MISSIONS EXPOSURE — WORK TEAM

Volunteers are needed to work at the construction of a building at Camp Maranatha. There will also be opportunity to learn about the Fraternity of Evangelical Mennonite Churches of Nicaragua. Don Plett, former EMC missionary in Nicaragua, will be the coordinator and leader.

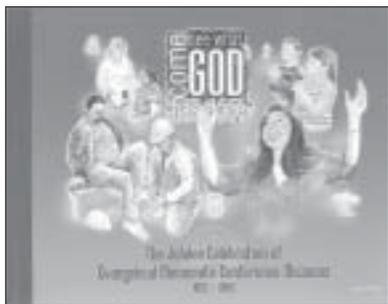
Dates: February 7 to 20, 2004

Cost: \$2,100 approximately

For information contact:
Lester Olfert
EMC Foreign Secretary
204-326-6401
or loolfert@mts.net



With Our Churches



Come See What God Has Done

The Jubilee Celebration of Evangelical Mennonite Conference Missions 1953 – 2003

by Menno Hamm
is available for \$10,
plus shipping,
from the EMC office



Mary and pastor Glenn Loewen, who began serving Portage Evangelical Church on Sept. 1, have four children—Christian, Anieka, Marcus, and Natasha.

Pastor installation at Portage

Portage la Prairie, Man.: “But he said, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me” (2 Cor. 12:9–10).

The church was full of family and friends to show support for Glenn and Mary Loewen. The songs were favourites of the Loewen family and the titles tell of their desires—*Hail, Jesus, You’re My King; There’s Power in the Blood; Jesus Loves Me; Above All; Near the Cross;* and *Jesus, All for Jesus*. With goals like that, we are assured of dedicated leadership.

Glenn left a teaching position at Westpark

to lead Portage Evangelical Church. He started Sept. 1, and the installation service was on Sept. 28.

Dale, Glenn’s twin brother, had the message—*Not Professionals, but Outcasts*. Following the service, everyone was invited to a potluck lunch at the Edwin Hall.

We look forward to the leadership of Glenn and Mary. May we as a congregation be faithful in support of our leaders.

Catherine Epp

Enter now to win a trip to the country of your choice!

Must be an adult, a committed evangelical, and have Bible college or other training.

Suitable people are friendly, open to international friendships, willing to learn another language, and available for 2 or 40 years!

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Not serious enough for you?

Try this.

Many people have yet to hear of Christ.
Many people are living without Christ.
Many people are dying without Christ.

Shouldn’t someone take them the message of Christ?

Will you be that person?



2003 Grade 12 graduates from Portage: (front) Matt Andrushak, Carly Moran, Jon Giesbrecht, and (back) Kevin Plett (between Sharon and Les Kroeker, youth pastoral couple).



Announcing the 4th annual Women’s EMCup January 23–24, 2004 Rosenort (Manitoba) arena

To register as a team or as an individual contact:

Laura Thiessen, 204-475-1419,
cl_thiessen@excite.com or
Angela Kroeker, 204-586-8859,
patang@yahoo.com

Registration deadline is November 18, 2003.

Out-of-province teams are encouraged to attend. They can be billeted by getting in touch with Laura or Angela. Three games are guaranteed.

Since the purpose of the event is to connect with fellow EMCers for a fun game of hockey, teams should be made of EMC members and regular attenders.



VBS staff and group leaders.

SonHarvest VBS at Straffordville

Straffordville, Ont.: What a blessed week of learning about and growing in the Fruit of the Spirit here during our SonHarvest Vacation Bible School held August 18 to 22.

Our *SonHarvest County Fair* skit people did a fantastic job every day at entertaining the entire audience while working on the farm—Steve Wall as Uncle Zeke, Debbie Thiessen as Auntie Opal, Loreen Sawatzky as Annie and Larry Sawatzky as TC (Terrence Clarence). But of much more importance, they also helped to open our eyes on how to live out the Fruit of the Spirit in our everyday lives, whether we live on a farm or in the city.

Hilda Loewen, together with a group of

nine young girls, lead in some exciting and creative singing, planting the fruit of the Spirit deep into our hearts and throats.

Annie's Garden is where the children went for Bible story and life application using lesson books and stickers.

The Lord answered prayers and blessed us with a wonderful week of beautiful warm weather that was perfect for water games, ice cream snacks, and outdoor craft activities.

Every evening 60 to 70 children showed up for registration and for the evening.

Pastor John Wall and I were privileged to work together with 18 other staff for VBS, of which six were group leaders—and they are the young teens of our church.

The Young Jubilees: Sonia Remple, Wendy Loewen, Michelle Loewen, Crystal Friesen, Amanda Loewen, Tracy Kornelsen, Whitney Thiessen, Abigail Froese, and Tanya Loewen.



Skit actors at Straffordville's VBS were Debbie Thiessen, Steve Wall, Loreen Sawatzky, and Larry Sawatzky.

One of my personal highlights was taking great delight in observing leadership skills to be developed as these 11-year-olds guided and cared for their little group of "farm animals" (the children). God bless you, all you young teens, for your service!

On the closing program on Friday, we had an actual "fair" night where all children that brought in a fruit or vegetable for display received a blue ribbon. What an amazing display and creativity!

We also handed out chocolate bars to two students per group that display the Fruit of the Spirit throughout the week. Jessie Froese won the prize for receiving the most individual points. For the most team points, the Daring Ducks (7's and 8's) led by Larry Sawatzky received a CD of VBS music.

To wrap up the week in a way of outreach to Straffordville and Vienna communities, a hotdog and watermelon supper was provided to children and their parents/guardians after the closing session.

We went home on Friday very grateful for a wonderful week of working together and, most of all, for having learned anew the blessings of the Fruits of the Spirit and how to better live them in our everyday lives.

Anna Sawatzky

What a blessed week of learning about and growing in the Fruit of the Spirit here during our SonHarvest Vacation Bible School held August 18 to 22.



Adding members, saying goodbye to a pastoral couple

Swift Current, Sask.: On March 2 a large group of parents dedicated their children to the Lord. Participating were Jake and Trudy Friesen with son Jason Michael, James and Shirley-Anne Wiebe with daughter Bryanna, Darcey and Shari Wiebe with son Jackson Brody, Doug and Carrie Penner with son Joshua Douglas, James and Jody Fehr with son Lane David, and Kevin and Trudy Banman with their children Shania, Ashley and Ty.

The caption read was, "Thank you, Lord, for bothersome blessings. Help us delight in every child you give. When we feel overwhelmed, refresh us with your strength and wisdom. In Jesus name, amen."

Children are the future generation, to carry on when the older generation passes on. So let us rejoice with our new parents and all their little ones.

A new birth in our church is Josiah David, born September 2 to Bryon and Janice Bezanson.

We also had a baptism on April 6. Three youth were baptised: Nathan Klassen, Annette Luciak and Devon Martens. A potluck dinner followed, to raise funds for our family camp that happened August 15-17.

April 13 we accepted four members by transfer: Henry and Tina Fehr, Jeff Schlamp, and Theresa Weston.

A group of our youth went to Mexico in August to help out in an orphanage. They found they were blessed as much or more than the group they were helping. They had a safe trip and praise God for all their blessings.

Our congregation has had various speakers since Pastor Mel left and we are still praying and searching for a new pastor for our church. We have had some possibilities, but nothing is sure just yet. Pray for us to find the right couple to come into our midst.

Cecilia Peters



Willie Peters almost took guest speaker and former pastor Mel Koop for a dunking in the lake during Swift Current's family camp weekend.



Pastor Mel and Mary Koop were presented with hockey jerseys as a farewell gift.

The end of June we held a farewell service for Pastor Mel and Mary Koop, a couple we miss very much.

The end of June we held a farewell service for Pastor Mel and Mary Koop, a couple we miss very much. They served our congregation well for four years. Many members stood to tell of what Mel and Mary meant to them personally. As a farewell gift, they were each presented with a Swift Current Hockey Club jersey.

Mel and Mary are well known and loved by many in Swift Current, and we hope they will return for visits when they can.

Actually, Mel and Mary Koop came back for our family camp at Camp Elim, south of Swift Current, to be our guest speaker. While there, Pastor Mel got picked up at one point in time by Willie Peters, and almost went to the lake for a swim (all in fun). Actually, after a short scuffle, they were both on the floor, ending all thoughts of swimming.



Nathan Klassen, Annette Luciak and Devon Martens received baptism on April 6. Standing with them are Mel Koop, senior pastor, and Bryon Bezanson, youth and music minister.



Skits with Ruth Dyck and Vanessa Plett (left) and praise and worship times (right) helped children learn during Vacation Bible School at Riverton.

The Jesus expedition

Riverton, Man.: Antarctica—cold, windy. I.C. Berg (Helen Froese) was ready for the challenge of teaching children that *Jesus is the Saviour*. With her sidekick Lynette Froese, Helen transformed the baby room at the Gospel Chapel into Antarctica.

Children walked through an igloo entrance into a science lab in the middle of nowhere. There they enjoyed a story, having an ice cream treat, and made snow globes and snowflakes.

The Brazilian Jungle—hot and sticky. Dr. Achoo (Linda Kroeker) was ready for her challenge of teaching children that *Jesus deserves our thanks*. With her sidekick Lacy Enns, Linda made a Sunday school classroom into a rainforest of snakes and trees.

Children entered through a cobweb of creepy, crawly Brazilian reptiles and into a place of majestic stories. They played games, looked at bugs, ate mud with worms, and made decorative parrots.

Mount Everest—high above the world's elevation. R. U. Ready (Debbie Kornelsen) was ready to inspire, with her sidekick Christine Peters, that *Jesus rewards persistence*.

Children climbed high into base camp, located in the sanctuary. They learned Scripture, acted out a play, made a garden stone, and ate gorp.

Pacific Ocean—deep into the waters of the unknown. O.C. Anna (Jen Friesen) and her helper Stephanie Martens told the children, *Jesus is our provider*. The youth room was changed into an underwater aquarium complete with seaweed, sea urchins, and a sea floor.

Children entered onto a beach to hear a story and then were guided into the depths of the ocean. They enjoyed making a candle decorated with seashells and precious stones, and loved that blue Jello with the fish at the bottom of the cup.

This was our VBS program. Every evening children gathered in the sanctuary for singing and to see C.J. (Ruth Dyck) perform a skit. Then they were whisked away by their leaders to a different part of the world every night.

It was exciting to have VBS for the first time in the new Gospel Chapel. The space gave us the energy and positive attitude to minister to the children. I believe that they left happy and loved every evening.

Gaylene Kornelsen and Lori Weber were this year's directors, and they did a tremendous job—recruiting leaders, group leaders, youth to help with snacks and clean-up, actors, music leaders, and painters who made backdrops.

VBS had an area for every member of the church to be involved in. That went

right down to the support and prayers that we might touch the life of even one child that week—to inspire them to look to Jesus as their Saviour and provider, to give thanks to Him, and to remember that He will reward persistence.

My favourite part of the week was seeing men from the church getting involved as group leaders. It was wonderful to see them laugh and joke with kids—to be a mentor to a child who might not have a father in the home.

These men should be given credit for the time they gave to VBS (summer is often the busiest time for them). Dennis Kroeker, Brad Kornelsen, Steve Weber, Dale Kornelsen, and Evan Kornelsen gave of their time to children, many of whom may only hear about God's love for them during one week in July 2003.

We hope that it was memorable for all that were involved. VBS taught us a good lesson. We know that next year's program will be just as exciting and will be even better planned, now that we know how well our new church functions.

"Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God" (Psalm 100:1-3).

Christine Peters



Craft time at VBS.



From treks through the Antarctica, the Brazilian Jungle, and Mount Everest to the Pacific Ocean, these leaders did it all: (back) Helen Froese, Lynette Froese, Linda Kroeker, Christine Peters, (front) Jen Friesen and Debbie Kornelsen.



Splish Splash games leaders Tyler and Josh.



Roseisle's SCUBA crews and volunteers.

SCUBA diving in Roseisle?

Roseisle, Man.: Our church was bubbling with excitement the week of May 26–30 thanks to our VBS program. Forty-two enthusiastic “divers” signed up for our Super Cool Undersea Bible Adventure, or SCUBA. The fun songs, Bible-learning activities, daily video, games and tasty snacks made for a memorable week and a wonderful opportunity for kids to dive into a deeper relationship with God.

The SCUBA crews heard about Elijah and how he confronted the prophets of Baal. They helped to build an altar and were appalled at what they would be required to sacrifice—a chocolate bar. However, they did learn that God is the one and only true God and how important it is to *believe in God*.

On Tuesday, we heard the story of Jonah. Just like he was swallowed by a great fish, our kids also experienced being in the belly of a fish (thanks to large sheets of plastic and a fan)—truly an exciting experience that helped them connect to the Bible story. They were told how important it is to *obey God*.

On Wednesday, the kids experienced a storm like the disciples did when they set out to cross Lake Galilee (it was windy and the kids got wet!). They learned that they can *trust God* and His loving care in scary times or when life seems out of

control.

Love God was the theme for Thursday. The SCUBA crews heard how Jesus hung on a cross, died and was buried. They were transported back to Bible times and imagined they were Jesus’ followers trying to hide from the guards for fear they too would be arrested. They were surprised when a guard did interrupt their “meeting” but were relieved when he said he would let them go.

On the final day, we were encouraged to *share God’s love*. The kids went “fishing” like Peter and heard how Jesus wanted Peter to fish for people instead of fish.

Each evening, SCUBA crews rotated between a couple of stations. We started the evening with super-enthusiastic singing—and I am not exaggerating. It was here that the crews also heard the Bible Point of the day: Believe in God, Obey God, Trust God, Love God and Share God’s Love. The crews then attended either the Deep Bible Adventures or the video adventure. We got together for games and snacks and then switched stations.

We concluded each evening with a festive Sea Star Finale that got everyone involved in celebrating what they had learned that day. Activities included experiments, game shows, creating an indoor storm and a powerful dramatization of Jesus’ death and resurrection, where the kids used red streamers to represent their sins which were hung over Jesus’ arms. The games we played also reinforced the theme of the day.

The Lord provided us with beautiful weather and each evening ended with the same activity—a water fight. This was not really planned, but came to be expected. The SCUBA kids received a new squirt toy every day they attended—Bible Memory Buddies with the day’s memory verse on them. It was amazing how wet you could get using these small toys! Too bad Jackie (one of our fearless volunteers) didn’t stick to those!

Speaking of volunteers, I don’t know if I’ve ever seen a more enthusiastic bunch. Our helpers came night after night. Some had specific jobs to do every night, but there were those who came to “help wherever needed.” They stayed even if there was not a lot for them to do because it was “so much fun.”

There were kids who missed baseball games just so they could be at SCUBA. Our volunteers and the kids who attended were an amazing answer to prayer. I thank God for the opportunity He gave us to minister to children of our community and for all the volunteers that wanted to be part of that ministry. Our prayer is that our SCUBA kids will remember the message of hope and love they heard that week and be excited about sharing it with others.

Eleanor Friesen

SCUBA kids and volunteers get into the music.



Being “burped” out of the whale. The adults wanted to experience being in the belly of a fish just as much as the kids did.



Celebrating with Peter and Martha

Grande Prairie, Alta.: On June 22 our church celebrated with our senior pastoral couple Peter and Martha Doerksen—a commissioning service, a 25th wedding anniversary, and a farewell potluck.

After the meal there was an open mike time, which included comedy skits by two of Doerksen's children, Angela and Chris.

Pastor Peter and Martha were presented with a church family scrapbook by Elvia Wiebe. Elvira had spent many hours planning, preparing, and helping other people prepare pages for the album. The end result was a beautiful and meaningful momento for Doerksens to take with them as they move to a new pastoral position in Oasis, Mexico.

Our church family has been truly blessed by this couple's ministry



Farewell and anniversary cakes were presented to Martha and Peter Doerksen at their celebration potluck. The inscriptions said, "Our prayers are with you in Mexico" and "Happy 25th anniversary."



Pastor Peter and Martha Doerksen were presented with a church family scrapbook by Elvira Wiebe.

here in Grande Prairie. Their genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of others and their wonderful examples of Spirit-led walks with the Lord have been encouraging.

While we are excited for them as they begin this exciting ministry God has called them to, we cannot help but be saddened by the loss we experience as a result.

We will miss them dearly as we bid them *Adios*, but it's only fair that people elsewhere be given the opportunity to know this sweet couple and be discipled by them as well.

Kathy Friesen

EMC Student Luncheon
Thursday, Nov. 6
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Room 224A-C
University Centre
University of Manitoba



Speaker:
Amos Fehr
Rosenort EMC
Rosenort, Man.

Contact:
 Travis 204-779-2888
 Rose 204-355-9259
 Terry 204-326-6401
 (Gerald Reimer is in Mexico, but says, "I'll be back for the luncheon!")

Sponsored by the EMC Board of Church Ministries

New members received at High Level



High Level, Alta.:
 Betty and Isaac Siemens were received into membership on June 15.



On September 7, High Level Christian Fellowship received members by baptism and transfer. Baptized were Lisa and Darryl Bueckert, Clinton Harder. By transfer, new members are Helen Hong, Lynda and Russel Peters, Cindy and Pete Fehr. Pastor Richard Klassen (right) stands with them.

Gert Harder

Summer scenes from Braeside



In July, Cam and Corrina Kroeker, with two-year-old Angela, reported on their MCC-related work with individuals of German ancestry who have lived in the former Soviet Union but who have returned to their "homeland" in the former East Germany. Their purpose is many-faceted, and includes winning the trust of newcomers as well as influencing young people, many of whom have no concept of Christianity, to connect with a church.

Kroekers will return to Canada in spring 2004. Previously, Cam and Corrina spent three years in Ukraine, working at a shelter for homeless and neglected children.



Ed and Tammy Harris, with Adam and Sarah, were accepted as members through transfer. In a testimony, Ed and Tammy shared how God's promises of love and guidance had constantly been verified in difficult life situations. They praise God for this.



Four couples dedicated themselves and their children to the Lord. The four little folks, who not only need their parents' support and prayers but Braeside's as well, are Jennifer Pitta (Antonia and Esther), Joel Heppner (Carl and Kathy), Isabella Figueroa (Josue and Maria), and Samantha Moreno Pichardo (Ana).



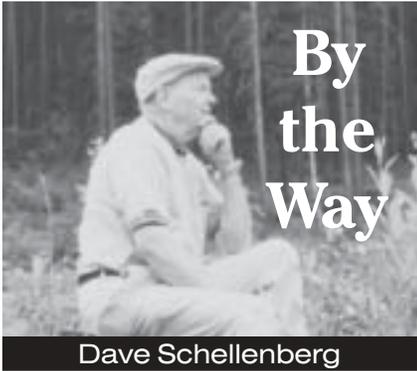
Pastor Carl Heppner stands with Lisa Friesen and Bryce McLean on their baptism day. Lisa felt that something was missing in her life. With the "gentle" pull of the Holy Spirit and the urging of her sister, Lisa decided to recommit her life to the Lord and to be baptised.

Bryce made a decision to follow Jesus at Camp Cedarwood. A faithful attendee at Sunday morning worship services, Bryce is unique at Braeside—he is the only one who comes to church by skateboard.



At her membership transfer, Judy Ford stated, "I am thankful that God's grace and strength is available each day. My disabilities continue to show me that God can be trusted and that he is always faithful, no matter how rough the road gets." Pastor Carl Heppner led in prayer for her.

Al Dueck



Dave Schellenberg

THE PASSING of a spouse brings on a whole new set of life's situations. You come to an empty house. You miss the input of your faithful companion when making a purchase to your wardrobe. You miss the familiar figure across from you at mealtime.

You miss, at least I do, the getting of the Scrabble game from the top shelf of the closet to play a game on those long winter evenings. And one could go on and on.

I have to learn to live in a new and altogether different world—a world no longer inhabited by a spouse of over 62 years. The finality of this only someone can imagine who has also gone through it.

Is it any wonder, then, that one does not always know what to say when a friend addresses you with a casual, "How are you"? It seems to me that one person had replied to this query with "How much time do you have?" Another person had replied with, "Do you really want to know?" and had embarrassed the questioner with, "Me geht it schlacht!" (I am miserable).

PETER P. FRIESEN
JAN. 5, 1917 – OCT. 21, 2002

A year has passed since God called you home
 Your days of pain and suffering are gone.
 You were getting so tired and wanted to go,
 To be with Jesus, whom you loved and served.
 With tears in our eyes, we watched you suffer
 Then we said our good-byes, and you quietly left us.
 Many times we need you, many times we cry.
 Your chair is so empty, and your shop so quiet.
 We miss your smiles, your stories, and your inventions
 You were always so positive, generous and wise.
 Quietly today your memory we treasure
 Loving you always, forgetting you never.



Lovingly remembered
 by your family

When greeting the grieving, give a little extra thought

You see, the trouble is that the person who asks wants a quick answer in passing. Seldom does the person want to linger and hear the whole story.

I have more than once, maybe many times, experienced a loss for words when addressed that way after the death of my spouse. And although more than a year has passed, the pain and the loneliness is by no means over. And it is not over for some people I have spoken to, for whom it may be close to ten years.

I have also been addressed with, "How have you been?" To me this is a little different. Although also a challenge, it conveys more a feeling of caring and really wanting to know than does the other question. There seems to be more warmth to it. It seems that a person who frames their question in that way displays empathy for your condition.

But we must be kind. That's what Scripture says, "Be ye kind to one another." The person who greets you with "How are you?" has only the best intentions. And one must receive it as that and thank God for the concern. And for ordinary situations, that also may be fine. But in the case of a bereaved person, maybe it should be given a little extra thought.

Then there are also those, bless their hearts, who stop you and convey their feelings—maybe somewhat in this way: "We are thinking of you. We remember you. We often pray for you." This overwhelms me, and I cannot help

but get a warm feeling. Once or maybe twice I even got a hug in public.

My mourning process may not have produced many dramatic effects, but here are some things that I have learned and am still learning:

- God has become more real to me.
- Comfort and encouragement can come from unexpected sources.
- I have come to see heaven more as a real place.
- I have learned to appreciate small things.
- My relationship to my heavenly Father is more sure and more confident, more the feeling that I have a loving Father in God. He is one who cares for me and is concerned for my well-being.
- I have experienced definite answers to prayer.
- I am learning that self-pity is not the answer.

I have shared some of my thoughts and feelings as one who has been bereaved. Maybe someone here or there can profit from something I have said. If so, I shall be well repaid.

Coming Events

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Oct. 27
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Steinbach, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> | <p>Nov. 1
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Morden, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> |
| <p>Oct. 28
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Otterburne, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> | <p>Nov. 4
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Brandon, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> |
| <p>Oct. 29
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Morris, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> | <p>Nov. 5
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Swan River, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> |
| <p>Oct. 30
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Altona, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> | <p>Dec. 5
 EMC Ministerial Mtg.
 Fort Garry EMC
 Winnipeg, Man.
 Phone: 204-326-6401</p> |
| <p>Oct. 31
 Sunong: The Right to Machatau
 Wycliffe Dinner Theatre
 Winkler, Man.
 Phone: 800-708-2476</p> | <p>Dec. 6
 EMC Conference
 Council meeting
 Crestview Fellowship
 Winnipeg, Man.
 Phone: 204-326-6401</p> |

Shoulder Tapping

Pelly Fellowship Chapel (EMC) is looking for a full-time **lead pastor**. Pelly is a small rural community (300 people) in east-central Saskatchewan. The congregation averages 40 on Sunday mornings and is the only evangelical church in the community.

Please forward your resume or questions to the search committee by mail at Box 70, Pelly, SK S0A 2Z0 or phone Eugene Prokott at 306-595-2287, or email woodlandsigns@sasktel.net

Abbeydale Christian Fellowship (EMC) of east Calgary, Alta., seeks an **associate pastor** with strengths in counselling, teaching and preaching. Duties also include mentoring lay leadership in existing youth and college and career ministries. ACF is medium-sized (180-220), a congregation seeking to disciple members and attendees, encourage their gifts and involvement, and to reach out to the neighbourhood and families of church adherents. We have strengths in lay leadership and ministry. Needed are gifts and abilities complementary to the existing pastor and lay leadership. Submit resumes to Harold Friesen, search committee chairman at SearchCommittee@abbeydale.org Description, qualifications and background, duties and responsibilities are posted on our website at www.abbeydale.org.

Vanderhoof Christian Fellowship (EMC) seeks a **full-time senior pastor** to serve a growing congregation of about 170 people in the centre of British Columbia. Our congregation is blessed with a large number of young couples, college and career, and youth. Home care groups are a thriving ministry here. The applicant will be a team player and work with other staff. If you feel the Lord calling you, contact Ron Penner at 250-567-9983 or email at vcfemc@telus.net. Applications must be received by December 20, 2003.

A rural western Manitoba community church is looking for a **full-time lead pastor** with a special gift and passion for ministering to young people, and a strong vision for developing and maintaining small town community relations. Contact Dennis Friesen (council chairman) at 204-824-2208 or Leonard Plett (deacon) at 204-824-2475 or e-mail lplett@mb.sympatico.ca.

La Crete Christian Fellowship Church (EMC), in a thriving northern Alberta community, seeks a **full-time senior pastor**.

Forward your resume to search committee, La Crete Christian Fellowship, Box 385, La Crete, AB T0H 2H0; or email lccf@telusplanet.net. Contact John Bueckert at 780-928-2212 or email at bueckert@telusplanet.net.

Morris Fellowship Chapel (EMC) seeks a **youth leader** for a half-time position to direct the youth group program. Expansion in this ministry could include post-secondary age group. Contact Pastor Ward Parkinson at Box 219, Morris, MB R0G 1K0. Call 204-746-2424.

Kola EMC, serving a small community in southwest Manitoba, seeks a **full-time youth pastor** to work primarily with a group of about 25 youth. Contact Len or Lori Koop at 204-845-2130, email lkoop@mts.net, fax 204-845-2098; or Harold or Cheryl Friesen at 306-646-4545.

Swift Current EMC seeks a **senior pastor**. Our congregation of approximately 180 consists of all age groups. Major areas of ministry include preaching, providing vision and developing leaders within the congregation. Contact search committee, 2150 Walker Street, Swift Current, SK S9H 4C1 or e-mail: emcsc@sasktel.net.

Pansy Chapel (EMC), a small rural church in southeastern Manitoba, seeks a **part-time senior pastor**. Send resume to search committee chairman Dylan Barkman, Box 25, Pansy, MB R0A 1J0. For information, phone 204-434-6370.

Riverton Gospel Chapel (EMC), a small rural town in Manitoba's Interlake, seeks a **half-time pastor**. This friendly and loving congregation has an average attendance of 75-100, with a high percentage of young families. The area provides other employment opportunities in various sectors, including farming and construction, and has good schools.

Contact Paul Peters, board chair, by mail: Box 356, Riverton, MB R0C 2R0, by e-mail: paul@vidir.com, or by phone: 204-378-2740 (home), 204-364-2442 (work).

Endeavour Fellowship Chapel (EMC), a warm, friendly congregation with 50 to 60 in attendance on Sunday morning, seeks a **pastor**. It is located in a small town/rural part of east-central Saskatchewan, between Yorkton and Hudson Bay.

The church is flexible both in standards for both candidate education and experience. As an evangelical church in town, it serves a wide range of people. Contact chairman of elders Neil Fenske at 306-547-4738 or Box 263, Endeavour, SK S0A 0W0.

Fish Creek Christian Fellowship (EMC) in Calgary, Alta., is looking for someone or a couple to give **ministry leadership to our youth/college and career**. This is a self-supported position. Contact Garry Kornelsen, 55 Woodford Cres. SW, Calgary, AB T2W 4C6 or phone 403-281-3747.

Steinbach EMC in Steinbach, Man., seeks a **full-time lead pastor** to provide leadership to a team that includes an associate pastor and a youth pastor. The applicant must have previous pastoral experience. Forward resume to Henry Klassen, Box 996, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0; Phone: 204-326-6068; E-mail: henryk2@mts.net.

Gimli Bible Camp seeks a full-time, year-round **camp director** with managerial experience, a strong background in Christian camping, ability to program events and work well with the public, with an evangelistic passion especially for people from the inner city.

The camp has a strong summer ministry to children and youth and a year-round guest ministry. Salary to be negotiated.

Contact: CSSM Ministries Manitoba, 200-189 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R2L 1L7. Phone 204-668-2776, fax 204-667-1496, or e-mail cssm@mts.net

Action International Ministries needs a **business administrator** to serve in Manila, Philippines. This position is open immediately for someone who loves the Lord and people, is an administration, and can trust the Lord for their support. Other ministry opportunities exist. Learning Tagalog is encouraged, but not required. You would work with about 25 missionaries and 12 Filipino staff who minister to urban poor, street children and to strengthen churches. Two years is required, four or more preferred. Check our website: www.actionph.org or email Mary Ann at maryann@actionintl.org

Riverton MCC Thrift Store seeks a **manager** to promote MCC's objectives and manage the shop as a service to the local and global community. Needed are vision, leadership and interpersonal skills. The shop has clothing and housewares, with a new furniture location to open in 2004. Mail resume to Riverton MCC Thrift Shop, Box 623, Riverton, MB R0C 2R0.

Work and faith issues important to pastors

Wally Kroeker

WHEN pastors look out over their congregations on Sunday mornings, they see:

- People who are stressed because they are having a hard time balancing the competing demands of work and family.
- People who are unemployed, underemployed or worried that they might soon be out of work due to downsizing and layoffs.
- People dealing with conflict in their workplaces.
- People trying to come to terms with their prosperity, and looking for guidance about materialism and consumerism.
- Retired people wondering if they have anything meaningful to contribute, now that they are no longer working.
- Young people wondering what careers would be right for Christians.
- In rural areas, they see farmers who are struggling to keep their farms, and people who are worried that their small communities may not survive.

Those were some of the thoughts shared by 325 U.S. and Canadian Mennonite pastors when asked by MEDA to share about the kinds of work and faith issues being faced by people in their congregations.

The survey of pastors was one of several sent by MEDA to a variety of people in late 2002. The purpose of the surveys was to help MEDA get a snapshot of where it stands during this, its 50th anniversary year, and to help the organization prepare to serve the church in the years ahead.

Wally Kroeker is editor of *The Marketplace*, the magazine published by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), Winnipeg, Man.



Kids' Corner

Loreena Thiessen
Winnipeg, MB

Who Has Seen the Wind?

DO YOU watch the wind as a storm builds and is about to break? Leaves and branches sail past the window, trees sway and bend. Clouds swirl and hurry toward us bringing rain. Sometimes the rain streaks sideways across the land. A winter storm can cause a white-out where we see only a wall of blowing snow. We call this a blizzard.

What is the wind? Where does it come from?

Wind is moving air. It's the sun that makes it move. The earth spins around like a top once each day. As the earth spins each part of it in turn gets sunlight. This makes night and day. The sun warms the air. As the air warms and gets hotter it rises. Cool air rushes in to replace the warm air. When you feel the wind you are feeling the cooler air moving to fill the places where the warm air has left.

Is the wind our friend? Or is it unfriendly?

In many ways the wind helps us. When we need rain it is the wind that moves the rain clouds toward us. After the rain the wind dries the land. Long ago the only way to travel across the ocean was by sailboat. Wind pushed the boat.

The fastest winds are high above the clouds. They are called jet streams. Jet streams help jet airplanes travel faster.

But the wind can also blow so hard that trees and houses are pulled down and crushed. A hurricane causes floods and smashes boats. A strong wind can make a forest fire grow larger and move faster so that more trees are burned. Wind can also change directions. As the wind changes the fire turns with it. This makes it more difficult for the firefighter to put it out.

We can't see the wind itself. It has no colour, smell or shape. But we can feel it and we can see it blow leaves and litter around.

In John 3 Jesus explains to Nicodemus that his Spirit is like the wind. When Jesus lives in your heart your friends can't see that but they can tell by what you do. Read Matthew 5:16 and John 3:8.



Make a spinner and hear the wind hum.

You will need:

- plastic tub lid
- thin cardboard
- construction paper
 - pencil
 - felt pens
 - scissors
- white craft glue
 - push pin
- strong string, 2 meters
- a single-hole punch

What you do:

Trace the plastic lid twice on construction paper and once on cardboard. Cut out the circles. Glue the construction paper circles on each side of the cardboard circle. Decorate the construction paper circles. Allow the glued circles to dry with a book as weight to hold them flat.

Find the centre of the glued together circles. Poke the push pin through the centre of the circles. Make a small hole on each side of the centre of the circles. Thread the string through the holes and knot it tightly. Punch a ring of holes around the centre of the circles about 4 cm. from the edge.

Hold the string out from each side of the circles. The circles should be in the centre of the string. Spin the string a few times until string on each side is twisted. Move hands in and out quickly and hear the wind hum.

Do you have a story for The Personal Touch? It must be a true account (although names may be changed, if necessary) illustrating the Christian life or character. Send your 700-word story and a photograph of yourself or suggestion for a story to the address below.