

# *The* Messenger

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE  
VOLUME 41 NUMBER 19 NOVEMBER 5, 2003



Has life  
lost its  
meaning?

(page 3)

## Visitors on Reformation Day

**J**OHN KNOX and Menno Simons entered the Presbyterian church service still in a daze. For men dead since 1572 and 1561, they looked good.

The Lord's permission to visit two church services on Reformation Sunday was most unusual—about like Moses and Elijah being allowed to go to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:4). Given the Lord's emphatic directive—"Go see how the churches are!"—they wondered what might await them.

An usher asked John, "What's your name?" "Knox," was the reply.

"Knox, you say?" said the usher. "I've heard of you." Knox smiled. "You're the American theologian who wrote *Criticism and Faith*." John frowned and said, "No, that's not me." "But I was sure of the name," said the usher.

The usher turned to Simons. "And your name? Simons? Sorry, don't recognize it," he said. "Auch, well, I'm glad you've come! Dinna worry. We only sing one or two Gaelic songs in a season. Did I tell you that we're having lunch after downstairs? All of the haggis you can eat."

Both men were awed by the electric lights and by seeing men and women plucking at the strings of strange instruments. They joined the congregation on when to stand and sit. The songs were new. Repeating The Lord's Prayer and The Apostles' Creed was comfortable.

The pastor spoke in a clear, ringing tone (Knox liked that). He spoke about Reformation Day—of our indebtedness to courageous men and women, the return to neglected Scriptural truths, and the tumultuous time that was the Reformation. Courage and biblical conviction are needed today in the face of modern tumult, he said.

The minister spoke against the use of force in the name of Christianity, whether during the Reformation or today (Simons enjoyed that and even Knox's sword hand didn't twitch).

John ate well at lunch, while Menno picked at the haggis. "There's nothing like New Hebrides haggis," a church member told him.

The pastor was surprisingly open. "You're both in church leadership," he guessed. They nodded.

The congregation had a fair-sized confirmation class, the pastor said, but it struggled to keep its young people afterward.

Middle-aged and younger people questioned the importance of doctrine. The church risked losing touch with historic confessions of faith.

The church people were friendly. "What did you think of the minister's message?" one woman asked Knox. "It was good," John said. "The Reformation was a difficult time. Why I remember..."

"Well, I didn't get much from it," a man stated bluntly. "Reformation? That's outdated, irrelevant."

"But changes were needed," said Menno. "There were major differences between churches of that time, matters that the fates of people's souls rested upon."

"Well, if you say so," said the man, who quickly turned to chat with someone else.

As Knox and Simons were leaving, a couple greeted them. "Thank you for visiting! Come again."

The two men walked down the sidewalk. "Is it true?" Menno asked.

"Is what true?" said the Scottish reformer, who seemed rather sullen.

"Is it true that the Reformation has lost its importance in the life of the church? Do Christians today take the gains for granted, and forget the blood of those who died that they might worship with greater confidence in the grace of Christ?"

Knox replied, "I'm wondering. But the minister seemed to consider what happened as important, and we didn't talk to all of the people."

"You're right," said Menno. He paused. "I liked the sermon, but in some ways I didn't fit into that church."

"Neither did I," said Knox.

"What do we do now?" asked Menno.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Knox. "I'm surprised at you, Simons! The Lord has spoken and we will do what he says. Besides, probably not all churches are the same. Next we'll go to a Mennonite church."

"But what will we find there?" said Menno, concerned.

"I dinna know, but take hope, laddie. There might be another Reformation Day sermon. Besides, remember how our Lord said that the church would prevail over the gates of hell, and..."

"And?" asked Menno, reluctantly.

"And it might over forgetfulness too."

Terry M. Smith

### The Messenger

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Terry M. Smith



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**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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# Has life lost its meaning?

Gord Penner

FOR A recent Bible college course on Wisdom Literature, students were asked to read the book of Ecclesiastes. Rick went to a local restaurant, bought a coffee, and sat down to read the book.

After a few minutes, a stranger walked up to him and asked, "Is that the Bible you're reading?" Rick nodded, and the stranger responded, "I find that book to be irrelevant."

Rick's immediate response was, "Well, then you haven't read Ecclesiastes." He went on to inform his new friend that Ecclesiastes is the most relevant book around, being written by a man who was searching for meaning in life.

By all appearances, Solomon had everything he wanted, yet his life was still meaningless! The stranger's eyes lit up, and he agreed to read the book and meet Rick a week later to discuss it.

I agree with Rick. Ecclesiastes is one of the most relevant books in the Bible. The author helps us see why life, at times, disappoints us.

The teacher, or preacher, who writes the book of Ecclesiastes is usually understood to be Solomon, king of Israel. He is often looked upon as the symbol of success. He had it all, as far as power, finances, and prestige are concerned. Yet, despite all this, he described life as meaningless!

When a man of that stature considers life unsatisfying and troublesome, it makes one sit up and pay attention to what he has to say. Reading the book of Ecclesiastes helps the reader understand how Solomon, the wisest person who lived, could interpret his vain pursuits.

The author's two uses of repetition drive home the message of Ecclesiastes. Thirty-seven times, the author uses the word *hebel* to describe life. English versions of the Bible translate this word as

*meaningless* or *vanity*. The picture here is of a mirage in the desert—as one approaches the spot, one realizes that it was only an illusion.

The phrase "under the sun" is used 28 times. It describes the perspective of a person who looks at life while ignoring God. When failing to take God into account, life is meaningless. In that, Solomon is right!

That message is as relevant today as it was in his day. It reflects the consequences of a lost perspective, where thinking and living as if what's down here (temporal) is more important than what's up there (eternal).

The teacher questions what a man gains from all his labour at which he toils under the sun (1:3). He wonders "What is the profit in all I'm doing? What good is it really going to do me? What is truly meaningful in all of my toil?"

He recognizes no purpose in the activities he has undertaken. Life has become a series of cycles—that go nowhere! Many examples today echo his findings. Some of the clothing we wore years ago is *in* again. We shovel the snow today, but recognize that we'll have to do it all over again soon. A family grieves a loved one lost last week. Today a friend's brother died. Why do laundry? Cook meals? What's the point?

The teacher agrees! He recognizes that life just happens—we eat, we work, we sleep. No wonder we're never satisfied! We get caught up in the dull routine of things which we have done before and will do again. Eventually, somebody else takes our place to repeat the cycle. We become cynical, and ask, "Where's the meaning in this?"



Gord Penner, B.R.S., M.Div., Th.M., is a professor of Biblical studies at Steinbach Bible College and a minister within the congregation of Ridgewood EMC, near Giroux, Man.

Solomon's analysis of the cycles of life is correct. Life, when lived only for accomplishments on earth, fails to take on meaning. It's empty! Nothingness!

Without a relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ, *meaningless* describes our situation accurately. As the philosopher Blaise Pascal pointed out, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing, but only by God the Creator made known through Jesus Christ." Any attempt to meet that need with something *under the sun* (failing to consider God and eternity) will lead to a life that is *meaningless*.

The apostle Paul reminds us that "What is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). A meaningful life is lived with the perspective of eternity in mind. Without that, we can have the greatest bumper crop or pay raise or whatever, and shortly it ends up feeling empty.

Ecclesiastes 1:8–11 reminds us that accomplishments *below the sun* are never enough. "The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing." Children open Christmas presents and within a week or two begin counting down to their birthdays. People go on "the trip of a lifetime" summer after summer!

Several years ago during Super Bowl week, a reporter asked Dallas running back Duane Thomas how it felt to be playing in the "ultimate game." Thomas responded, "If it was the ultimate game, they wouldn't be playing it again next year!" What the reporter failed to recognize, but Thomas seemed to understand, was that even a Super Bowl ring doesn't ultimately satisfy.

Solomon also bemoans the realization that nobody's going to remember us anyway: "There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow" (1:11). When it comes right down to it, under the sun our life amounts to little more than a five-minute eulogy, and a moment of silence at the graveside. Then, it's business as usual! There is no permanent gain under the sun.

However, when viewed through the lens of eternity, life takes on new meaning.

What can Ecclesiastes teach me about life?

**First**, everything is meaningless without God. When I get tired of the rat race, and feel like life is empty, perhaps I need to evaluate what percent of the God-sized vacuum I am trying to fill with winning the next "big game." Failing to take God into account, life lacks genuine purpose. It's what is above the sun that counts. When Solomon's gaze was focused only on what is under the sun, he ended up a loser!

**Second**, I receive no gain for my labour when it is for selfish ends. Paul writes "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). In Philippians 3:8, he adds, "What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things." Our society and God have two different ideas of what achievement looks like, and only God's view offers permanent gain and glory.

**Third**, there is nothing new under the sun, but coming to know the Son makes all things new. Seeing the cycles of life can either lead me to despair or to look beyond them to the One who created and sustains life. When I choose the latter, I begin to discover meaning. 2 Cor. 5:17 states: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

**Fourth**, though people may not remember me, God never forgets. The human memory is short—God's is everlasting! When I'm buried, the testimony of the life I live will never fit on my tombstone and nobody might ever read it. However, what was done for the sake of eternity will continue to produce fruit for generations to come.

**Fifth**, when I don't live my life in relationship to Jesus Christ, then my life is simply frustration and futility. Only Christ gives meaning and purpose to human existence. Col. 1:16 states, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him." If I deny that, or ignore that, I make the greatest mistake possible.

Ever get the feeling that life isn't everything it's cooked up to be? That maybe there's something more? Is life racing out of control, and you're desperately looking for an exit ramp? Tired of the rat race? Wondering and planning for your next "adventure," hoping that it will finally fill that empty spot in your heart?

Perhaps you're going through the motions—at home, at work, at school, at church—but it seems to be meaningless? Whenever you get the feeling that something is useless or meaningless, take note! Ask, is this what Solomon would classify as being "under the sun?"

Life under the sun may have some short-term satisfaction, but always ends up empty. We can kid ourselves that it's working, but when we sit in silence for a while, we realize that this, too, is empty, vanity, meaningless. I begin to live with meaning when I recognize that the God-shaped vacuum in my heart can only be filled with God. The rewards? A life with meaning and purpose and eternal life with God.

Remember the Bible college student I mentioned? The next week Rick was waiting for the young man to arrive. When he came, he asked, "Could we meet a week later? My wife is reading Ecclesiastes now and would like to join us in this discussion." The term *irrelevant* no longer coloured his view of this book of wisdom. ■

# Mennonite World Conference: Reflections on Africa 2003

Dr. Don Thiessen, EMC Moderator

**Editor's note:** *Assembly 14, the Mennonite World Conference gathering, was held from August 11 to 17 at Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.*

*Moderator Don and Minna Thiessen attended on behalf of EMC. Now, Don reflects on this event within our wider family. (General Secretary Len and Faye Barkman also attended. Len's reflections were published previously.) MWC gatherings are held every six or seven years.*

## Meals

Every day six to seven thousand participants ate very adequate meals. Lunch and supper were prepared in large pots over open fires close to the dining facilities. Each meal consisted of rice, sadzu (a boiled corn meal), meat (beef or chicken), vegetable and fruit.



Minna Thiessen visits a woman cooking at Assembly 14 in Zimbabwe.

## Diversity

The Anabaptist church is no longer simply a small, quiet sect with European reformation roots with a few pet doctrines that the rest of the Christian church doesn't understand, never mind agree with. We are now in over 60 countries with the majority of us not being Caucasian. In our weakness, often making mistakes, the gospel has been brought to countries around the world to churches that are now showing us the way to spiritual vitality.

## Peace

Sometimes I wonder if all we're doing is trying to discover in how many ways we can say peace. Those of us in the western world, who appear to have the most peaceful countries in the world, talk about peace. In countries where there is unrest, war, persecution, and oppression, the church is evangelizing and growing. Here, where we have peace, the church is declining.

## Passions

It is the passions and preoccupations of the developing world that will save the larger Mennonite church from a slow deterioration to an impotent institution that spends a huge amount of energy and money gazing inward. Hopefully in our fellowship in the future those with a passion for reaching out beyond themselves will lead the way and, in fact, set the agenda rather than responding to ours from the western world.

## Zimbabwe

We encountered a country in decline. As visitors we encountered little inconvenience because of the foresight and graciousness of our hosts. Food, fuel and money shortages have become critical for many, especially for the poor in rural areas.

## Name change

This seemed to be a discussion by the English speaking church on what are the nuances and subtleties of the English language in an attempt to change the nature and direction of Mennonite World Conference. "Are we a community or a communion?" was the question. After considerable discussion the name was kept but with the added subtitle, *A Community of Anabaptist Churches*.

## Mennonite-Catholic dialogue

Over the past few years, a group of leaders has been meeting to address the reformation history that involved persecution of the Anabaptists by the Roman Catholic Church. This report was met with some consternation, especially by Latin American delegates, who felt that this is still the case in many of their situations. They were fearful that this was a preliminary to theological and structural merger.

## Snippets

- stacks of firewood at the outside kitchen
- the conference chairperson dancing with the choir
- exuberant African singing

Don Thiessen, B.A., B.Ed., M.Mus., Ph.D., is an EMC minister and a long-time educator. He is on staff at Steinbach Bible College. For several years Don, by General Board appointment, has represented EMC within Mennonite World Conference. During this past summer Don became EMC moderator.



- joshing with street vendors
- breakfast with David and Grace Shenk
- turning on the heat at night (in Africa)
- meeting brothers and sisters from around the world
- celebrating our 39<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in a nice restaurant
- a tired conference attendee sleeping on the grass
- digital cameras
- preaching, singing, praying, dancing
- a ceremonial forgiveness footwashing between two African tribes
- communion with 7,000 believers

**A typical day**

- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:00 On the bus
- 9:00 Singing
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30 Inspirational Session
- 12 noon Lunch
- 1:00 Workshops, tours, seminars, networking
- 5:30 Inspirational session
- 7:00 Supper
- 8:00 Wait for the bus
- 9:00 Home (at the motel, that is)

**The future**

Where is Mennonite World Conference heading? There seems to be an effort to add more programs to the activities of MWC. To gather for fellowship every six years has been the main agenda but more sub-committees and agendas are being added. It seems, and I could be wrong, that some would like MWC to become the structure that will speak for all Mennonites and will seek to coordinate activities around the world in missions, development, and theological direction. If this happens it will take much more money and personnel. I fear that this will divert resources from the primary work of the church to supporting a large administrative structure.

I think we need to hear our brothers and sisters from around the world and this gathering is probably the best way to do this. But once we begin publishing books, developing theological statements, adding more meetings, creating more administrative bodies, lobbying governments and developing programs, we are adding a new dimension to what began as a fellowship of Anabaptist believers. We will need to decide to what extent we wish to participate.

Would I go again? I would love to. The opportunity to meet so many other like minded Christians from around the world is a wonderful one. For that week it almost seems that everyone in the world is Anabaptist. It's actually quite overwhelming. ■



Delegates and attendees take a break from official Assembly proceedings. ■

**I think we need to hear our brothers and sisters from around the world.**



Don Thiessen met many church leaders and members, including this leader from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Coming Events**

**Dec. 5**  
EMC Ministerial  
Fort Garry EMC  
Winnipeg, Man.  
Phone: 204-326-6401

**Dec. 6**  
EMC Conference Council  
Crestview Fellowship  
Winnipeg, Man.  
Phone: 204-326-6401

**Jan. 13 to Apr. 6**  
*Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*  
Callsbeck Fellowship  
Chapel  
Winnipeg, Man.  
Bergthaler Mennonite Church  
Winkler, Man.  
Phone: 204-663-3453



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# Letter

## BELIEVERS OR DISCIPLES?

Thank you for the articles on Evangelical Anabaptism [Oct. 8]. I agree with Earl Unger that “disciples of Jesus” is the best way to describe ourselves.

Unfortunately, we too often confuse discipleship and belief, a trap his article seems to have fallen into. It says, for example, “Our aim is not to try to convert people into Evangelical Anabaptists, but into born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Great Commission (Matthew 28) is to make “disciples,” not “believers.” Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first tentative step of a baby disciple. Conversion does not—and evangelism cannot—stop there.

Here is where the Anabaptists can be helpful, because they understood discipleship so well. To be a disciple is to live a life radically different from the world—a life that appears upside down, as Jacob Enns reminds us. To be a disciple is to obey all that Jesus taught (again, from Matthew 28). Certainly, it’s a challenge, but precisely the challenge to which we are called.

Tim Rogalsky  
Landmark, Man.

### Letters to the Editor

Letters for publication, commenting on issues raised in *The Messenger*, are welcomed. Their tone should be charitable, dealing with subjects rather than individuals.

To be published they must include the writer’s signature, address and phone number. Names and general location will appear, except for extraordinary circumstances, on letters published.

The magazine reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and charity. It can refuse publication when the material does not conform to the editorial policy approved by the Board of Church Ministries (January 2002).

**Come, join the celebration  
at St. Vital!  
You are welcome!**

**St. Vital EMC** invites you to  
celebrate with us in the  
**installation and ordination**  
of our new pastor,  
**Awln Davison,**  
on **Sunday, Nov. 23, at 6:30 p.m.**  
in the  
**Samuel Burland School Gym,**  
192 Burland Ave., Winnipeg, Man.  
Phone 204-453-4586 or  
**204-275-3231.**



## A Woman's Journey of Faith

Betty Koop  
Steinbach, Manitoba

## SHARON

BEFORE me is an amazing picture. It shows a large blue poppy in the centre of which is a clear image of a tiny lamb. No, it’s not trick photography! The photographer is Tillie Poe, a woman who sought for God’s peace as she awaited word of diagnosis of her daughter’s illness. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...” came to her but, as she writes in a 2001 *Guideposts* issue, she had a want—she wanted to know what was making her daughter sick.

As she touched the flower and prayed, warmth flowed over her. She snapped a picture of the beautiful flower to share with her daughter later.

When the photo was developed, she was amazed to see the tiny lamb! Her daughter’s name was Sharon and the diagnosis was multiple sclerosis (MS).

This story and picture were used, with Mrs. Poe’s permission, as part of a talk given by another Sharon (the one I’m writing about). She also is living with MS. She believes it was one of God’s marvelous “coincidences” that, in the first issue of *Guideposts* she received, this article was there to bless her.

Sharon says, “I’ve sometimes thought that my faith is too simple. I believe that God is in control of everything and He has a plan for me. Who am I to question what happens in my life?”

She goes on, “When I was first diagnosed [in August 1999], I admit that I was scared. Would I end up in a wheelchair? Who would take care of my family? What would the future hold?” However, her husband reassured her that God loved them and would see them through this also. “He will never leave us or forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5). She continues, “God is still using this verse to speak to me. I wasn’t angry at God, but I did question, *Why me?* The answer I seemed to get was, *Why not you?*”

When we first moved to La Crete, we were intrigued by this big house not far from the manse that had the appearance of a castle, complete with a turret. Soon after, Sharon and husband, Dave, and their three children moved into it.

I enjoyed my tour of that house with its many special features. But we enjoyed the love and hospitality of its owners even more. Their attitudes were exemplified by quiet caring and giving with just the right touch of humour—a true servant

attitude. The house had been on the market for a long time, they had needed to move out of their crowded trailer, and here they were!

Sharon began experiencing strange symptoms in 1998 and received the devastating diagnosis the following year. She says the common symptoms of MS are: visual problems, fatigue and muscle weakness, problems with balance and coordination, muscle stiffness and spasms, feelings of numbness or pain, speech problems and memory problems.

Then she adds, “[These] symptoms...are all ones that I deal with every day. What I have come to realize is that life will go on. Nobody knows what the future will bring. I could wake up tomorrow and not be able to get out of bed....The only thing that I can do is trust God to give me the strength I need to see me through whatever the future may hold.”

But I like her attitude when she says, “Just because God hasn’t healed me doesn’t mean that I have to accept my situation as it is and not do anything about it. ...All the information I’ve read basically tells a person with MS to eat a healthy, well balanced diet, get lots of rest, and to exercise regularly. I think those three things are good advice for all of us.”

She did start an injection treatment about two years ago on the doctor’s advice. It’s supposed to slow down the progression of the disease. Her husband gives her the injection once a week. For the first ten months the side effects were quite bad, but she says, “Now I hardly notice anything at all.” And she hasn’t had a major attack since she started these treatments.

But Sharon has learned to live with some limitations and to work around them. She says she has to concentrate carefully on each step she takes. Her hands are often numb, and sometimes really stiff.

So you’d think she’d be at home, concentrating on taking care of herself to try and prevent the disease from taking further hold. But Sharon lives life to the fullest. She and her husband have taught a lively Sunday school class for several years. She works a few mornings a week at the high school library. Her children and husband are well cared for. She chooses to concentrate on what she can do, rather than worrying about what she can’t do. However, they are facing reality and are now building a house with everything on one level.

Her strong faith shines through as she says: “Through it all God has never left my side. I sometimes leave His side and try and do things on my own but nothing seems to work out then. I just have this incredible sense of peace and it can only come from one source. God is so good!”

## African bishop astonished at Mennonite numbers, wealth

Thompson Mpongwana Adonis, a founder of an African-Initiated Church in South Africa, and respectfully known as Bishop Adonis to his fellow Christians there, was stunned by the vast numbers of Mennonites he saw, and the wealth and enormity of their churches during his first visit to North America, he told a group of Mennonite Mission Network staff here last month.

Bishop Adonis came Sept. 4–26 to North America at the invitation of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and visited the mission headquarters of four of the six partners in AIMM: Mennonite Mission Network, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Fellowship of Evangelical Churches, and Witness.

Adonis said that, until he came to North America, he'd met and worked with Mennonites only in groups of two, three or four at a time. He said he had no idea so many Mennonites existed. And, coming from South Africa, where many Christians are young people, Adonis said the large number of older people in Mennonite congregations interested him.

He said he was astonished to see the wealth and power of the continental fellowship that stands behind the U.S.- and Canada-based mission workers with whom he has collaborated over the years.

Asked what he would desire from such a group to help him in his ministry, Adonis had a humble request: Bible training for potential church leaders, and bricks and mortar to build a wall—to discourage thieves like those who broke into his church during his birthday celebration last July, stole three benches and let the goats wander in.

Last summer, Adonis was called away from his church building to celebrate his birthday when the break-in occurred. When he went to police to file a complaint, he was told that the theft didn't even warrant investigation, so long as his church building wasn't protected by a wall—a ubiquitous fixture around nearly all public buildings in many parts of Africa.

Adonis lives about 10 kilometers from Idutywa, a small town about 90 kilometers from the city of Umtata, where mission workers Brian Dyck and Lynell Bergen live and work, teaching Bible classes and assisting with a regional AIDS-awareness program. The couple is co-sponsored in their mission work through AIMM by Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network.

In expressing his appreciation for his trip, Adonis wrote, "I had never dreamed in my



As reported earlier, Bishop Thompson Mpongwana Adonis visited the EMC national office on September 10. He met with Henry Klassen, former General Secretary and who currently relates to Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission; Lester Olfert, Foreign Secretary; Len Barkman, current General Secretary; and Terry Smith, editor/executive secretary. (photo by editor)

life that one day I would put my foot in America. I will never forget that, thank you very much for all your efforts to make this trip successful. Also I praise my Almighty God, because if he was not there, this trip would not have been successful. Psalm 27:1–2."

Former mission worker Gary Isaac said, "I can't say enough about how faithful (Adonis) is, always present when expected. We always knew we could count on him to be wherever we needed to be.

"He was the glue that held it together. He serves without pay or applause," Isaac said.

Garry Prieb, Executive Secretary of AIMM said, "We at AIMM are thankful for the opportunity to relate to men of such caliber in South Africa."

In the early 1980s, Dr. Hennie Pretorius of the Transkei Council of Churches took an interest in African-Initiated Churches and called together some of the leaders, including Adonis. Pretorius pointed out to them their need to have better trained leaders. That resonated with Adonis and he has been the mainstay of getting the inter-denominational Bible-training program, now called Bethany Bible School, going and helping to maintain it.

The Transkei Council arranged with AIMM worker Jim Egli in the neighboring country of Lesotho (a small mountain kingdom surrounded by South Africa) to come periodically and do some Bible

teaching. That led to the assignments of other mission workers through the present time in the Transkei area, now part of the Eastern Cape Province.

During apartheid, the region known as Transkei was designated by South Africa as an independent country, the homeland for the Xhosa people—Nelson Mandela's tribe. It remains one of the poorest provinces of South Africa.

Doris Daley, Mission Network/AIMM

### People seek friendship and a better life!

#### Open Circle,

a ministry of MCC in Manitoba, invites applications from volunteers willing to serve as **visitors** to inmates in Manitoba prisons and in **supportive roles** to newly-released prisoners who request support during their resettlement into the community.

Call Murray Barkman at 204-772-5317 or e-mail [opencircle@mts.net](mailto:opencircle@mts.net)

*Delegates,  
ministerial members,  
remember these meetings!*

**EMC Ministerial Meeting  
December 5, 2003**

Fort Garry EMC  
602 Pasadena Ave.,  
Winnipeg, Man.

**Theme: How to be Socially  
Relevant and Biblically Faithful**

Presentations will be made

**EMC Conference  
Council Meeting  
December 6, 2003**

Crestview Fellowship  
271 Hamilton Ave.,  
Winnipeg, Man.

Reporting by boards

Special two-hour focus:

**Rebuilding the Relationship  
between the Christian Church  
and First Nations Peoples  
in Canada**

**Panelists:**



**Larry Wilson**, pastor,  
First Nations Community Church,  
Winnipeg



**David Pashe**, instructor,  
Assiniboine Community College,  
Brandon



**Stella Neff**, retired educator  
and now pastor's wife,  
Grand Rapids

**For information,  
phone 204-326-6401.**

**Foreign**

I don't understand something that is not mine.

The reasons why they do the things they do—seem so Foreign.

But then again—that is what they are.

**Foreign...**

In a place where I don't belong  
Trying to make sense of what I fail to comprehend.

**Foreign...**

I am Foreign and I am in a Foreign place.  
A place where my beliefs,  
my goals,

my values,  
are not always right.  
Why did I ever think I had the corner on  
what is right and wrong?

**Foreign...**

Will I ever fit in this Foreign place?  
Will things ever begin to make sense?  
Will I ever come to understand the  
Foreign?

Or will it always be this way?  
Me failing to see through the foreignness  
that surrounds me  
And the foreignness never accepting  
me?

**Foreign...**

Foreign is hard to understand.  
Karlene Thiessen

## Mental health website launched

McMaster University has a website that provides down-to-earth, accessible information on mental health and psychiatric disorders, at [www.psychdirect.com](http://www.psychdirect.com).

With one in four people being affected by mental health problems, the need for accurate information in the community is a pressing one. The PsychDirect site filters professional calibre information from faculty clinicians and researchers at McMaster and its affiliated hospitals into understandable and relevant content.

"We believe that everyone has the right to as much information as they need or want to enable them to be collaborative partners in their own health care as well as that of their loved ones," said Gayle Stoness, program manager of PsychDirect.  
McMaster



Anthony and Karlene Thiessen (La Crete) have lived for one year in Zambia, where they serve under Mennonite Central Committee.



**Announcing the 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:cl_thiessen@excite.com) or  
Angela Kroeker, 204-586-8859,  
[patangk02@yahoo.com](mailto:patangk02@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.

### 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](mailto:loolfert@mts.net)



# With Our Churches

## My Week at VeggieTown

**St. Vital (Winnipeg, Man.):** *Gonna be a citizen, la, la, la, la, la, la. Gonna be a citizen...* was the theme song and probably my favorite! I had a lot of favorite things at VeggieTown. Out of all the stations, the Factory, Doctor's Office, Animation Studio, Pet Store, and Court House, the Doctor's Office was the one I enjoyed most. (My mom was teaching there!) I liked the humor, and we made nail cross pendants to remind us of God's forgiveness.

Of the four movies we watched, I liked Joshua and the Big Wall best. The most exciting event of the week was when two Blue Bombers came to talk to us about listening and obeying. It was fun—we all got autographs! The most important thing I learned was to do everything to the glory of God.

*...When I work, when I play, trying each and every day to be like Jesus. Gonna show*



The gospel was clearly and enthusiastically presented.

*His love in every way. Gonna serve and forgive, at school and where I live, speak with honesty. You and me, building our community. I'll be showin' you some growin'. Just you wait and see! Gonna be gonna be gonna be be gonna be be....*

Josh E. Davison, age 9

## Celebrations and sadness

**Kola, Man.:** A couple of occasions that happened before summer break need to be highlighted. Sunday, May 25, Pastor Les Martens baptized five young people. Tyson Martens, Kelsey Friesen, Terry Schellenberg, Jeremy Siemens and Kimberley Friesen chose to follow Christ in obedience and receive baptism.

Conrad and Shantelle Penner welcomed the arrival of their first-born child, Sethaniel Steven, on June 19. Grandparents are Travis and Rose Penner of Kola.

Summer was also a time for weddings. Jarvis and Maria Penner were married August 9 at the home of his parents, Lawrence and Lenore Penner of Maryfield, Sask.

Christian and Hazel Hince were married in Winnipeg on August 7. Hazel is daughter to Earl and Florence Penner of Kola.

We did not hold Sunday school during July and August. So, the children may not all have been happy to go back to school in September, but it was exciting to have Sunday school again.

The time has come for us to bid farewell to a cornerstone and pillar of Kola and the surrounding communities. Pastor, preacher, teacher and encourager Rev. Art Neufeld went to see his Saviour's face early in the evening of September 13. We rejoice that he was able to leave this earth, but will miss his being here with us.

Sunday, September 19 was the interdenominational praise and worship service. It was held in the Kola church this time. It involves several churches from Virden and our church. It was a wonderful evening of praising God and fellowship with other believers.

Lori Koop



Hans Rahn, pastor of discipleship ministries, leads the commissioning service for Jennifer (holding son Jameson) and Camden Rempel.

## New pastoral staff added

**Steinbach EMC:** The church had the pleasure of commissioning a music minister. Camden Rempel was engaged as half-time minister in this pastoral role. Camden and Jennifer Rempel were commissioned during the morning service on September 14.

On Tuesday, October 14, at a congregational meeting we decided to hire Ron Penner as half-time interim lead pastor. This action was taken after a long-time search for a full-time lead pastor.

Dave K. Schellenberg



Robyn Thiessen shared her faith journey at the first gathering of *Connect*, a ladies' group in Landmark.



Many families participated in a January 19 parent-child dedication.

## Alpha, baptisms, *Connect* at Prairie Rose

**Landmark, Man.:** The New Testament church was given many instructions by Paul, and one portion of scripture that I find particularly practical and encouraging is Colossians 3:12–17. A part of that passage reads, “And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”

In Landmark, we want to be thankful for what God has done and is doing in our church body. We have some exciting new programs, new babies, marriages, a parent-child dedication, membership transfers, baptisms, a mortgage-shredding, a new building and a newly-ordained ministerial couple.

One exciting tool that is being used by God to minister to people in Landmark is Alpha. Ivan and Cheryl Giesbrecht spearheaded this program and have used the tapes by Nicky Gumbel to teach three Alpha groups.

The fourth group began this fall, and it is exciting to see people interested in finding out more about Christianity or wanting to deepen their knowledge of the Christian faith. There is a fellowship meal at the beginning of the evening, followed by the video session, and discussion. We continue to pray for the leaders and participants.

Another new program is *Connect*. A group of ladies in Landmark felt that there was a need to meet and fellowship with other ladies from all age groups. So they formed a committee, organized an evening out for ladies, and called it *Connect*.

At the first meeting in fall 2002, Robyn Thiessen shared her faith journey and emphasized God’s faithfulness through all of life’s struggles, trials and joys. In February, Deidre Plett used the book *The*

**One exciting tool that is being used by God to minister to people in Landmark is Alpha.**



A February 9 baptism involved Jarrod Plett, Stephanie Giesbrecht, Zac Penner, Laura Hildebrand, Tiphannie Plett, Pastor Mike Plett, and Desirae Warkentin.

*Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman to teach how we can better express love to one another. This fall, Terri Redekop from the Crisis Pregnancy Centre in Winnipeg encouraged women to remember that they are unique and special in God’s eyes. Each evening included special music, beautiful decorations, exciting door prizes, delicious food and lots of visiting.

The parent-child dedication service held on January 19 included many families. We are thankful for all of the young parents who want to commit themselves to raising their children to know Jesus personally and to serve Him with their lives. We are also thankful for people who have joined Prairie Rose through membership transfer: Jason and Rita Winter, Mark and Tish

Hildebrand, Paul and Wendy Unger, and Ken and Wendy Friesen.

We also celebrated two baptism services. On February 9, Stephanie Giesbrecht, Laura Hildebrand, Zac Penner, Jarrod Plett, Tiphannie Plett and Desirae Warkentin shared their faith stories and were baptized. And on September 28, Tim Funk, Jegar Hiebert, Sarah Hiebert, Tyrone Plett and AJ Reimer were also baptized after sharing their testimonies.

Each baptismal candidate chose one person who had mentored them or who had been a spiritual influence to stand with them and pray after they had spoken. Often candidates chose parents or grandparents and it was an encouragement and a blessing to see that support and relationship.

Deidre Plett



**Fearful Friday Fear Factor—dunking for...?**

## Church campout

### **Roseisle, Man.:**

'Twas time for our campout at Stephenfield Park. Many flashlights were needed because of the dark. On Friday we all got a little bit scared, Fear Factor was the game; you could play if you dared. Our speaker was Jaison—far from home in Bombay. He spoke to us words the Lord led him to convey.

We started our Saturday with a huge waffle brunch. It kept us going a long time past lunch. This was a good thing for the challenge we faced. We became like Tom Sawyer—building rafts in haste. We paddled these rafts made of many a tree limb. Ben and Frank got so hot, they decided to swim! A Tiger Woods challenge and baseball game too—The day hardly long enough for all there's to do. Bananas and ice cream in a long line we ate. Out of an eaves trough? It must have been late!

On Sunday a.m. our teens had stories to tell. Their campfire "noise" had not gone over so well! We worshipped and sang and Jaison spoke from the Word. All weekend long, through him God's voice we heard. This was also the day when we all were told. Brian and Elaine's marriage was 25 years old! For a ride 'round the park on a wagon we sat. Some had to walk back when a tire went flat. Time came for packing, the weekend was done. A huge thanks to the people who planned so much fun!

*Eleanor Friesen*



**Tom Sawyer challenge—we paddled our homemade rafts.**



**Brian and Elaine Friesen celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.**



**Ben and Frank, swimming buddies—maybe next time bring your trunks!**



**Guest speaker Jaison Abraham was present with his wife Jyodhi, and their children Joshua and Judith, who were too busy to take time for a picture. Their home is Bombay, India, but Jaison is currently studying at Providence College.**

# What's the connection between Christian faithfulness and business success?

Wally Kroeker

"WE'VE ENDED the year in the black. Clearly, God has endorsed our work."

The speaker, an executive with a Christian organization, easily linked good financial performance with God's blessing.

But the next year wasn't so great. Income was down, and expenses were up. Was the red ink a sign that God no longer endorsed the ministry? Had God's blessing been withdrawn?

The executive found other ways to explain the poor bottom line. Perhaps the ministry was being tested or challenged.

Some of his staff wondered: Could they have it both ways?

As part of a farming family, I learned early that financial fortune was tied to weather. When the rain was right and the crop was good, we thanked God.

Sometimes we did so cautiously, like the year when hail ravaged our "unblessed" neighbor's field but passed us by. We could say "God is good" but if we then lost half our crop due to early frost that wouldn't mean "God is bad." Come drought or flood, God was still good.

We knew of no guaranteed connection between faithfulness and financial success. It was a matter of simple observation that some fine Christians lost their shirts, while some scoundrels seemed to have the Midas Touch.

I'm still careful how I say thanks. I believe God is the author of all good, but how that good is apportioned here on earth remains the stuff of mystery.

Successful Christian business-people have been known to credit their prosperity to God. That can sound like spiritual one-upmanship, as if: "Since I'm more faithful, I'm also more wealthy." More often, it's an effort to be humble, as in: "Shucks, I'm just plain folks; must have been God that did it for me."

A leading businessman in our community routinely attributed his considerable success and affluence to God. Whenever his achievements were praised in public (which was often) he blushed and said, "I've been blessed."

Other equally devout businessfolk who were mired in misery may have wondered, "Why haven't I been

blessed, Lord?" It made them feel like worms.

The term "bless" has several shades of meaning. One is "to hallow or consecrate," as in "bless this food." Another is "to confer prosperity or happiness," probably what the wealthy executive meant.

It can also suggest "divine approval." If this is what the businessman had in mind he was perhaps less than modest; humble people seldom boast that God has bestowed approval on them.

Usually it's the rich and successful who invoke blessing language to explain or justify good fortune. The poor don't. When was the last time we heard someone say, "I'm unemployed and broke. God has surely blessed me." It's only natural to link blessing with happy outcomes.

If we are going to use blessing language in business we may want to explore deeper layers of meaning. One of my former seminary professors says that in Scripture "to bless" is to fortify, to enable, to empower. "Blessing is not some verbal sweetness wafted over the congregation to end the service; blessing is the bestowal of generative powers. When God blesses, God makes productive. To bless is to affirm,

but it is more, for to bless is to authorize and simultaneously to enable through empowerment."

Can a business then be blessed? Of course, especially when its activities are in tune with God's kingdom. Businesses that empower and enable people and communities to shape the kind of world God intended will warrant divine approval. They may—or may not—earn big profits, too.

With blessing comes increased responsibility. To whom much has been given, much is expected. ■



Wally Kroeker is editor of *The Marketplace*, MEDA's magazine about connecting faith and work.

## EMC Volunteer Statistics with Mennonite Disaster Services

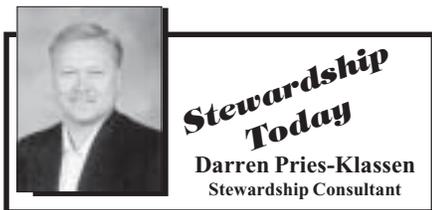
**Since January 1, 1999, EMCers have served at the following locations:**

Burgaw, North Carolina 5  
Northfork, West Virginia 21  
Eunice, Mississippi 1  
Barriere, British Columbia 2  
Arkansas Snow Project 2  
Pinedale, Arizona 1  
Little Rock, Arkansas 2  
Mullens, West Virginia 1  
Houston, Texas 14  
Columbus, Mississippi 19

Hoisington, Kansas 7  
Guthrie, Oklahoma 8  
Redding, California 2  
Snow Hill, North Carolina 7  
Princeville, North Carolina 14

These numbers include people who have served several times, but are counted individually at each project. There are likely more people who served, but MDS can only track those who let them know their conference affiliation.

MDS



## So, how should I invest?

SOME time ago I wrote an article entitled, *So, Why Should You Invest?*

The idea was to get individuals thinking about their goals, lifestyles and objectives as Christians before purchasing whatever financial investment option their agent or broker happened to show them. Although our hope is placed in an eternal God, we still need to manage our resources for the needs of tomorrow, as well as today.

After giving thought to why we invest, we need to think about whether or not our investments are consistent with our faith convictions and values. *Mission Based Investing* is an option that continues to grow in popularity and is

something Christians should better understand.

Mission Based Investing (MBI for short) promotes the idea that our investment practices should align with our faith convictions. MBI guides our investment decisions so that they support our Christian beliefs rather than detract from them.

Would a person dedicated to educating children want to invest in a company that produces its products with child labourers? Our Christian faith calls us to feed the hungry and work to alleviate poverty. Would we want our investment dollars supporting a company that has production and labour practices that foster a cycle of poverty?

One way that MBI works to create consistency between faith convictions and investment practices is the use of screens. Investment screens can be both positive and negative.

Negative screens such as tobacco, alcohol, gaming, and pornography, eliminate companies directly involved with these activities as investment options. Positive screens look to invest in companies that perform well in areas of environmental concern, human rights, community involvement, employee relations, and workplace safety.

Is there any reason to fear that applying MBI principles to my investments will result in below average rates of return? Research done in Canada, the U.S., and elsewhere indicates that screening investments according to social and environmental criteria does not appear to hurt financial returns.

One of the newest MBI options available in Canada is Meritas Mutual Funds. Using the tools of socially responsible investing, the goal of Meritas is to join beliefs with deeds. The Meritas family of mutual funds offers five different investment options to choose from. Ask your bank, credit union, or financial adviser about Meritas or visit their website at [www.meritas.ca](http://www.meritas.ca).



Her deep faith and trust in God has been her strength and comfort as she has walked through difficult times of failing health.

Susan has demonstrated her love and compassion for people as she worked for many years as a nurse on the polio ward at King George Hospital, also as director of care at Rosenort Eventide Nursing Home. Upon retiring from nursing she followed her dream and founded the *Christian Book Nook* in Morris, Man., where she made many friends and each customer was special.

She loved the outdoors, planting flowers, admiring nature. She was also an accomplished seamstress sewing many a wardrobe.

Susan was a gentle, kind and very generous person—always ready to help, giving of her time and resources, giving of herself. In spite of illness, she never complained.

We have many precious memories of her and will deeply miss our dear Susan whom we respected and loved so much.

A special thank you to Donwood Manor staff, who gave her such tender care with hugs and kisses, loving her, treating her with dignity and respect.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday, October 15, 2003 at 2 p.m. at Rosenort Fellowship Chapel, Rosenort, Man. Viewing took place prior to the service. Pastor George Toews officiated. Donations in memory of Susan can be made to Donwood Manor, 165 Donwood Dr., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0VP.

Her Family

For stewardship education and services, contact your nearest Mennonite Foundation of Canada office: Abbotsford – Dave Kroeker, 1-888-212-8608; Niagara – Darren Pries-Klassen, 1-888-212-8731; Kitchener – Mike Strathdee, 1-888-212-7759; Winnipeg – Edwin Friesen, 1-800-772-3257.

### SUSAN FRIESEN DECEMBER 16, 1925–OCTOBER 12, 2003

Peacefully, with family at her side, Susan Friesen of Rosenort, Man., died on Sunday, October 12 at Donwood Manor.

She is survived by three sisters, Helen Friesen, Millie Reimer (Allen), and Laura Friesen (Ed); five brothers, Bill (Helen), Frank (Gertie), Len (Bertha), Art (Ruth), Elmer (MaryAnn) and thirty-five nieces and nephews.

Susan was predeceased by her parents, Cornelius and Mary Friesen; brother Pete and wife Mary; sister Tena; brother Johnny in infancy and brother-in-law Ike Heinrichs.

Though we feel a sense of tremendous loss and sadness we are happy for her that she has been carried Home—to a place of peace and perfect health again.



### 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  
or see your pastor**

# Shoulder Tapping

**Note: Because positions are numerous, short ads will appear. Please notify *The Messenger* when ads are not needed. An ad can be removed after two insertions unless prior arrangements have been made. Thank you. - Editor**

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; Lewis Anfinson, 306-595-4743; Dan Johnson, 306-594-2151.

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 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](http://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](mailto:vcfemc@telus.net). Applications must be received by December 20, 2003.

Camp Assiniboia at Headingley, Man., seeks a **manager**. Responsibilities include personnel leadership, guest relations, and general oversight of physical operations and services. This busy year-round camp operates Christian summer camp programs and rental services. This position is ideal for a motivated couple with an Anabaptist faith commitment and a willingness to relate to a Mennonite Church Manitoba congregation. Strong communication and organizational skills are an asset. The camp also seeks half-time **rental secretary** to coordinate group schedules and to assist with hosting. Contact Mennonite Church Manitoba at 204-896-1616 or [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca)

Morris Fellowship Chapel (EMC) seeks a **youth leader** for a half-time position to direct 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 Les Martens at 204-565-2604, email [leskola@mts.net](mailto:leskola@mts.net), or fax 204-565-2635.

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](mailto: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 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.

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](mailto: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.

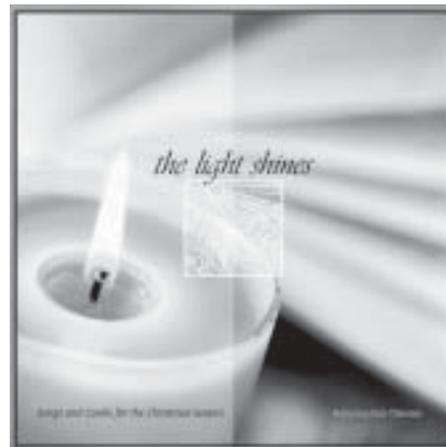
Gimli Bible Camp seeks a full-time, year-round **camp director** with managerial experience, a strong background in Christian camping, ability to program events and work well with public, with an evangelistic passion especially for people from the inner city.

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 [csm@mts.net](mailto:csm@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](http://www.actionph.org) or email Mary Ann at [maryann@actionintl.org](mailto:maryann@actionintl.org).

Wymark EMC is a congregation of about 130, set in a rural, farming community in southwest Saskatchewan. We seek a **senior pastor** willing to serve the Lord by modeling and communicating an intimate relationship with God, His Word and His family. He must be able to equip and encourage local leadership, building them up so they can reach out and disciple others. For information, call Blaine Friesen at 306-627-3441; send a resume at Box 116 McMahon, SK S0N 1M0; or email [blfriesen@t2.net](mailto:blfriesen@t2.net)



## Christmas CD benefits MCC AIDS program

The light will shine and music will fill the air this Christmas with the release of a new CD *The Light Shines*, benefiting MCC's Generations at Risk (GAR) program.

Featuring contemporary, traditional, country, and German Christmas songs, the CD follows *To Such as These*, a hugely successful CD released in fall 2002. *To Such as These*, a fund-raising venture sponsored by Foothills Mennonite and MCC Alberta, to date has raised over \$100,000 for GAR and sold over 7,000 copies in Canada and the U.S.

The Generations at Risk project is providing homeware, training, blood testing kits, education and support to affected families in their communities.

The sale of one CD buys 10 blood-testing kits in most villages where the Generations at Risk program is working (see sidebar).

*The Light Shines* is \$18 including GST (in Alberta). The CD can be ordered on the web by phone at 403-275-6935 (Calgary and Area) or 888-622-6337 (toll free); at all MCC Provincial Offices; at Ten Thousand Villages Stores across Canada; at most MCC Thrift Stores in Alberta. MCC Alberta has committed approximately \$16.50 from the sale of each CD sold in Alberta to go directly toward the Generations at Risk Project. In other provinces, the amount varies. For the previous project, an average of \$15 from each CD went to Generations at Risk.

### Generations at Risk

- 42 million people affected by HIV/AIDS worldwide, 95 percent of them in the developing world.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, 28.5 million people are affected; 6,300 people die every day.

- MCC AIDS kits include towels, soap, rubber gloves (for domestic cleaning) and health care items. Visit [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org) for details.

- Other global AIDS websites: [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org) and [www.aegis.org](http://www.aegis.org), the AIDS education global information system site.

MCC Alberta

## What is the Church?

Brigitte Toews

I'VE always had this hang-up of not praying or talking to the Lord while I was in the bathroom. "Like God would never enter this forsaken place while I was doing my business," I thought.

Then one day in June I had this desire to talk to him when, when I realized where I was, I resisted and did not speak. But all of a sudden God's voice spoke to my spirit and asked the question, "What is the church?" God, truly, has a sense of humour, for I did not expect this!

I knew this was supposed to be my next poem, so I pondered the question all day. I studied different Bible passages, but could not put them together in my mind. I needed to have a better understanding of whom He is and the purpose of His church.

After much Bible reading, I pulled out my daily devotions and started to read ahead in Charles Stanley's *In Touch Devotions*. The title of the devotions for July was *When God Speaks*.

As I read a few articles I came to the question and answer section of his magazine. The question that was presented was: "What is the Church?" I

knew this was my confirmation from the Lord and along with it came the place to start.

Charles Stanley puts it this way, "The church's main purpose is to exalt Jesus Christ as God and glorify God the Father.

"Its purpose is three-fold: first, worship of God; second, edification of the saints; and third, evangelism and missions."

I was now able to grasp what God had inspired me to write and proceeded to create the body of the poem. After completing the poem, God gently reminded me where He gave me the Idea. He said, "I have gone to far worse places to remove your filth."

I was in awe at how profound this statement was! I'm a member of His Body and so I could talk or pray to God wherever I was.

So as I sit on the throne each day, I take comfort in the fact that He is on His Throne, directing and guiding my thoughts.

Thank you, Lord! ■

### What is the Church?

The church is  
God Wrought, A chosen lot,  
Blood Bought and Spirit Taught  
Fully Redeemed, Pure and Clean  
And a Christ Esteemed, Spiritual Team

The Church must be  
True Believers, Kingdom Seekers,  
Wisdom Speakers and Brothers' Keepers  
Servant Leaders, Righteous Teachers  
Sowers and Reapers and Humble Preachers

The Church should be  
Faith Contenders, Widows' Defenders  
Gospel Senders and Relationship Menders  
A people of prayer, a people who care,  
A people who share and a people who dare  
To Be Like Jesus!

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*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.*