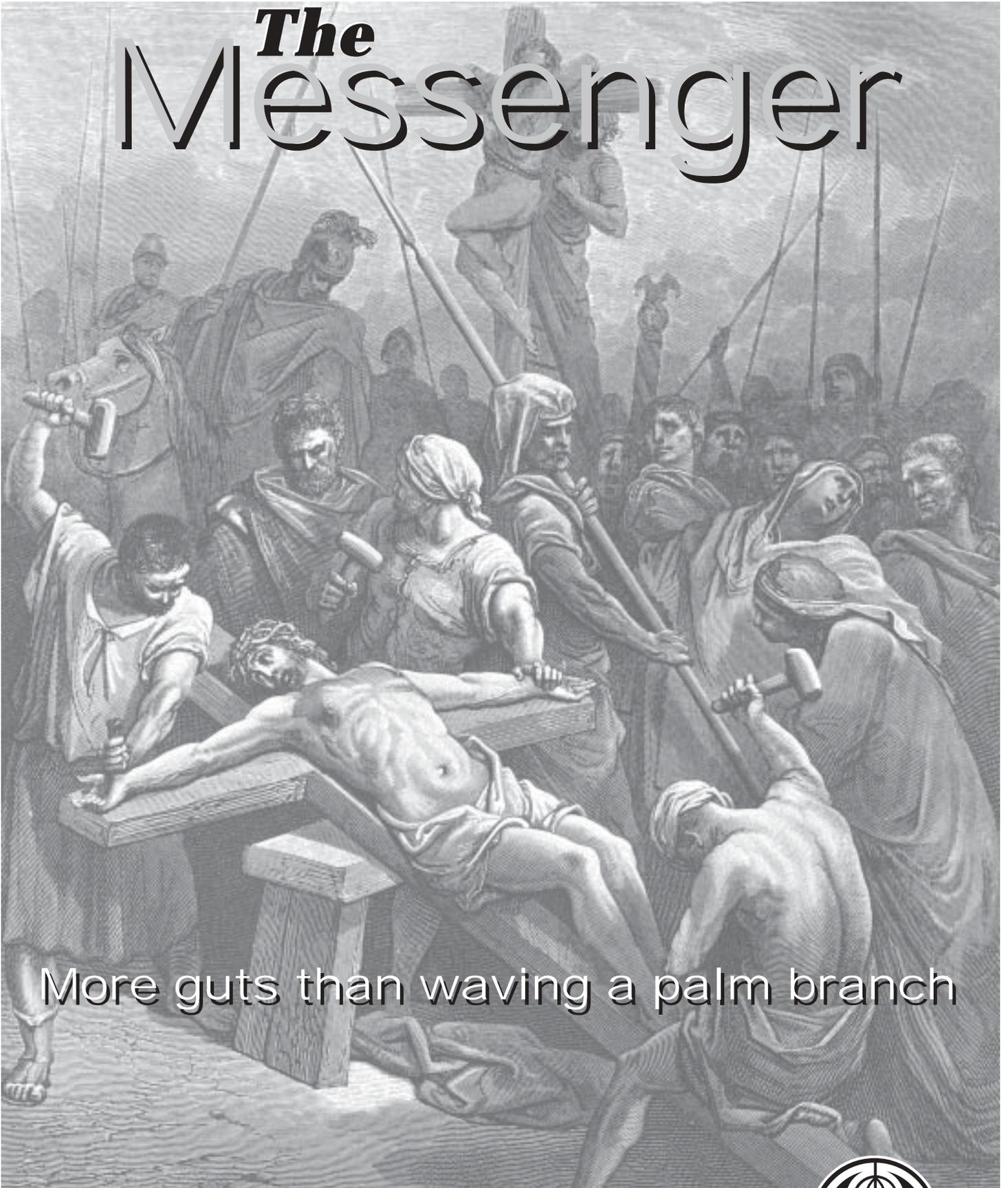


The Messenger



More guts than waving a palm branch

Nailing Christ to the Cross—Gustave Doré (1832-1883)

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE
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Don't miss the point!

THE PASSION of the Christ, a movie produced by Mel Gibson, is controversial. But don't miss the point.

No movie production is perfect. Movie critics and biblical scholars might disagree on aspects of the portrayal—the degree of violence and how Jewish leaders and common folk were involved in the death of Jesus. But don't miss the point.

Christianity is centred in Jesus. The Gospels present a person who is much more than a teacher, example, and prophet. Jesus is the anticipated healer of the world, the Messiah. He is to be our Lord and Saviour.

Jesus is the real controversy. Jesus has a proper claim on every man, woman, and child on Earth. Whether by simple reading or critical sifting of Scripture, He is the most extraordinary person of history.

In 1931 Sir Edwin Hoskyns and Francis Noel Davey published *The Riddle of the New Testament*. They said that the riddle is

centred in Jesus, who even through critical study, emerges as challenging: "The future order, which it was the purpose of Jesus to bring into being, depended upon what he said and did, and finally upon his death" (p. 172). This takes us back to the Passion, which the movie focuses on.

Jesus once asked, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" After the crowd's responses are given, Jesus then asked, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:14–15).

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30–31).

Look beyond the controversy about the imperfect movie. Instead, focus on Jesus. Better yet, follow Him. Jesus deserves this—and that *is* the point.

Terry M. Smith

How many languages does your church use?

THE THREE most used languages in the world are Chinese, English, and Spanish. Currently the most important language in world communication is English.

How many languages do you or your children know? Pastors, how many languages can you preach in? Time was when learning multiple languages was important. It should still be.

Languages are both matters of the heart and tools. Learning both official languages helps in employment in Canada; it opens doors in church ministry in French-speaking circles.

How many EMC churches effectively use the languages members have? Some people do not use the German they know and children learning French in school do not see the church reinforcing the value of the language.

We need to expand languages used in our services beyond English, German, and Spanish. Our conference can and should reach more cultural groups in Canada.

The languages best used in a particular location depend on whom the church seeks

to reach. Our goal must be to include, to minister, to serve, to meet needs (not to exclude, as in the past). While no local church can equally reach people of all cultures and we need to be conscious of choices we make, services can be started in more than one language. This should be done without apology and without confusion (no language is more *Mennonite* than any other).

Given our long history in Canada, there's no adequate reason why we don't have a single French-speaking congregation. While the Gaelic-speaking population might be low in western Canada, what about a Ukrainian-speaking church? Many more languages could be listed.

The Mennonite Brethren Conference in B.C. uses at least 15 languages, including Cantonese, Japanese, Amharic, Laotian, Punjabi, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Persian, Indonesian and Romanian. Such vision deserves our respect and imitation.

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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More guts than waving a palm branch

Pastor Mo Friesen

APRIL 4 is Palm Sunday. I'd like to start by doing something a little bit different. I would encourage you to imagine that you are in Jerusalem on the afternoon that Jesus entered the city.

It's probably quite warm, the sun is shining on the rocks that seem to be everywhere in the city. You hear a commotion down the street. You begin to walk toward the noise, slowly at first, but the closer you get the quicker your pace. There are people lined up on the road into the city; they are waving palm branches, laying down their coats on the road, all for one man to travel past. You hear someone yell, "Hosanna."

Another yells, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." This is Jesus the Nazarene the one who raised Lazarus from the dead. As he passes the people, they pick up their coats and run ahead. Soon you find yourself caught up in the excitement of the crowd. You run ahead and throw down your coat, someone hands you a palm branch and you start waving it and joining the rest of the crowd in shouting "Hosanna."

Many people were quick to hail Jesus as the Messiah. I wonder how many of the same people were in the mob shouting, "Crucify." On February 25 a movie opened in theatres across North America. Mel Gibson, a Roman Catholic Christian and a well-known Hollywood actor, has produced a movie that depicts the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus, including his crucifixion. The movie is called *The Passion of the Christ*.

I was fortunate to be invited, along with pastors from all across Manitoba, to preview this movie. It very graphically but accurately depicts "the Passion," the death of Christ. It has been met with controversy, but people have stumbled and not understood the cross since the beginning, and so that comes with little surprise.

I would encourage those of you adults that feel comfortable going to movies to go and see this movie, and to bring a non-Christian friend with you. Be prepared. It is two hours of watching someone you love being betrayed, tortured, and crucified. It is very graphic.

For instance, the movie is rated 18A in Manitoba. This means ages 14 to 17 require adult accompaniment and there's no admittance if under 14. I would strongly encourage parents to use discretion in bringing your young teens to see it. If you would like more information, you can see two of Campus Crusade's websites: thelife.com and sharethelife.com.

As I watched the movie, I wondered if I would have had the guts to follow Jesus to the cross. It would have been so easy to wave a palm branch a week earlier, but to follow him to the cross would have been a different story.

The question that I would like to ask is, "How do we follow Jesus to the cross today?" I would like to offer a few ideas of how to do this.

We need to start at the cross

First of all, we need to start at the cross. Our faith, hope and security need to start at the cross. There is nothing that is more central to our belief than the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In the past month and a half we have talked about the purpose of the Church but in some ways before we can talk about worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and service we need to talk about and understand the cross. Without the cross—without Jesus' death and resurrection—there is no difference between us and the rest of the world.

We could try starting with the fellowship of believers and we would have a great time interacting, but we lose purpose if we don't start at the cross.



The Crucifixion
Gustave Doré

We need to focus on the cross

Second, we need to continue to focus on the cross. Being obedient to God's purpose for our life should be our highest priority.

I have often been told that God gave us a brain so that we could make calculated, rational decisions. And I think that to an extent that is true. But I believe that if the cross is our central focus there will be times when our decisions and actions won't always be rational and understandable.

Let's look at a few examples given to us in the Bible. Let's begin with Noah. Noah had never seen rain. But God told him to build a boat because there was going to be a flood that would cover the entire earth. Noah agreed, against most of the advice he might have received from friends and relatives. He worked for 100 years building a boat. He gave up his good name—people thought he was nuts. He gave up his home—everything was flooded. All he knew was that God had called him to a purpose and he was obedient.

Then there's Moses, called by God to lead the people out of Israel. He wasn't a great speaker or leader. He was going against the most powerful nation in the world. Rational thought would have said, "Stay right where you are."

Then there's Gideon. He was hiding in a winepress and was called by God to lead the Israelites to victory over the Midianite army. Practical, rational thought would have been to bring as many soldiers as possible and fight it out, but God told him through a number of different ways to send men home. He ended up attacking the army with three hundred men and because he was faithful God prevailed. Was this sound military decision making?

We could go on with Joshua walking around Jericho, or Barnabas taking a chance on Saul/Paul. These men are often thought of as Bible superheroes. But if we take a closer look, they were ordinary people, overcome with the desire to obey God and yield to his purpose for their life.

When we choose to make the

cross the central focus of our lives, and when we are obedient to the purpose God has for us, there will be times that we will need to abandon rational thought for faith in God's power.

A note of clarification: I am not saying that we should not think or that we should act irresponsibly or without practical rational thought. I'm not saying that we should make bad financial decisions.

However, keeping the cross as the central focus of our life means that *I* is replaced by *God*. We need to be willing to lose our comfort, our financial stability, our reputation and even our life in order to be obedient to God's purpose.

February 25 was the start of Lent. Lent is a custom observed by many in the Christian community. It runs the period of 40 days before Easter. The custom is to give up something for those 40 days, with the goal of using that sacrifice to remember the sacrifice that Christ made for us. I would encourage you to think of something that you could give up for the Lenten period as a way of practically remembering the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross.

Bring the cross to others

The third way to follow Jesus to the cross today is to "bring the cross to those we meet."

We need to tell as many people about the cross of Christ. Mel Gibson said in an interview with Diane Sawyer on *Prime Time*, "I believe that this story is one that everyone needs to hear, especially now."

We need to be willing to associate ourselves with the cross of Christ. Matthew and Mark, in their accounts of the passion of Christ, both describe Simon of Cyrene, a man that was forced to help Jesus carry his cross. At one point in *The Passion of the Christ*, Simon interlocks arms with Jesus and they work together to carry the cross.

We also have opportunities every day to help carry the cross of Christ to the people around us—whether it is the hurting people around us, the friends who still haven't accepted Christ, or the people we meet for the first time.

We need to take advantage of these opportunities and present the cross and the hope that it represents to as many people as we can and as often as we can. Our job isn't to change people's hearts. Our job is to present Christ, his love and his hope and let God do the changing.

We have a choice. Will we have the *guts* to make Christ, his death and resurrection the central focus of our life? It doesn't take *guts* to wave a palm branch with a mob of others doing the same thing. The glorious hope is that when we choose to make Christ our central focus, he has promised us help, comfort and an eternal home in heaven. ■

Mo Friesen is associate pastor at Steinbach EFC in Steinbach, Man. He spent some of his childhood as a missionary kid in Nicaragua, graduated with a BRS degree (church ministries) from Steinbach Bible College, and has served with Youth for Christ in Steinbach.



A Mozambican refugee story

Allow me to tell you a story, a real life experience relayed to me during my recent trip to Mozambique. Claudien and his wife and their teenage daughter live in Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique. Their journey began a number of years earlier, far away in their native Rwanda. Their story is an expression of living with hope and demonstrates the energy and resilience of so many who are forced to leave home, to start life anew in far off and unknown places

The horrendous days of the mid 90's in Rwanda resulted in death and injury to untold thousands. Masses of people ran away in an attempt to find safety. Inter tribal conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus was at the base of this holocaust. The mass killings of those days did not go unnoticed in the world, but for many it was too late.

Claudien and his family lived through those days, but realized that because of the continuing threat to their lives, they would need to leave their beloved native Rwanda. Claudien was a trained accountant with good job options, but life in Rwanda would never be the same for them.

They fled to Uganda and later found their way to Nairobi, Kenya. In Nairobi, Claudien was able to get work in his field, but in time they found that they would not be able to realize the kind of long-term opportunities they were looking for. Although they were safe, they felt they would always be second class citizens there.

They looked for a country that was open to refugees, and in particular they looked for a country where the people would be able to understand their plight of having lived through war and disruption. As a result of their search, they finally decided to make their way of Mozambique, via Swaziland.

In a hot, dusty refugee camp outside Maputo on the road that leads to Swaziland, they began to piece their lives together. They had official refugee status and called a small tent their home. For sustenance they depended on donated food provided by the United Nations.

By tradition, their people cultivated the soil and grew food and cash crops for a living. And so, they too began to cultivate the soil, to produce some of their food at the earliest opportunity. In addition to farming, they were able to engage in small trade, buying supplies in town and selling them in a small family owned shop in the camp.

It was here that the family got a break. Fundo de Credito Comunitario (FCC) is the World Relief Canada partner in Mozambique. FCC provides credit for the economically active poor through a network of community banks. Small loans are being delivered using village banking practices. Claudien took a short-term loan from the FCC that allowed him to expand his business. He successfully repaid a number of three-month loans as a member of a community bank.

But the story doesn't end there. FCC recognized that not only was Claudien an excellent client, he was also a hard working and well-trained individual with valuable work experience. FCC eventually hired Claudien and, after several promotions, he is now financial manager

of FCC, the largest micro-finance provider in Mozambique.

Chatting with Claudien, I was struck by a number of things. First of all, there's his ability to learn languages. English, French and Portuguese are European languages he has mastered, and he speaks numerous African languages.

Claudien exuded a quiet confidence and hope for the future. I asked him about that. How were you able to keep going? How were you able to retain a long-term view on your road to freedom and opportunity? His response was simple yet profound: "Our faith in God was utmost. We kept hoping and praying for a better day. We believed that God had given us a special purpose in life, and if we had patience and resourcefulness, we would live to understand."

FCC provides credit to many in Mozambique who have limited opportunities to access credit elsewhere. FCC has also found that Mozambique is a country with a dearth of trained people for middle and upper level management positions.

And so, FCC has hired, trained and promoted a number of trained refugees, and thus exemplified in a practical way their determination to help people help themselves. Financial Manager Claudien is one of many staff who understand the needs of their clients, because they were once a client.

By partnering with the FCC, World Relief Canada is helping people in Mozambique work toward a brighter day for themselves, their family and their country.

Menno Plett



Menno Plett (Prairie Rose) is Africa program coordinator for World Relief Canada, the relief

agency connected with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, of which EMC is a partner. Before that, Menno served for many years with MCC, a relief and development agency.

LOW GERMAN BIBLE PROJECT COMPLETED!



Pastor John Wiebe

The \$100,000 project is the combined effort of the United Bible Society, Canadian Bible Society, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Kindred Productions, Mennonite Central Committee and Friends of Plautdietsch—a Winnipeg based group of interested individuals and people representing several Mennonite conferences.

Pastor John Wiebe of Steinbach, Man., says the Low German Bible makes it possible for him to share the scriptures with Low German speaking people using "the language of the heart."

Tony Enns, meeting coordinator, says, "I hope it will enable a renaissance of learning in Low German communities in Mexico and Paraguay."

Photo and information courtesy of Gladys Terichow, The Carillon

Struggles and summer fun

Mount Salem, Ont.: This article took me a couple of weeks to write, it being one of my last. I've been thinking about all the events that took place over the summer months and the way God has moved in our church.

The church as a whole has gone through many struggles over the past while. There are times when we wonder if we're ever going to have happy times in the church again, but as an encouragement to the congregation—the struggles and hard times are what get us from one happy memory to the next. Now I ask of the congregation that we put the struggles behind us and remember the happy things that have brought us through, and the happy things that are yet to come.

The summer was an exciting time for the children, as it usually is. Sunday school was cancelled for the summer, which was a nice break for the teachers. The teachers came back in September with renewed energy and purpose. One might ask, but what of the children, what did they do? Well, thanks to some volunteers, the church was able to pull off a children's church. As a result, some women took it upon themselves to start a children's church every Sunday, even when there is Sunday school. To those who are seeing to this, may God bless you in your willingness to serve and teach!

My best friend and I took the challenge of leading this year's Vacation Bible School, which was held August 18–22. It didn't take us long to realize that maybe we jumped into it a little too fast, but with some help we were able to pull it off successfully.

The theme for our VBS was SonHarvest. Elma and I worked for hours to prepare everything and get the backdrops done in time. Decorations and props were not a problem due to the fact that we have many farmers in the church who were willing to donate.

VBS for the past couple of years has been held for ages five to 12; we chose to try having it for ages four to 12 to see what the reaction from the parents would be. Well, they were thrilled, as were the children. More than 100 children came out during the week to enjoy a music centre led by Ani Ens and Sue Loewen, a Bible centre led by Randy and Gloria Fehr, a craft centre led Juanita Thiessen and Tiffany Fehr, a recreation centre led by Frank Bergen and Dan Friesen, and a snack centre led by Mary Froese.

The week was enjoyable and satisfying, and Elma and I want to give out a big thanks to all those who offered their time and

efforts. Thanks go out to Cindy Friesen, Tina Friesen, Monica Harder, and Susie Sawatzky for being brave enough to take on the challenge of teaching 23 four- and five-year-olds. God bless those who helped us out that week.

This year's Sunday school picnic was a big success; the turnout was good and the food was plentiful. After the barbecue was when the real fun began: A men's, women's and children's watermelon eating contest was held, as well as a bed race. After that, there was nothing better than having fun with a dunk tank and getting a little wet. Thank you to those who made the picnic possible.

Of course, the summer could not have gone by without a baseball season. A church as young as ours makes us a church filled with athletes who like a good competition. The season did not go by without its tense moments and frustrations.

I wish to say thanks to the Mount Salem Twisters and the Mount Salem Rockies for putting forth your best effort and being an

example on the field. Large congratulations go to the Mount Salem Kings for winning the trophy. It was a tough season for you guys, but you pulled through with good attitudes and took the trophy.



The VBS leaders did take some time to have fun.

Finally, to my girls, the Mount Salem Lightnings, I have enjoyed playing with you for the past three years and I am definitely looking forward to next season. I have learned from you the meaning of playing as a team, as well as good attitudes and sportsmanship. I wouldn't have picked any other group of girls to be with when we took the championship this year. Thank you!

Darla Klassen



The four- and five-year-old VBS class and leaders.

Church, a community within a community

Braeside (Winnipeg, Man.): In mid-October Braeside held a leadership retreat at autumn-tinged Camp Nutimik. One item of discussion was how we as a family of believers modeling the love of Jesus, could have an impact on our community. The answers came quickly!

A disastrous fire at a local day care left 60 children and a devastated staff without a home. Braeside was approached. After government regulations and expectations were met, the Learning Tree Day Care became a part of our church. Enter the church and you will hear the contented buzz of 60 youngsters, see the smiles of a dozen workers, and the relieved faces of parents as they drop off and pick up their kids. The ministerial gave each child and worker a small Christmas gift as well as a copy of the Christmas story. The day care expects to return to its refurbished location in March.

Short on the heels of this opportunity there were two others. The regional health authority approached us with a proposal to host a community-based ESL learning centre. The local school board, recognizing our Hispanic outreach, presented the possibility of being an information source for Spanish-speaking parents in the school division; our specific task would be to provide information on schools and social services within the community.

Our Thanksgiving service once again reminded us of God's many blessings and the open mike elicited responses from many people, younger and older, in Spanish and English, thanking God for country, friends, family, church and answered prayer. In fact, there was such an array of responses that the chairperson finally said, "We'll just have one more!"

Our annual missionary conference was spread over two weekends. The guest speaker, Fred Stoesz, clearly and resonantly dissected John 3:15 under three topics: *Our Motivation for Missions* ("For God so loved...that He gave His...Son"); *The Breadth and Scope of Missions* ("That whosoever believes in Him"); and *Counting the Cost of Missions* ("Shall not perish but have eternal life").

Fred and Jolene have served for many years with World Impact, establishing urban churches in Los Angeles, Calif., and Wichita, Kan. They have now relocated to Winnipeg. Also presenting their work were Carl and Lisa Loewen (Philippines), Grace Thiessen (Mexico), and Vivian Loewen (Philippines).

Braeside Church has a soccer team! Comprised mainly of our Hispanic members and friends (also including some members of our ministerial), the Eagles—so named because of their hope to soar like these majestic birds—show boundless

energy and spirit as they compete in a city indoor soccer league.

This year we again supported Operation Christmas Child. It was gratifying to see many families filling the shoeboxes with gifts. Some of our care groups sponsored Christmas hampers for indigent neighbourhood families. One Saturday was set aside for families in the community to drop off their children at Braeside, while they went shopping or

enjoyed some quiet moments over a cup of coffee.

A first for Braeside was a Sunday school Christmas program held on Sunday morning. Almost all age levels participated (the youth had already served in a previous Sunday service). The church was full.

The year ended with one Spanish couple from Brandon having to return to Mexico in order to get the correct documents for a permanent return to Canada. In early 2004 a Braeside family had to leave Canada for similar reasons. It was with much excitement, therefore, that we welcomed Carlos, Aida, Erik, and Shaila Pitta back to Winnipeg after a five-month absence; although they were greeted by frigid temperatures, they were glad to be back and Braeside rejoices in their return.

Not everyone left our country involuntarily. In early January Tina and Arnold Thiessen left for a four-week work experience in Burkina Faso. They returned with exciting stories of life, work, and blessings in that African country. In February we bade farewell to Annabelle Friesen, who left for a two-year term of service in Paraguay. Our prayers are with her.

Al Dueck

Pastoral couple installed at TCC

Treesbank, Man.:



On January 25, 2004 Kenton and Lucille Penner were installed as the pastoral couple in Treesbank Community Church. Seen here are Pastor Kenton and Lucille Penner, chairman Dennis and Margie Friesen, deacon Leonard and Luella Plett, and EMC Conference Pastor David and Merna Thiessen.



Krista (nee Plett) and Timo Kunz were married February 14 in Treesbank Community Church.

Lucille Penner

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Herb Kopp, M.A.
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Loren Johns, Ph.D.
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Aberdeen children are walking the walk

Aberdeen (Winnipeg, Man.): Recently, two guests to our church spoke about the destruction caused by landmines in various countries and what we can do to stop the manufacture and distribution of landmines (see the sidebar for one idea).

One guest was Sierra, a 13-year-old Winnipeg activist, and the other was Joe, a children's story writer. In one story that Joe authored and read to us in part, he posed the idea that it is our children that will save our world. This thought reminded me of some projects that children in our church are doing as their small but significant part in making our world a better place to live.

A recent Sunday school project in which three- to 12-year-olds have participated has been that of preparing school kits for children in Iraq. Due to sanctions and looting since the war, there is an urgent need for school kits, according to MCC.

Alice Doerksen, a senior member, sewed 26 school bags and children filled them with notebooks, rulers, pencils, crayons and erasers. Notebooks are so precious to many of the children receiving them, stated Herb Heppner, MCC communications director, that they squeeze three lines of writing on each line of paper. Pencils are snapped into several pieces in case one piece gets lost.

Another project by young Aberdeeners is the sponsorship of a child through Foster Parents Plan. This project was started by the junior youth group more than three years ago. Letters and money are sent regularly to support the health and education of a Haitian boy and his family. Stenor, now nine, recently responded with a gift of his own, a woven cap and a bag, as well as a letter.



Verna Hiebert, MCC Material Resources Coordinator, holds a quilt created by Aberdeen kids for kids in Iran.

If education is a key factor to escaping from poverty, Aberdeen kids have helped toward the freedom of at least a few Iraqi kids and one Haitian boy.

A third project completed by the eight- to 10-year-old Aberdeeners in Ivy Guenther's class was the making of a quilt. Sewing machines were brought to church and a quilt was carefully created. The quilt will be sent by MCC to a family affected by the recent earthquake in Iran.

The project was a practical application of Sunday school lessons which focussed on God using ordinary young people such as Samuel and David in biblical times. Blankets are precious to those that have

lost their homes and belongings. As Herb informed us, donated blankets are often used to cover several people or even an entire family.

As a result of the quilt, the school kits, and the sponsorship, we are now connected in small but important ways to people in Iran, Iraq, and Haiti. As Jesus believed and taught, kids are good at making the world a better place to live and we need to learn from their example. One more thought: I just wonder what gifts Iraqi and Haitian and Iranian kids might have to offer to us in our world?

Liz Plett

One idea for conscientious objection in today's world:

A recent news release from Conscience Canada <http://www.consciencecanada.ca> alleges that our contributions to the Canada Pension Plan are heavily invested in U.S. corporations that manufacture antipersonnel landmines that maim and kill thousands yearly. This violates the spirit of the Mine Ban Treaty that the Canadian government signed in 1997.

"The peace and security of our retirement years is being purchased at the expense of those who must suffer at the receiving end of weapons systems from which we are forced to profit," the release says. Read the report and sign an online petition to register your opposition at <http://coat.openconcept.ca>.

Liz Plett

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An idea that keeps on growing

Riverton, Man.: During their vacation in the Autumn of 1979, Neill and Edith Von Gunton had an idea: To start an MCC Thrift Shop in Riverton. On November 19, 1979, they presented their idea to a group of representatives and toured a proposed building site for the shop. This was the birth of the Thrift Shop executive and a new venture began, bringing churches and communities together.

With determination and hard work the Thrift Shop opened its doors on December 14, 1979, just four weeks after their initial presentation, providing quality used clothing, MCC handcrafted items and Christian literature for local shoppers. The shop earned \$1,409 in the first month of sales and reached \$17,620.42 in annual sales for 1980. By 2002 annual sales for the shop had reached \$55,417.35.

A few years after the original opening, the executive made the decision to buy land in town and build a newer and better building. The new building included an area to be shared by the Friendship Centre which offered educational programs for the community.

There have been many changes to the shop over the past 25 years. Initially including a rental space, this was eventually absorbed into the shop making room for a larger sorting area. Nothing is wasted that is donated to the shop. Sorted clothing is often washed, and buttons and zippers repaired.

Clothing items that don't make the grade for sales are bagged and kept for the Interlake Mennonite Fellowship who pick up, re-sort and recycle for the purpose of shipping clothing to Russia. Shirts and pants

that are stained or ripped beyond repair are cut up into rags and resold in the shop or directly to Vidor Machine.

Buttons and zippers are cut off and sold in the notions area. Old sweaters are opened and balled into yarn that is sold in the shop or knitted into pot-holders or other small items. Clothing made from fortrell, denim or corduroy are cut up and bundled into patches for quilting. Even the smallest knick knack that doesn't sell in the shop is boxed and resold through the Union Gospel Mission in Winnipeg. Nothing goes to waste at the Thrift Shop.

On a Monday workday, the shop becomes a well-oiled machine of workers, sorting, tagging, pricing and stocking the shop. These people are the hub of shop and the people clerking Tuesday to Saturday are the spokes that keep the shop turning.

Volunteering is a contribution that people can make to give something back to their community. For the past 25 years contributions by hundreds of people have made this outreach successful and have resulted in the opening of a second shop. Riverton is now home to a used furniture store located next door to the clothing store. Both ventures require people's service and donation of goods.

In his book *The Purpose Driven Life* Rick Warren states, "The Bible says 'God has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do,' Ephesians 2:10b (TEV). These 'good deeds' are your service. Whenever you serve others in any way, you are actually serving God."

With the opening of a second shop in Riverton, the churches that serve are serving the community and God. Every smile and conversation with a customer,

contributes to a love that builds up the local community. MCC Thrift shops are not just about earning money to send to MCC for their global missions. MCC starts as a seed in your back yard.

By taking the opportunity to serve in your local shop, you are a missionary without having to leave home. If you think you are not gifted to be a missionary, think again. Clerking once a month or once every few months fills a need that your local Thrift shop has.

Consider this outreach next time your Thrift Shop coordinator asks for your help in a shop. You'll be pleasantly surprised how much fun it is sorting the goods, or clerking and getting to know people in your community.

Christine Peters

Convention Registration

Pre-registration is encouraged for the EMC convention in Swan River. Registration forms will be sent to churches and available at the EMC website (www.emconf.ca).

People attending are encouraged to make lodging arrangements well in advance; space in Swan River itself is limited. For information, contact the national office at 204-326-6401.

See you at convention!



Conroy Koop



Peter Dueck



Mike Plett



Cameron McKenzie



Plan to attend the
54th EMC Annual Convention



Reproducing the New Testament Church

July 2 to 4, 2004
Swan River, Man.

Speakers: *Conroy Koop, Peter Dueck, Mike Plett, Cameron McKenzie*

Can we be more prepared?

The Church's response to suicide

Irma Janzen

PASTORS AND church leaders dread the word *suicide*. They dread that phone call in the night or a police cruiser pulling up on their driveway.

No one wants those calls. When they come we're never quite ready! We take a deep breath and say a quick prayer. Questions such as: *What do I do? What do I say? It can't be true. Why did I say that? Why didn't I suspect it?* race through our minds.

Can we be more prepared? Perhaps so, depending on what we know and have experienced. Thinking through issues around suicide in advance, talking about suicide, role playing, and becoming aware of resources around us can help. We need to think through issues around suicidal deaths, including our theology. Scripture does not say enough about suicide for us to develop a theology around it. This creates some tension for us and sometimes it causes us to look at isolated incidents in Scripture to support an opinion we already have.

Some suicides recorded in Scripture such as those of Judas Iscariot and King Saul obviously suggest desperate and unhappy people. For some people this suggests separation from God in the afterlife.

Then there is Samson who killed himself and others, and that after he had prayed for God to give him strength to do so. He is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as a hero of the faith.

There are other Scriptures that say that those who come to God, God will in no way cast out, and that nothing, not principalities nor powers, can separate us from God's love. Ultimately we need to entrust people into God's hands, both pre- and post death without having any definitive answers and this is very hard to do.

How do we understand despair? The teaching that faith in itself is enough or that we should be able to handle things on our own hinders openness and honesty and can make a person who is already in despair feel worse. Many situations in people's lives go wrong. For some this leads to feeling that life is not worth living or that trying any longer is too hard.

At times people are unable or unwilling to call for help. This may be due to their own issues or to stigma, or because they are given the impression that it is their fault that they are feeling this way. People who have a serious mental illness may at times hear voices that tell them to hurt themselves.

A leader's fears

Some leaders fear to ask hard questions or to speak openly about suicide before it happens. They fear to ask, "Do you feel suicidal?" Some leaders promise to keep secrets and do not want to break them even if they sense danger and this becomes a heavy load to carry. There are times, too, when a leader does not know their limits and does not call for help quickly enough.

When talking with someone

When in conversation with someone wanting to die, you need to validate their feelings of despair and helplessness. Don't tell them it's not that bad. Let them talk, cry, scream or whatever they need to do. Wait and listen rather than giving simple solutions or advice. Ask questions that help them to open up and talk more, such as, "You're feeling terrible...." "You say life is not worth living?"

If people talk about killing themselves, you need to check if they have plan. If they have a plan that can be carried out, do not leave them alone and call for help. Mobile crisis teams have trained people that can come assess the situation and take the needed precautions.

Check your phone book or the hospital for numbers to call in an emergency. The person can be taken to a hospital emergency or you can call the police. That would be necessary especially if you're on the phone with the person and can't get there or if there is danger of hurting themselves or others.

Reassure the person of your love and care. Move physically closer, if they want you to, but ask first. Make a contract with the person asking them to call you before they make an attempt. Follow-up to see how they are doing. Don't promise not to tell. Instead tell them you will treat their confidence with respect but that if there is danger to themselves or others, you will get more help. Pray silently. Before you offer to pray out loud, ask if they would like that or if they'd prefer silence. Let them know you understand that sometimes dark times are long. Encourage counseling of issues or medication for depression.

After an attempt

When someone has attempted suicide, assure the person of your love in spite of how they feel. Sit with them in the darkness and despair. Assure them that God forgives (if that is their concern). Help

them to find help in dealing with issues, especially stresses that led to the attempt. Make a contract for future times when the person may feel suicidal. Let them know you realize it may be a long haul.

When spending time with family members after someone has attempted suicide, assure them of your love. Don't blame or judge. Listen in silence. Ask questions to lead them to talking more or crying. Be careful not to give simplistic solutions. Validate their feelings. Comments like, "This is a very difficult time..." may encourage further talking. Encourage self-care so they can support the person for longer periods of time.

After a suicide

When suicide happens, assure people of your love. Don't judge or blame. Validate feelings of guilt, shame, anger, despair or whatever they are. Let people, talk, cry, scream, pound their fists. Anger at the person who killed him or herself is very common. Reassure them that God loves their loved one even more than they do, that God does not desert people in their time of greatest need, and that ultimately we need to leave people in God's hands.

Help plan the funeral in a way that celebrates the life of the person who died (while at the same time being honest about the level of despair). Recommend a suicide support grief group or counseling.

Help them to see their symptoms as normal (feelings, anger, depression). Keep going back. Remember birthdays, anniversaries and the anniversary of their loved one's death.

None of us want to hear about suicide, especially in our immediate circles. However, many of us, perhaps most, do within our lifetime. Advance preparation can make those times less difficult for us and more helpful for others. ■

Irma Janzen (Fort Garry) is part of the EMC Social Concerns Committee. She is also MCC Canada's director for Mental Health and Disabilities Program. The program's website is www.mcc.org/canada/health.html. A brochure on teens and suicide is available.



MDS helps Louis Creek rebuild

Wildfires on July 31 of last year destroyed 80 homes and all businesses, including the sawmill, in the small community of Louis Creek and the neighbouring North Thompson First Nation north of Kamloops, B.C. A few houses and one mobile home somehow miraculously survived the fire.

What had been a beautiful forested area with natural landscaping along the North Thompson River quickly became charred trees and yards with only twisted metal, cracked concrete and ashes.

MDS Kamloops area representative Menno Unger was already mingling with officials and residents on August 6 when the ashes were still warm, trying to understand the extent of the damage and offering resources and

hope. Civic authorities, who seemed ineffective in assisting the community, made the investigative step more difficult. Also, homeowners could not easily be found initially, as most were evacuated to Kamloops and all yard signs were destroyed.

Other BC MDS representatives, supported by Region V and Binational, soon joined Menno in initiating a fund appeal and setting up a project camp, complete with kitchen, rented shower and bunk trailers, at the Pentecostal Church and a nearby rented house in the neighbouring town of Barriere, which was spared the fires. Pastor Bob's booming voice and huge heart became the norm as MDS volunteers all but took over the well-equipped church facility, with the exception of Sunday morning worship.

The first focus was to clean up all yards, irrespective of potential insurance benefits, in order for those with the means to begin rebuilding immediately. August 27 saw 27 exuberant youths and leaders from Kamloops begin the sensitive and dirty sorting and sifting of each yard to remove debris and save any valuables. This began to give residents hope of a better tomorrow when they were at their lowest and trying to make decisions about their futures.

MDS investigators helped form a community based recovery committee including local church pastors, Red Cross and Salvation Army, to identify and address the unmet rebuilding needs in the community. It began August 30 and has been ably led by Rob Rutten, a Louis Creek resident who lost both his home and his antique business in the fire.

George Evans, a Kamloops auto dealer, made it possible for people to open their hearts in aid of the fire survivors by starting North Thompson Relief Fund, raising more than \$1.5 million for the people of North Thompson. The board, including Pastor Karen of the Barriere United Church, of this new charity liked what MDS wanted to do in Louis Creek and insisted on donating up to \$40,000 in building materials for each of the eight houses that MDS, Free Church and Holdeman groups committed to rebuild for those without adequate fire insurance coverage, as well as replace the 12-unit mobile home park.

The North Thompson fund also equipped the MDS tool trailer and paid for a local demolition company to work alongside MDS volunteers in clearing most of the 80 yards where homes used to stand. MDS supporters also donated very generously to these recovery efforts

as a result of the appeal.

MDS volunteers, mostly from BC but also from the prairie provinces, have completed five new homes in four months. This is an extraordinary accomplishment when one thinks of the time it takes to build one home with paid contractors, advance planning and readily available materials, and the fact that the volunteers had to set up their own truss building factory.

Twenty MDS volunteers, including BC board members, the Region V Director and outgoing and incoming binational Executive Coordinators Tom Smucker and Kevin King from Akron were blessed on February 10 to be able to participate in the individual dedication of all five of these homes together with the proud owners and their extended families and pastors.

Joe, Clayton and Jason, Bill and Valerie, Mario and Barbara, Pearl and Don, and Rob and Susan could hardly find words to thank God and the volunteers who had helped them rebuild their homes and through this also their lives. They were presented with a Bible, keys, a copy of *The Hammer Rings Hope* (a history book of MDS) and paintings created and donated by BC Mennonite artists.

In turn, the homeowners contributed to a potluck lunch at the Pentecostal Church where they, community leaders and MDS volunteers continued in the midst of families and new-found friends their emotional sharing and dreaming of a brighter future. A decision was also made to continue the work of MDS this summer through a two month youth project aimed at offering landscaping and other restorative help to all 80 families.

Susan wrote the following poem of appreciation:

THE CIRCLE OF LOVE

You picked us up and carried our load.
You asked nothing in return.
Your light shone on our path when we
couldn't see the way.
Your sympathetic ear, patience and hard
work were examples in our time of
need.
You do not know, you cannot know, our
losses or how much the demonstration
of your belief has been a source of
strength and hope.
What can we give in return?
How can we repay?
Your example must show the way.

Gord Friesen, MDS

SURVEY IDENTIFIES 19% OF CANADIANS AS EVANGELICALS

An Ipsos-Reid Corporation poll sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and other partners "demonstrated, that, on the basis of six key indicators, 19% of Canadians (12% Protestants, 7% Catholic) are 'evangelicals.'" The indicators for evangelicalism were determined by people's agreement with these statements:

I believe that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God provided the way for the forgiveness of my sins.

I believe the Bible to be the word of God and is reliable and trustworthy.

I have committed my life to Christ and consider myself to be a converted Christian.

To be called an "evangelical" the survey respondent also needed to disagree with the statements that:

The concept of God is an old superstition that is no longer needed to explain things in these modern times.

In my view, Jesus was not the divine Son of God.

The sixth determining factor was weekly church attendance. When all six indicators were present in a person's response, they were classified as an evangelical.

From EFC materials

Volunteers grateful at Open Circle celebration

Ester Wiens felt apprehensive walking past the security guards keeping watch over the gates of Stony Mountain Penitentiary. As recent immigrants from Brazil, she and her husband John were finding it difficult adjusting to a new culture and new language. But regardless, they had agreed to go to the jail on behalf of a friend to visit Tony Ribeiro, serving a life sentence in Manitoba's maximum-security prison.

"I was scared and fearful I wouldn't be able to love, understand, or forgive him," says Wiens, who with her husband shared their experiences at a 30th anniversary celebration of MCC Manitoba's Open Circle program in Winnipeg in October.

She need not have worried. Despite Ribeiro's serious criminal record, after their first meeting Ester had no doubts that Ribeiro would be a friend.

Ribeiro, a 49-year-old Portuguese man, was in the early years of a life sentence for murder. He had come to Canada in the 1970s in search of work to support a wife and young daughter back home. A bad turn of events in northern Ontario had landed him in prison.

Shortly after their own arrival in Canada, Wiens says a Portuguese-speaking friend attending North Kildonan MB Church in Winnipeg, Man., approached them, asking if they would visit Ribeiro. The friend, who helped the Wiens family make the transition to North America, was returning to Brazil.

"This one fell into our hands. We could not say no," says Ester.

The friendships they made that first day flourished as the frequency of their monthly meetings became, at times, weekly.

"Tony and my husband developed a relationship that [you] could well say was one between two brothers. [Over the years] they cried and they laughed. They got to know each other's sorrows and joys."

Regulations do not allow visitors to openly share their faith unless prisoners ask. But actions can speak louder than words and after several years of regular meetings, Tony shared how he had become a Christian.

"By attending services in the prison chapel, and by reading the Bible, he came to know Jesus Christ, and that he needed God's forgiveness," says Ester. "He said he saw Jesus in us."

"Ester and John's story is a bit unique, but I could tell you similar stories about other relationships that have grown just as strong," says Murray Barkman, who coordinates the Open Circle program for MCC Manitoba. Barkman is a member of Aberdeen EMC.

The strength of those relationships brought 140 people to a church basement in mid-October as inmates and volunteers, both past and present, gathered to celebrate the connections Open Circle has been making for 30 years.

"This is the kind of work we are called to do," says Barkman. "We work to build links between people and these are the kinds of results we see." Tony Ribeiro was twice turned down for parole, extending his prison term by six years. But this past

spring, after 11 years of visits from John and Ester, Ribeiro finally qualified for release and returned to Brazil where he was reunited with his wife and with his daughter who was now 22 years old.

In looking back over the past decade, both John and Ester say they are grateful for Open Circle and the opportunity it gave them to share and listen to someone in need through the cold of a Manitoba winter.

Jonathan Tiessen, MCC Canada

Storytellers and the coming of post-Vietnam war refugees in 1979 and 1980

Twenty-five years ago a crisis in Vietnam set in motion a massive migration of refugees that transformed the Mennonite church communities in Canada. Tens of thousands of southeast Asia refugees who came to be known as Boat People fled the ravages of war and sought refuge in Canada.

Mennonite churches responded enthusiastically. With the response came a cultural shift. A new openness to non-

Europeans developed. Refugees sponsorship now became a ongoing concern for many Mennonite churches. Closer working relationships with government agencies developed. Then, too, the ethnic composition of Mennonite churches began changing, as Chinese and Vietnamese Mennonite churches were born and more non-Europeans began attending Mennonite churches.

Just what was the nature of these changes? How did they occur? Who were the major players? What were the relationships that were formed? What was the legacy of this moment in time?

These are some of the questions that a history conference planned for October 2005 will seek to answer. The conference, supported by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and MCC Canada, and hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, will be a weekend of analysis and celebration.

The conference planning committee is looking for storytellers and presenters. It is especially looking for people who were involved in the settlement of the Boat People to tell their stories at the conference. A special appeal is made for host and sponsored families who have maintained relationships over time who would be willing to tell their stories together. Deacons and pastor are encouraged to present their congregation's experience with non-European refugees. Any academic interested in investigating this story from an historical, sociological, theological perspective is encouraged to participate.

Anyone interested in participating should contact either Royden Loewen at the University of Winnipeg r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca or Ken Reddig at MCC Canada kwr@mennonitecc.net.

Royden Loewen
University of Winnipeg



Window on Missions

Lester Olfert
Foreign Secretary

61, BUT THE NEEDS REMAIN!

THE AVERAGE age of Mexico missionaries is 61, excluding the three that are under 30 years, not as stated in *Window on Missions* (Feb. 25, 2004). Sorry for the mistake.

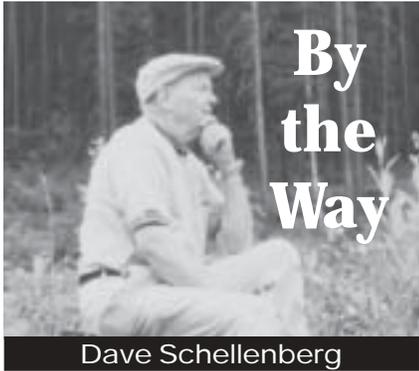
Personnel needed for Mexico are:

- Pastoral couples for Hillside Gospel Church and Camp 67.
- A couple and a single person for Spanish ministries (church planting, leadership training and more).

Some of these positions may be filled by individuals from Mexico.

Lester Olfert, Foreign Secretary





After the flowers have faded

Now what? What does the bereaved spouse do after the embraces of family and friends, after flowers have faded, after sympathy cards are stacked away on the shelf? Life has to go on and it does. Maybe it is good that God has ordained it that way.

Although immediately it is hard to grasp, time is a great healer. With time comes, not necessarily forgetting, but a different perspective—a God-given perspective whereby one can begin to cope with the inevitable.

We know that a parting must come, but we try to push it from our mind as long as possible. Then when it comes we are unprepared. As far as I can recall my wife and I never shared any discussions on the matter. You may have.

And so I had to learn the hard way, by trial and error.

My family has been a great help. However, with their own interests and family, what they can do is limited. But I am thankful for every effort they make and there are lots. But, there will be long hours where you are alone and where you feel alone. What does one do? I have said before, self-pity is not an option.

If I have work to do, or make work, this certainly helps to make things easier and more bearable. And with time, that great healer, the possibility for relief is there.

So, can something to do to occupy those lonely hours meet some of the requirements of a bereaved person? Yes, to a certain extent, even if it goes against everything you feel like. For the moment of pain, it supplies a distraction. If you can do something useful, such as visit a sick friend, so much the better. For me something to do consists of practicing my culinary crafts, which is of necessity. One has to eat.

Occasionally I get ambitious and try new recipes. They don't always turn out. New Year's cookies were a flop and my last batch of *Moos* turned out lumpy. I sometimes turn out something which gives me a real sense of achievement, of which I think my wife would be proud.

But something to do can go beyond that. Time can be profitably spent in reading and praying, and even singing. Yes, singing! Alone? To yourself? Yes. What if I don't feel like singing? Sing anyway. I am practicing this in my devotions. And I love to sing in German from a simple hymnbook. Page by page, up pop German hymns we used to sing in church. It is amazing the comfort you get out of it. Of course I also use English hymns. Try it some time and you will agree with me.

If you have a computer—if you don't, get one—get on the Internet (but beware of SPAM!). I write on my computer and

communicate with family members far and near. This has been a source of great satisfaction and cheer for me. And I'm finishing my third book now—not elaborate or professional, just something I can leave my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. (You should do that in any case, bereaved or not.)

This takes care of a lot of hours that might be spent in loneliness and may be generating something useful. It is no substitute for a companion you still miss and loved very much, but it helps fill a gap.

One of my favorite Bible verses is found in Psalm 27:13: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

IN MARCH I have been alone in my apartment for two years. That's when my wife entered the hospital and then my life took an unexpected turn. First, the steady hospital visits; and then, after some three months, the parting with my wife.

One of the hardest things to accomplish is to come to terms with the death of your spouse. A chapter on earth has ended and somehow it is so unbelievable. How can this be! She just is no longer there. He is no longer present. And it is such a helpless feeling. There is nothing for you to do. It can only be accepted and for you to go on. That is not an easy thing to do.

Only those who go through it know the adjustments made after the death of a spouse. In this I am not alone. It is happening all the time to young and old. This has again happened this year. Already in 2004, I attended three funerals—a man in his 50s, another in his 60s and a friend's wife who was 81—three spouses bereaved.

Weddings

DOERKSEN - BERGEN: John, son of Abe and Margaret Doerksen of La Crete, Alta., and Rosaleen, daughter of Ron and Mary Bergen of La Crete, were married on January 3, 2004 in La Crete, with Peter Janzen of La Crete officiating. The couple lives in La Crete.

KUNZ - PLETT: Timo, son of Andreas and Elke Kunz of Germany, and Krista, daughter of Leonard and Luella Plett of Wawanesa, Man., were married on February 14, 2004 at Treesbank Community Church with Randall Holm officiating. The couple lives in Germany.

Births

WIEWEL - to Mike and Sherry Wiewel of Steinbach, Man., a daughter, Amanda Joy, on December 1, 2003.

FISHER - to Trevor and Susanne Fisher, a daughter, Hannah Elaine, on December 22, 2003.

WIEBE - to Dan and Shari Wiebe, a daughter, Reagan Alexis, on December 23, 2003.

HEWSON - to Curtis and Marjorie Hewson, a daughter, Merren Elise, on January 8, 2004.

Coming Events

March 19-20

Empowered leadership in a congregational church
Speaker: Owen Burkholder
SBC Leadership Conference
Steinbach Bible College
Steinbach, Man.
Phone: 800-230-8478

March 20

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools
Spring Banquet, 6 p.m.
Bethel Mennonite Church
Winnipeg, Man.
Choirs, handbells, Back Roads Band
Free tickets
Phone: 204-885-1032
or 204-261-9637

March 22-25

Grounded in God
Mennonite Camping Association
2004 Convention
Lincoln City, Oregon
Phone: 541-996-3978

March 29

Deadline for Social
Concerns Essay Contest
What is our Christian
Responsibility to the
economic poor?
Open to high school students
Phone: 204-326-6401

July 2-4

54th EMC Annual Convention
Reproducing the New Testament Church
Swan River, Man.
Phone: 204-326-6401

July 9 to August 2

Project Macedonia
Belize, summer ministry
Application deadline is May 15.
Phone: 204-326-6401

Sept. 24-26

MCC alumni celebration in Vietnam
50 years in Vietnam
Hanoi, Vietnam
E-mail: deg@mcc.org



**A TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF
ROSE KORNELSEN
1931-2003**

If we were asked to describe the perfect Grandma there would be few differences between her and our own Grandma. She was definitely one of a kind. We have so many happy memories and fun stories, a few of which we would like to share.

Going to Grandma's always promised to be a fun time. Not many of us can remember ever sitting in her living room and visiting with her. It was always around her dining room table. This is where we spent hours visiting and playing games.

Her favorite game was Rook. She had a few decks in her games closet, some in her bottom drawer in her room, and one stashed away in her purse for those spur of the moment games.

So, many of us learned to play Rook almost as soon as we learned to walk and talk. When we would play a good card she would exclaim, "yammers I say!" We also have memories of playing Skip-bo, Phase 10, Cross over the Bridge, Kerplunk, Pick up Sticks and many others.

Grandma always had special treats for us when we came over. Some that we will always remember are: Crunch and Munch, Bugels, cream puffs, and the canned peaches and pears that she always served for faspas. And then of course there were the *tootch*as that we always got at Christmas. They were bags filled with goodies that had been very equally counted, down to the last peanut. She always liked things to be fair. We always looked forward to the Kornelsen gathering because Grandma knew how to make the best gravy in the world!

We'll miss the phone calls from Grandma on our birthdays. She never missed sending out a card for birthdays, Valentine's, Easter, Christmas, baptism and anniversaries. They were not just any cards. She always put effort into finding the perfect one. The verses and pictures on the card had to be just right. She always wanted us to read them out loud to her.

It was so easy to have conversations with Grandma. Not only did she ask us what was going on in our lives, she also told us how it was for her when she was younger. And even taught us funny little sayings and

songs that we will always giggle about. And somehow, sometimes while she was telling a story, little blurbs would be in German. Even though we wouldn't understand the German parts, her stories never lost their meaning because of her expressions and how full of life they were.

One thing that was so special about Grandma was that she always took time to teach us new things or play with us no matter what else needed to be done. She spent special time with each of us: anything from sleepovers to gardening. We can remember picking off the evil potato bugs, or how she always kept quiet while we pulled out carrots that had hardly started to grow. She was surprised, but she never scolded us.

Our Grandma loved to brag about her grandchildren. She loved to tell people when we had been in the newsletter or gave her a special gift. She showed her support for us by being at our sports games, choir performances, or any other special events. She paid close attention to her grandchildren—sometimes even noticing our new clothes. She complimented and encouraged us often.

It has often been said (in the last few days) but we can't say enough about the time she spent in prayer. Not only did she take time to pray for each of us daily, she often reminded us that she was praying. Even during her illness, she turned the attention on how she was praying for us. She taught us how to be selfless. Her relationship with Jesus was very evident, and shone through every aspect of her life.

Grandma was always positive. If she complained about something, we knew it meant business. She had many struggles in her life, and would sometimes say how it wasn't fair, but she always put other people's happiness ahead of her own.

Grandma K was known for her kisses. Not often when you hugged her were you able to escape without getting a big smooch on the cheek. She was so loving and it wasn't hard to see that she enjoyed the company of many others.

So many people that knew her have said that they appreciated how she always made an effort to talk with them. So many people felt they had a special bond with her. This was true in our own family as well. When Erik, Scott, and Michelle started to be a part of our family, she loved them and treated them as if they had been her grandchildren all along.

The night that Scott and Brandi got engaged, Grandma was over at Joe and Carol's for night. In the morning, she sat close by while Brandi phoned people, always smiling and excited to hear her story over and over again. She was so interested, asking every time "Who was that?" or "What did they say?" Brandi will miss (we sure missed) her at the wedding.

We'll miss so many things about Grandma

K. We'll miss her daily phone calls, in which she always asked what every single one of us was "up to" before she got to the reason for the call. And her answering machine messages that she left were always special too! Instead of saying "Hi, this is Grandma" she'd say "Where is everybody?" or "Not home yet?" and hang up the phone.

There is no one else like our Grandma. She taught us so many important things. It has been said that her biggest prayer was that she would see her children and grandchildren someday in heaven. We can't wait to see her again...with her crown, so full of jewels.

We love you, Grandma!

We can't believe a year has passed since our Mom's daily prayers and phone calls. There is a place no one can fill at the family gatherings, but we are looking forward to our reunion in the sky.

Missed dearly by Liz and Leroy (Dale and Michelle, Kim); Bruce and Lill (Erik and Amber, Tyler, Raquel); Brad and Colleen (Brittany, Stefan, Anders); Carol and Joe (Scott and Brandi, Jenna Cristina); Dennis, Iris (Zach, Samara and Jeremy).

Her Family



**GEORGIANA FRIESEN
(NEE PLETT)
1933-2003**

I am gone, but please don't weep
Or grieve with great despair
For I am now with Jesus
Heaven's beauty I now share.

Try to look beyond tomorrow
For there is much for you to do
God has many blessings
Waiting on this earth for you.

Cherish precious memories
Until the day we'll be
Together in God's Heaven
For all eternity.

We love you and miss you!

Love, Ted and Family

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

MCC Manitoba seeks a **resource generation team leader** in the Winnipeg office to work with staff in material resources, communications and resource programs. This leader is responsible for coordinating and supporting the resource generation and promotional activities of MCCM.

Familiarity with MCC constituency and strong relational and administrative skills are required. Fundraising or marketing experience is an asset.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking.

Direct applications and inquiries to Janelle Siemens or Sol Janzen. Phone 204-261-6381, jms@mennonitecc.ca or sjj@mennonitecc.ca. Application deadline is March 31, 2004.

Anola Fellowship Chapel is looking for a **full-time pastor** starting as soon as June 1, 2004. We are a rural congregation with an attendance of about 125 people in a newer building. We are an EMC church comprised of people from assorted backgrounds. We have great potential for outreach. Please contact Art Koop at 204-355-4243 or David Wiebe at 204-866-3245.

Gospel Mission Church (EMMC) seeks a **full-time senior pastor** to serve a growing congregation of about 170 in the city of Winkler, Man. Primary responsibilities are preaching, teaching, training, and developing leaders within the congregation to reach out and disciple others. This congregation has a large percentage of younger families. We have active youth, Sunday school, home bible studies and ladies ministries. Contact Jake Giesbrecht, Gospel Mission Church, R.R.1, Box 565, Grp 39, Winkler, MB R6W 4A9. Phone 204-325-5414; e-mail at jgiesbrecht@gvsvd.mb.ca.

Reserve Fellowship Chapel (EMC), located in Sioux Valley, Man., seeks a **part-time senior pastor**. The smaller 47-year-old congregation is part of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, a community that has a Christian history going back to 1879. The church serves people of various church backgrounds and experiences. Currently there exist ministries through a small Sunday service, Sunday school, Bible study and a summer VBS program. The congregation is located about 45 minutes from Brandon and Virden, where a variety of work opportunities exist. For information about this opportunity, please contact the EM Conference office at 204-326-6401.

Roseisle EMC, a warm, friendly congregation serving a diverse community, seeks a **full-time pastor**. Roseisle is a small rural town in south-central Manitoba. The church's average Sunday morning attendance is 85.

The applicant should be familiar with the Mennonite perspective and willing to be guided by the EMC Statement of Faith. Previous pastoral experience is an asset. Please submit resume and cover letter to Peter Dyck, Box 4, Roseisle, MB R0G 1V0, phone 204-435-2068; or Frank Peters, Box 94, Roseisle, MB R0G 1V0, phone 204-828-3571.

Inner City Youth Alive is an organization in the North End of Winnipeg, Man., that reaches youth and their families in the community. It seeks a **community ministry coordinator** that will work with adults from the surrounding community, and with volunteers and staff to be the hands and feet of Christ. It also is seeking a

program director that should possess pastoral gifts and be ready to support and encourage the staff team. Phone: 204-582-8779. Email: icya@mts.net. Website: www.innercityyouthalive.org.

A **director** is sought for a new addictions treatment rehabilitation centre in Cuauhtemoc, Mexico. The director will work with MCC workers and a program committee. An ability to speak Low German, High German, or Spanish is an asset. Contact Mary Friesen at maryf@mennonitecc.ca or 204-261-6381.

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 McMahan, SK S0N 1M0; or email blfriesen@t2.net.

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.

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.

Salem Home Inc., a 145-bed, accredited Mennonite personal care home in Winkler, Man., needs a **chief executive officer** on or before August 23, 2004. The CEO is responsible to the Board of Directors for the overall operation of the organization. The successful applicant will provide direct leadership to the senior management team, ensure appropriate delivery of services, and demonstrate accountability. Applicants should have a university degree in Health Care Administration or a related entity; a demonstrated record of successful leadership in an integrated health care system; effective communication, problem-solving, negotiating and public relations skills; an aptitude to relate to the mission and value system of the corporation.

Interested candidates should forward their resume on or before March 19, 2004 to: CEO Search Committee, Salem Home Inc., 605-350 4th Street, Winkler, MB R6W 1J8, E-mail: abeenns@mts.net, Phone: 204-325-4494, Fax: 204-325-4658.

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, Lewis Anfinson at 306-595-4743 or Dan Johnson at 306-594-2151, or email woodlandsigns@sasktel.net.

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, or fax 204-565-2635.

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.

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 administrator, 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.

Pine Ridge Bible Camp (NCEM), located at Beauval in northern Sask., seeks **volunteers** to build a three-bedroom house for a missionary residence and seasonal camp staff housing. Date needed: for month of May. Contact Bill Martens at 204-320-9515 or Peter Salmond, camp coordinator, at 306-763-2035. The camp serves about 45 campers for each of five weeks. It is about 30 years old. Lodging and food are provided, but transportation isn't. Beauval is three and a half hours north of Prince Alberta. The route has paved roads, except for final 20 minutes.

Mennonite Disaster Service is inviting applications for the full-time, salaried position of **communications coordinator**. Information is available online: <http://www.mds.mennonite.net>. Submit resume to Carla Hunt by March 31, 2004 at MDS, 1018 Main St., Akron PA 17501.

**The Evangelical Mennonite
Conference office
has a new address!**

**Future correspondence for EMC and
for *The Messenger* should now be
addressed to: 440 Main Street**

**Steinbach, MB
R5G 1Z5**



The Personal Touch

Luke 12:22-31

I have learned to sit in awe of my Creator

Elaine Enns

MY GARDENING experiences go back to my childhood. I had grandparents who had the best orchard in the village, several aunts who constantly tried new plants or gardening methods and a mother who loves to garden, cook, and can. So I come by my passion honestly.

The village provided space for a huge garden and it was my job to weed the back garden. I remember finishing the job and glancing back at long rows of vegetables with a feeling of satisfaction. The thought of the harvest to come and the canning season that would follow added to the feeling.

As the oldest of six, I had many opportunities to help. I remember grinding onions for relish, shedding many tears in spite of being blindfolded. Or needing a chair to stir a batch of vegetable soup simmering on the back of the wood stove. I have memories of hard work, but time spent in the flower patch always brightened the day. Mom grew a Peace rose, along side four o'clocks, bridal wreath spirea, lilacs and any flower that self-seeded. I enjoyed bringing flowers into the house. After I had left home, dad would always know when I had returned—the vases were full of flowers.

In 1972 we moved into our first home and the opportunity to create a new garden came with that move. For too many years I had missed being able to pick fresh ingredients for salad or soup, or bring in fresh flowers. With the passage of time the grass area steadily decreased and more flowers found their way into our yard.

January brought my seed catalogues, my garden plans and the urge to start my own seedlings. Watching the sprouting seeds assured me that winter would soon give way to spring. The miracle of rebirth was not far away. And as things warmed up outside, all my inside work was forgotten. Being on my knees with my hands in the dirt was the best place to be. I felt I was part of what God had planned for mankind. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Gen. 2:15).



Over the years my vegetables have given way to flowers and shrubs that attract butterflies and birds. My garden, with a pond, birdhouses, feeders and many varieties of plants, has helped me see God in a very different way. Luke 12:22-31 talks of how God has provided for the birds even though they do not sow or reap or store away. He dresses the lilies in more splendour than even Solomon was dressed. God clothes the grass that in days is burned. How much more must He care for me, someone with an eternal soul, created in His image?

When I turn away from my computer, I am surrounded by His creation. The beautiful reds of a maple flanked by two tall evergreens, juncos searching for seeds, or taking time to drink from the water gently falling over the rocks of the waterfall, a blue jay landing on the gazebo, waiting to check out the feeder, nut hatches at another feeder. I am learning to sit and quietly take in the marvels of God's creation.

I have enjoyed watching the painted ladies lay their eggs on the silver brocade, knowing the caterpillars will destroy all the foliage later, the black swallowtail finding my parsley in bloom, and the monarchs laying their eggs on the swamp milkweed. Whether following the life cycle of a monarch or watching a hawk having supper on the roof of our house, I have learned to see God in all of it.

I have learned to sit in awe of my Creator. There is beauty in a spider web stretched between evergreen branches, mist-covered strands glistening in the light of the rising sun. Or in a rain drop on a lilac leaf producing a myriad of colours as the sun's rays begin the evaporation process.

Whether it is watching baby robins hatch, listening to the courtship song of the male wren, or watching a night hawk sleep away the day in our willow tree, I am inspired to praise God for His love and provision. ■

Elaine Enns is part of Fort Garry EMC in Winnipeg, Man.



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.