

The Messenger

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More churches are needed this year

THE ALL Boards Visioning Meeting was held on February 28. More information will follow by actions of the five national boards, by what General Board representatives take back to their regions, and more. Your pastor or regional representative should be able to help you with information.

To grow, the EMC needs to plant more than one church per year. While that's a jump from our current growth rate, we have a biblical calling not to be content with meeting only our current needs in Canada.

- Remember why we're doing this: People's urgent and ultimate needs are met in Jesus Christ; the church is Christ's blueprint for humanity. The more churches we plant, the more needs we meet.

- Local churches will vary greatly in style and culture, but are to be committed to Christ

and to each other. By the grace of Christ, we must move beyond past successes and past mistakes.

- Regions need to commit to planting one church at least every three years. Ministerials need to do more than dream; they need to research, to do grunt work, to identify and assign people, to be collectively committed to such church starts.

- I agree with the thought that churches need to give away some of our best people. We need to say, "Pastor, you're good at reaching out. That's why we want you to leave and plant a church. Businessperson, you have the skills of a church planter. Church member, you're a stable gifted person who is needed elsewhere."

More churches are needed this year. Let's get to it!

Terry M. Smith

Numbers don't matter?

SOME PEOPLE might say, "Why plant more churches? You don't need numbers for success. You just need to be faithful." Right and wrong.

Yes, there are situations where there is little immediate opportunity for church growth; in some situations, survival is success. Faithfulness in Christian witness is not decided by how others respond. Paul was faithful even when stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19-20). But that's no reason to be content to play dead.

Most Canadian churches should not be satisfied to hold their own. To describe that as "being faithful" is highly questionable. At best, it is being partly faithful.

If numbers are not the point, what numbers exactly are we talking about? And what do the numbers represent?

If numbers represent people included and helped, needs met and priorities shifted to serve others, this matters. A church that is not gearing up to touch more people's lives exists for itself; it risks becoming a small package indeed. It has partly forgotten what Jesus meant when he said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8).

Most people care less about what name is on the outside of a church building than about what happens inside it—and if they are truly welcome.

A congregation's financial sheets, the size of its building and the number of its programs are of relatively little interest in themselves as mere statistics. What is critical is how people's needs are being met in Christ through his human community, the church.

The church by its nature is to expand. We are to reach out, include and grow because it is normal for a family to grow. Numbers matter because people do.

A census taker showed up at a house. A mother was asked, "Who lives in this house?" "Well," she said, "there's Jane, Billy, Peter, and Joey. There's Monica and Lisa and...." "Ma'am," the census taker said, "I don't need the names. I just want the number."

The mother looked at him and said, "No one who is *just* a number lives here." She was right, but she also knew exactly how many children she had.

Numbers matter because people count.

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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The Gift of Love

John Schlamp

I WANT to begin with a confession: I need you. Christianity depends on other believers. You support me in my attempt at experiencing and knowing God. We stand as a group before our Maker. As we bring ourselves to each other, we support each other in our common humanness.

It is good for us to take time to say thank you to people who actually do the work of keeping church going. We need to acknowledge that to function as a group we need volunteers to contribute heavily.

We need those of you who care for buildings and maintenance, who make it possible for potlucks together, and those willing to share their food. We need worship leaders, song leaders, Sunday school teachers, Christmas program organizers. I dare say (though you might dispute this) that we need preachers. We need and are grateful to everyone who contributes to our well being together.

I resisted this topic of gifts. As I wondered why, some reasons suggested themselves.

We engage in navel gazing

First, it seems that when we take 1 Corinthians 12 alone, we engage in navel gazing. We ask ourselves which gifts here do I have? If it is preaching, then it would seem that I should be the best, most popular preacher; otherwise, what is a gift if everybody has it? Does the text not say “to some” He gave? If I am not the best Sunday school teacher, does it follow that I don’t have the gift and I need to move on to something else? And if that likewise fails? Am I then giftless, forgotten, ignored by the God I worship? Like too much fudge at Christmas, too much attention on my abilities seems detrimental to my health.

Gifts are associated with success

Second, gifts have been too closely connected with success. If my business

is doing well, God must be blessing me or giving me the gift. Yet Jacob, that trickster who stole the birthright from Esau, found that winning was not the only worthwhile experience.

Later in life he decided to return to meet his brother. He arranged the meeting—with young animals for gifts—so Esau could not refuse. But an angel met him and they wrestled all night. That morning, with a twisted hip, Jacob met his long-lost brother.

Jacob was a new person (Genesis 32). He had failed, lost the wrestling match, but it turned out to be his gift. He won by losing, rabbi Harold Kushner says. Unlike Jabez whose prayer was to have his property holdings increased and gets it, Jacob the patriarch lost a fight but he was better off for it. Success and gifts are different things.

For church leaders only?

Third, it appears to zero in on the church leadership roles only. It sounds as if the only way to contribute anything to this world—of interest to God, at least—is church leadership. I sometimes have that feeling at EM Conference annual meetings. We are told about the needs of missionaries, but never a word about us working stiffs making any contribution to God’s intent here on earth. Those who make and contribute lots of money to EMC missions are second-rate persons.

We need to figure out that this world and its God need people to keep civilization going. We can then appreciate that our lives are special contributions we can and do make to each other. Wally Kroeker says “God’s week has seven days.” All of us are important and we make valuable contributions; by our very being we are valued members.

Not so narrow

Clearly not all of us fit into the few categories listed here. However, there are indications that Paul did not see it so narrowly as I make it out to be. He describes gifts as being from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:1). If whatever we are or have is extended to us from an outside source, that puts a new light on the subject.



John Schlamp is a member of Aberdeen EMC in Winnipeg, Man.

You and I are God's gift to each other and to the world. Our strengths and, perhaps even more so, our weaknesses are our gifts to each other. Those things that are our strengths we often do naturally; where we need to exercise is in the business of love. From loving ourselves, realizing that we are lovable and loved, sharing love so that we can again receive it back, then we can come back to the gifts conversation.

We can no longer be so sure of ourselves and of our own gift. Perhaps the person who seems so "without" is also God's gift to you. Perhaps the person who seems to be lacking in spiritual abilities needs me and what I have to let blossom the gift buried within them.

Another indication that Paul thought this was a broader subject is his emphasis on varieties (12:6). There are various ways of serving, many different kinds of endowments. Before he pens a list of gifts he indicates that the variety is huge.

Leave aside the details. Commentators say that chapters 12 to 14 should be seen as a unit; you need only read the headings to see that. What I had not noticed before is the intricate connection that the so-called "love chapter" (1 Cor. 13) has to the idea of gifts. It sounds like Paul is saying, "You better think carefully about investing in spiritual gifts, but if you don't invest in love, you will never increase your holdings."

Rachel Naomie Remen says in *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, "Perhaps the worth of any lifetime is measured more in kindness than in competency."

Kindness, love, being present for the other—these are what have real buying power.

What lasts

Imagine that I am in the last stages of terminal cancer. You sit with me. When Kathy returns, I open my eyes and in an unusually clear moment ask her to tell me how the congregation responded to my last sermon, or how my RRSPs did last quarter, or if our son Arlyn has finally brought the company to the number one position. Surely you would sink deep down into your seat in shame.

If at such a moment I did not say, "I love you, sweetheart," you would realize I had lived my life for nothing, to gain stuff that would disappear. If I had loved Kathy better something would remain—but of stuff nothing remains, not even of the gifts.

Mitch Albom, in *Tuesdays with Morrie*, writes about an old professor's last days with terminal illness. On his deathbed, "He told his friends that if they really wanted to help him, they would treat him not with sympathy but with visits, phone calls, a sharing of their problems..." (p. 12).

Strange, isn't it, how at crisis moments like these we know what's important. At weddings we emphasize 1 Corinthians 13 as if love is only what will make a marriage possible. Then comes Monday and we are back to our busy life; there's no time for kitchen table stories; it's full steam ahead, acquiring, competing, doing, getting.

During a meeting at Aberdeen EMC I had an unexpected pleasure. We were only a few people and even the younger people did not have their close friends here. At the back were Rachel and Steven, two people a quarter of my age, sitting on stacks of chairs. I stopped and made comments in my usually strange fashion and these two people responded with grins.

Rachel and Steven acknowledged me as a person and their kindness found a place in my heart. These two young persons would not likely describe an old man as a good friend, and perhaps it was that exactly that made it so good for me. Perhaps kindness or love is shown better by recognizing people one doesn't have a natural affinity for than friends one enjoys.

Rabbi Harold Kushner says in his book *Living a Life That Matters*, "I believe in you. I believe that you have the ability to do great things, things that will change the world for the better." He tells us that by living with integrity and honesty, by kindness and love, that we are sharing our gifts with the world around us and affecting it in drastic ways.

You and I are God's gift to each other and to the world. Our strengths and, perhaps even more so, our weaknesses are our gifts to each other. Those things that are our strengths we often do naturally; where we need to exercise is in the business of love. From loving ourselves, realizing that we are lovable and loved, sharing love so that we can again receive it back, then we can come back to the gifts conversation.

When we begin from love—when we acknowledge that love is the ultimate overarching gift—we can say, "Yes, you have a gift for teaching children. You have a real gift for working with tools."

Death is a great equalizer. I've never been to a morgue, but I'm sure that a homeless person from Winnipeg's Main Street and Billy Graham, George Bush and me all would seem the same. There is another equalizer far more powerful than death. In love, young and old, rich and poor, homeless and powerful all are nose to nose. Death is a constant that perhaps does not change the world, but love changes us and changes and improves the world.

Rachel and Steven, you changed my world. ■

Temporary or eternal: What was I thinking?

Pastor Lincoln Vellacott

WHAT IS the most expensive or valuable thing that you own?

What is something that someone else has that, as the cliché says, is *to die for*? What is one of the greatest experiences you have ever had, or something you hope you will experience before you die? Last year it was exciting to do the play-by-play for the broadcast of a local hockey game. I always wanted to do that.

At Christmas I was given the book *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. Reading through the early chapters, I came across the verse to leave with you. Maybe it will act as something that will possibly clear and straighten our thinking.

Have you ever done, thought, planned or acquired something and then shaken your head and asked, “What was I thinking?”

Let me ask some personal questions. Who owns that vehicle parked in the driveway or the place that you live in? Or your beautiful clothing? Or the money in church offering plates—or in wallets, purses and bank accounts for the rest of the week?

Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” Matthew 25:14 reads, “Again, it [the kingdom of heaven] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.”

The stuff doesn’t belong to us

All of this stuff around us doesn’t belong to us. It belongs to the one who is our master. We are his stewards or servants. He has entrusted some stuff to our care. He has allowed us to hold on to it for Him for a little while.

I want to go on from talking about our stuff, to talking about the things that we often take pride in. Maybe it is the things we can do, or the degree, diploma or certificate that we earned.

Perhaps we figure we could boast

about our family—that they have always been religious or that there are no scoundrels in your family tree. Maybe we’re proud of a record, top marks, being a star player, or a trophy.

When I entered seminary in January 1986, I was 21. Friends and I concluded that I was the youngest student at Canadian Theological Seminary and the youngest student to attend that seminary. It had more to do with my schedule and undergrad degree than any brilliance on my part, let me assure you. But it was a record of sorts—broken by this time, no doubt, as happens to most records.

As I mention my informal record, some of you might remark: “Big deal!” You’re right. The apostle Paul would agree with you. In Philippians 3 Paul talks about all the things in his life that he could possibly be proud about or boast in. Then Paul says compared to gaining Christ and being found in him, he considers these things rubbish. Let me ask this question: Who really loves rubbish? Does anyone think it worthwhile to spend their life gaining rubbish?

In Acts 20:24 Paul says, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.”

This stuff doesn’t amount to much

I want to go on to talk about how long the things on earth last. From 1 John 2:15–17 we are told, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

This stuff is temporary

Further, all of this stuff around us is temporary. The world and its things are passing away. If we have something that is a couple of decades old we think that it is really old. Antique dealers may have something a couple of hundred years old. Museums might

Lincoln Vellacott has been pastor of Pineridge Fellowship Chapel in Hudson Bay, Sask., since January 1997. Together with their three children, he and his wife Marilyn are moving in May to take up a ministry as CSSM missionaries with Kenosee Lake Bible Camp in the Moose Mountain Provincial Park (Southeast Saskatchewan).



have a few items that are a few thousand years old. But that isn't long compared with eternity.

The writer of James says that even our lives on this earth are like a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. In Psalm 39:4, David asks the Lord to remind him how brief time on earth will be and that life is fleeing away.

Rick Warren says in *The Purpose Driven Life*, "Compared with eternity, life is extremely brief. Earth is only a temporary residence. So don't get too attached" (p. 47).

Elsewhere Rick says, "When you fully comprehend that there is more to life than just here and now, and you realize that life is just preparation for eternity, you will begin to live differently. You will start living in light of eternity, and that will color how you handle every relationship, task, and circumstance.

"Suddenly many activities, goals, and even problems that seemed so important will appear trivial, petty, and unworthy of your attention.

"The closer you live to God, the smaller everything else appears. When you live in light of eternity, your values change. You use your time and money more wisely. You place a higher premium on

relationships and character instead of fame or wealth or achievements or even fun. Your priorities are reordered.

Keeping up with trends, fashions, and popular values just doesn't matter as much anymore" (pp.37-38).

Here's the verse to keep close throughout the year: "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

Do we have the outlook of :

*This world is not my home,
I'm only passing through
My treasures are laid up,
Somewhere beyond the blue
The angels beckon me From heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.*

Scripture tells us that we are aliens and strangers in this world. We are Christ's ambassadors. This is not our homeland or permanent residence. Our citizenship is in heaven.

Jesus said in Matt. 16:24-26, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The biblical principle for us and for our lives is Jesus' words: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matt. 6:19-20).

Don't be duped and mesmerized by what is seen and what we often grasp for, but which is temporary, can't really be owned and doesn't amount to much. Fix your eyes on the unseen, that which is spiritual and of God—the things which are real treasure, that will last and we will enjoy forever because they are eternal.

Here's a story from Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life*: "A retiring missionary was coming home to America on the same boat as the president of the United States. Cheering crowds, a military band, a red carpet, banners and the media welcomed the president home, but the missionary slipped off the ship unnoticed. Feeling self-pity and resentment, he began complaining to God. Then God gently reminded him, 'But my child, you're not home yet.'

"You will not be in heaven two seconds before you cry out, 'Why did I place so much importance on things that were so temporary? What was I thinking? Why did I waste so much time, energy, and concern on what wasn't going to last'" (p. 51).

In a song Helen H. Lemmel tells us to

*Turn our eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace.*

Will you do that?

Will you pursue the real things of the Lord, which will often include saying no to the temporary trinkets and temptations that seem to sometimes have us mesmerized on this earth? May our Lord and His glory and grace cause all other things to dim in comparison. Let's fix our eyes on the eternal things of the Lord. ■

**Spring Intensives
Evangelical Anabaptist
Seminary program
Winnipeg, Man.**

Old Testament theology (3 cr.)
Pierre Gilbert, Ph.D.
April 19-23, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

*Preaching the Sermon
on the Mount* (2-3 cr.)
Herb Kopp, M.A.
April 26-30, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Book of Revelation (2-3 cr.)
Loren Johns, Ph.D.
April 30 (6 to 9 a.m.),
May 1 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.),
May 3-7 (9 a.m. to noon)

All courses are held at Canadian
Mennonite University

Credit students (3 units): \$460
Auditors: \$125

For information, contact:
Pierre Gilbert, coordinator.

Office: 204-487-3300
E-mail: pgilbert@cmu.ca

With Our Missionaries

Impact awaits as AIMM changes

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM), founded in 1912 as the Congo Inland Mission, has decided to drastically reshape the way it relates to and serves Christians in Africa and North America. It's downsizing its North American office and moving significant decision-making powers to Africa.

"This restructuring really breaks new ground in an important way," says AIMM transition coordinator Dave Dyck of the change. "We want to move decision-making to Africa where the programs happen, involve North American churches directly with churches there, and make sure that African Christians are intimately involved in the decisions that affect their lives."

AIMM plans to do this through partnership councils made up of representatives of mission agencies and churches from Africa, North America and elsewhere. They will meet in Africa and create beneficial programs.

"Christians in North America have spoken loudly and clearly: They want more direct involvement with missionaries and churches in Africa," says Dyck. "They don't want staff in a head office in North America to control their involvement in mission."

The remaining North American-based staff will assist direct relationships between North Americans and partnership councils in various African countries. Dyck continues, "We want to assure a new level of flexibility while at the same time

ensuring the best mission practices. We want to be sure to create space for the growing mission capacity of the African churches."

Consequences of this are the sale of AIMM's office and the release of the present staff. As of June 30, executive secretary Garry Prieb, controller Wade Handrich and clerical assistant Sharon Whitacre will have completed their terms of service. Assistant executive secretary Leona Schrag will serve as office administrator on a three-quarter-time basis. She will work with Dave Dyck during the transition process. Schrag will work out of rented office space in Goshen while Dyck works out of his office in Winnipeg.

It is anticipated that proceeds from the building's sale will be used to support mission activity in Africa, says Dyck. He says that the funds could be used to assist African churches to support their own missionaries—for example, churches in the Congo sending missionaries to other African countries.

The changes may be unsettling to some long-time supporters. "But we believe that this is the way forward in missions today," says Dave Dyck. "We think our long-time supporters want to make sure that AIMM continues to be relevant today and proclaim the Good News in the future. The message will be the same, even if it is being done differently."

The agency intends to formalize the changes at a consultation June 2 to 5 in Elkhart. Participants will include representatives from AIMM's present and potential partner agencies, including African Mennonite churches. AIMM is a partnership of North American Mennonite conferences working together for the sake of the gospel.

For information concerning the transition, contact Dave Dyck (dmdyck1@mts.net or 204-663-4342) or EMC General Secretary Len Barkman. For information on the ongoing work of AIMM contact Len Barkman.

AIMM

The Well is Dry /Challenges in Congregational Caregiving

The Well is Dry /Challenges in Congregational Caregiving, a seminar presented by Joanne Klassen, counselor and director of Recovery of Hope counselling service. This workshop will discuss ways to walk effectively with those in our congregations with multiple problems.

The workshop is for pastors, deacons, ministerials, small group leaders and other congregational caregivers. Come for a day of replenishment and nourishment of your soul.

May 7 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man., or May 14 at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man. Call Eden Health Care Services for information at 204-325-5355 or Recovery of Hope 1-866-493-6202 (toll free).

Have you got your copy?



Come See What God Has Done

\$10 plus shipping from the EMC office.

People Movement



Helena Guenther of Aylmer, Ont., is beginning a one-year MCC assignment in Aylmer as receptionist/settlement worker. Guenther obtained a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Steinbach Bible College. She is married to John Guenther. They are members of Mount Salem EMC.

Project Macedonia 2004

Belize, An Exciting Summer Mission for July 2004

July 9 to August 2

Ministry: in Spanish villages; in Blue Creek, Spanish Lookout, and Shipyard; youth ministry; work project: build a school on the colony of Shipyard.

Applicants must be 18 or a high school graduate. Each member needs to raise about \$2,000 Canadian for travel, passports, inoculations, accommodations and insurance.

Application deadline is May 15.

Contact:

Gerald D. Reimer
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204-326-6401

With Our Churches



On March 21 the congregation at Evangelical Fellowship Church in Fort Frances, Ont., crowds the platform.

Potlucks restarted at Evangelical Fellowship Church

Fort Frances, Ont. : It was a sunny Saturday afternoon on March 20 in Fort Frances, Ontario. Pastor Jeff Plett waited for me at Evangelical Fellowship Church, located at 560 Webster Ave., just off the main route through this town of 9,000. We went for supper, then Jeff led the way to my lodging at Ike and Bonita Friesen's home near Emo, about a half-hour from Fort Frances. Ike is congregational chairman.

On Sunday morning the adult class discussed, in part, the strengths of the congregation. Those gathered shared how long they have been with the congregation. While most people present have been involved in congregational life for several years, I heard that some people have been involved in the EMC for "hundreds of years."

It was my privilege to preach during the worship service, and even more my privilege to meet the congregation. EFC had decided to restart potlucks for each second month; one came on this Sunday.

Many stories could be told of Craven, Bell, Rittau, Barker, Martens, Lowe, Hicks, Plett and more. In truth, I know next to none of these stories, but efforts of EFC carry on.

On Sunday afternoon I drove back to Mitchell, Man., facing only light traffic. During the tourist season heavier traffic

will come through Fort Frances and wider northwestern Ontario.

There is only a relatively narrow strip of farming near the U.S. border. As editor Menno Hamm reported in his profile in 1992, logging, tourism and a paper plant are major draws to the area.

EMC has had a church in Fort Frances since 1987.

Henry and Tina Kornelsen served as pastoral couple from 1987 to 1992.

John and Becky Hiebert served from 1992 to 1995. Pastor Jeff and Laural Ann Plett have been serving since 1997, the longest-serving pastoral couple in the church's relatively short history. Thanks, Evangelical Fellowship Church!

Terry M. Smith



Laural Ann and pastor Jeff Plett have served the congregation since 1997. Jeff was ordained as a minister at Prairie Rose EMC. Pletts have served in Germany as church-planting missionaries under the EMC. They have four children. (photos by editor)

A joyous event at PEC

Portage La Prairie, Man.: My name is Sherry and I received Jesus as my Saviour at the age of 8. My mother had been raised in a Christian home. She backslid in her teens. It was in that state that she met and married my dad.

My grandmother was a very strong Christian woman and continued to pray for my mother and my family. I believe it was through these prayers that my mom started to watch 100 Huntley Street and Rex Humbard on TV. Through one of these programs she rededicated her life to Christ and also through these programs and my mother that I gave my heart to Jesus Christ.

Within a year or so my father became a Christian. Unfortunately this was to make my mom happy and not for the right reasons. He received a lot of ridicule from his family. He went as far as attending Peace River Bible Institute. We had been there six months when he was attacked by Satan through one of our extended family members who accused him of not supporting his family properly, among other things. This was the last straw. My dad moved us from there and that was basically the end of his Christian walk. My parents divorced when I was 14.

My mother continued to raise us through the church, which is where I met and married my husband. We dedicated our first two children at Grace Bible Fellowship where we were married.

When our oldest was three we moved away and didn't get involved in any church for some time. Although I didn't go to church I knew that it was something I should be doing. We floated along in this state for quite a few years.

In 1992 we moved again to northern Ontario. I was feeling a pull to attend church. I knew that it was something my children as well as I were missing. The church that I attended was a very charismatic church. There was a lot of dancing in the aisles and I found myself more and more often praying to God saying, "If this is how they want to worship You, then that's between You and them." It got to the point where I wasn't getting anything from the service as I was constantly saying this.

I started taking my children to a Baptist church. I would take them to Sunday school and pick them up afterward and go home. There were only a few times I would actually attend a church service myself. This did not lead to very much spiritual growth and was not a very good example to my children.

During this time I became friends with a woman who had also been raised in a Christian home. I found myself talking with her more and more about God and Christian living.

When we decided to move to Portage, I decided that I wanted to be active in a church and prayed that God would help me find one that had a strong youth program for my children, as they didn't have that where we came from. We were led to this church and felt comfortable from the very first and didn't look any further. I appreciate the friendship and prayers from so many of you here. Thank you for making me feel a part of this church family. I am so looking forward to growing with you spiritually.

About four years ago, in the spring, I had gotten this feeling that I should be baptized. I didn't feel comfortable as I did not really have a home church. The next two springs the same thing happened. It was like the Holy Spirit was laying it heavily on my heart saying, "Sherry, you still haven't been baptized." I kept saying, "I know." This year I didn't get that message as I had already committed to getting baptized.

When pastor Glenn Loewen asked me if I had a favorite verse, I wasn't sure what to say. There were so many different ones that crossed my mind that say so much. In the end I decided to claim Proverbs 3:5-6 as my favorite: "Trust in the Lord your God



On September 12, 2003, Sherry Guenther was baptized at Portage Evangelical Church. Pastor Les Kroeker welcomed her into the membership.

with all your heart and lean not on your understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your path."

This is such a powerful verse and I pray that I will use it in my daily life. I can't imagine any better guidance than to have God directing my paths.

Acts 2:38 says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." So tonight I am standing before you in obedience to God. For this is what He has asked of me.

Sherry Guenther
Reporter: Catherine Epp

Deacon couple commissioned



Bernie and Irene Driedger were commissioned as Crestview's deacon couple on January 18.

Crestview (Winnipeg, Man.): As a church we felt the need to add more members to our ministerial team, so on January 18 we

clean-up afterward!

On Sunday, February 22, after lunch we had a family curling and potluck event at

celebrated with Bernie and Irene Driedger as they took up the challenge of being our deacon couple. Many of their friends and family came to share this occasion with them.

After the morning service, in which Bernie and Irene were encouraged in their new role, we shared a lunch in the basement. The youth group put on a tasty fundraising lunch of soup and breadsticks, with a variety of pudding tarts for dessert. Thank you, youth group, for all your hard work and, of course, for doing the

Rosser, Man. This was a casual event as no teams were made in advance; people formed teams as they came. There were also many who chose not to curl, but to watch, visit or play table games. The outdoor rink was also available which some used to try their luck with ice skating.

After a time of exercise, the potluck supper of soup, chili and desserts really hit the spot! As much as it is wonderful to spend time as a church body worshipping together on a Sunday morning, it is also refreshing to come together for the sole purpose of having some fun and socializing.

Darlene Wiebe



Youth group members and youth leaders were kept busy at their fundraising lunch at Portage Evangelical Church.



(Back) George Fehr, Ann Hume, Randy Hume, (front) Pastor Richard Klassen, Karen Fehr, Amanda Neudorf and Kimberly Siemens participated in a December 21 baptism and membership reception service.



Scot and Sheila Leys and Gwen and Cameron Peters were commissioned as elder couples on February 8.

New beginnings at High Level Christian Fellowship

High Level, Alta.: On those cold winter days, when all you really feel like doing is staying indoors, one often sits and dreams of spring. Spring, the season for fresh smells, fresh flowers, new life and new beginnings. At High Level Christian Fellowship Church we have had many new beginnings over the last few months.

On December 21, 2003, we had our third baptism and membership service in two years. Kimberly Siemens and Amanda Neudorf shared stories of trials, temptations, forgiveness and faith before they were baptised into the fellowship of

our church. In doing this, these two young ladies also became members of our congregation, along with Randy and Ann Hume and George and Karen Fehr.

February 8 marked the date of a commissioning service for our church's elders and wives. The message from Pastor Richard Klassen on the role of elders in the church challenged the congregation to live up to the Bible's outlined standards for elders, even though we may never be elders ourselves.

The commissioned couples, Scot and Sheila Leys and Cameron and Gwen

Peters, will be taking the spot of two previous elder couples. After the service, the new board of elders, along with Pastor Richard Klassen and his wife Kathy, took part in an afternoon potluck to welcome the two new couples.

As this is just the very beginning of a new year, we hope to have many more new beginnings taking place within our church. We look forward to what God is going to continue doing in our lives.

Desiree Krahn

Anything worth doing is worth doing badly

DOES THAT look like a printing error to you?

"Anything worth doing is worth doing badly" has been attributed to G. K. Chesterton and to Mike Moore. Now, surely, it should read, "Anything worth doing is worth doing well." But, no, it is correct, and I think by the time I'm done you will agree with me.

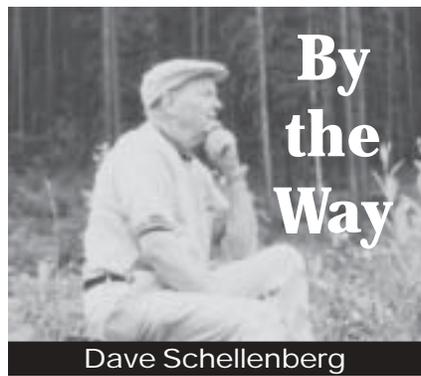
I have a habit of second guessing my statements and actions. In fact, I am not too ready to say anything. But sometimes I do, and later I start to think about it and wonder if I should have said that. I was perfectly honest and felt the Holy Spirit's prompting, even though it was on the spur of the moment. But it was not done perfectly.

This happened to me the other day when I asked a person which church they attended. The answer was they didn't attend any church. Oh! From the conversation we had I thought it would just be a matter of which church—but not attending any church. I felt bad for having asked that question. I should have kept quiet.

But my intentions were good and I should not have felt bad about it. I did not start this off by intentionally posing the wrong question. Because I am not perfect did pose what I later felt was the improper query.

When I came across this statement by Chesterton, I felt better about the question. Perhaps I had asked it with too many assumptions, but it still had been worth doing; I was consoled.

I think that the fear that we might do it poorly often keeps us from witnessing. I once went to a friend and asked him how I could witness to a person I expected to



do a job in my apartment. He said: Don't make plans beforehand. Let things take their course. Lead into it.

And so I did not have a master plan ready when the time came. It turned out beautifully. I was happy I had followed his advice, even though I had not carefully thought out plan. It could just as easily have gone poorly.

If our fear always stands in the way that what we plan to say is the wrong thing—that it will not be perfect and polished—we will often wait till it's too late to say anything. If what we have to say is worth saying, say it anyway, even if it does not come out perfect. Then learn from it. I determined to do that just recently and it turned out okay.

If I had first carefully analyzed what to say, I might not have said anything. But now I did open my mouth and it turned out well, I trust.

"Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." This statement, since I came across

it, has given me much assurance. It gave me a new feeling that if I do my best and I feel that it has turned out badly, I need not continue to blame myself.

Moore puts it this way: "Make friends with your imperfections and those of others. Sure it is important to strive to do well in what you attempt, but if your best efforts don't result in what you wanted to achieve, don't be too hard on yourself. It is more important to strive to improve than to insist on perfection." I think this is good advice.

"Anything worth doing is worth doing badly" has been liberating for me. If my intentions and motives were good and it turns out badly, I can desist being hard on myself by carrying a load of guilt.

Why don't you try this the next time you stand at a crossroads? Give it your best and leave the results to God.

SBC to host simulcast seminar for business leaders

On April 30, 2004, the Maximum Impact Simulcast: *The Qualities of a Leader* will include over 40,000 business professionals participating via satellite downlink in 500 churches across North America. Steinbach Bible College at Steinbach, Man., is participating as a local host site for the simulcast. Registration begins at 8 a.m. The simulcast runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Lunch is on campus. Cost is \$129.

Author and authority on leadership Dr. John C. Maxwell will be joined by such leaders as coach John Wooden, Zig Ziglar, coach Pat Summitt, executives from PepsiCo and Wal-Mart Stores, and leaders from West Point.

Seminar host Maxwell is the author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* and *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*. He founded Maximum Impact and INJOY, organizations dedicated to providing resources and training for personal and professional growth. He has addressed executives from Sam's Club, Chick-fil-a, Wal-Mart, Primerica, Mary Kay, and Indianapolis 500 Drivers.

The simulcast is open to churches in North America and will focus on qualities of great leaders. Based on the book *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* by Maxwell, each speaker will illuminate certain qualities akin to their personal careers and experience.

For more information visit www.maximumimpact.com/mis or call Susan Penner at 204-326-6451.



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



Try differently, not harder

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and the Church

Irma Janzen

IT IS only during the past several decades that we have come to understand the serious neurological damages that can occur when children are prenatally exposed to alcohol.

For many years parents, teachers and congregations have been frustrated and confused because some children were disruptive in Sunday school. Now we know that some of them have lived with an often invisible and until recently unidentified disability.

Today, although research is relatively new, we have some answers. Children who have been exposed to alcohol before they were born may be affected by a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD is currently being used as the umbrella term to describe a variety of disorders that are the result of the mother's alcohol consumption before they were born.

FASD affects the central nervous system. How the damage is revealed varies from individual to individual, depending on when during the pregnancy the alcohol was consumed and what part of the unborn child was developing at the time.

Some children are born with certain identifiable facial features while others have none of those. For some there are serious developmental or learning disabilities; some are brilliant but unable to sort through abstract concepts or learn from consequences. Many are easily distracted because they are over-stimulated and so they need quiet non-stimulating environments.

Many children who are affected tend to do what the people around them are doing without understanding inconsistency. That is why they are involved with Sunday school but when with friends mid-week do what their friends are doing even if it is totally different from their Sunday behavior. Many of us do this to a degree but we *know* what we are doing; we know it is inconsistent or hypocritical. Someone affected by FASD may not see that and all the talking we do will not give them that insight. That is simply the nature of the damage caused by the disability.

This leads us directly to the how to, the how do we respond. The obvious answer is not by talking more, trying to convince or to reason. That just ends up in more frustration, confusion and alienation for the person who is affected.

Try differently, not harder

The rule of thumb in being involved with people who are affected by FASD is to try differently rather than harder. That is a difficult thing to learn. However, people who have not been affected *can* learn to do that. A person who is affected may not be able to. We know that a person who is deaf cannot learn to hear; however, those of us who hear are able to learn sign language.

The challenge of how to do things differently continues. Some things are simpler than others—using the concrete, using movement and visuals rather than just speaking and trying to reason are among those that can be implemented more easily. I was very excited about the Christian Education program in a

church I recently visited. That congregation has groups for readers and non-readers rather than grouping by school grades. Children who choose may also attend classes for younger children. The leader we spoke to shared lots of practical ways of including all the children. Her main goal for a few of the children who are affected by FASD was that they learn that "God ain't made no junk."

She also said that what worked for them was to ask the children what they needed rather than telling them what to do. She said she was amazed how often they knew what to do and could work through their own issues (this might also actually work for children who are not affected). The pastoral understanding of these particular kids was that they understood good and evil and brought a unique perspective to the internal struggle between the two.

It was so obvious that the adults involved in giving leadership to these children respected the children, they appreciated their gifts, they sought to find their strengths and to affirm them.

Identifying the disability also seems important. Then both the person affected by FASD and the other people around understand the limitations and can begin to work with these children, youth and adults in appropriate ways (as we do when we build ramps for wheelchair users).

The damage to the central nervous system will not go away; it is there to stay. But as we work with understanding we can help to prevent or to protect from what are known as secondary disabilities. Secondary disabilities include low self-esteem, disrupted school experience, inappropriate sexual behaviour, conflict with the law, misuse of alcohol or drugs, bad work experiences and broken relationships.

Grapple with theology

The church also needs to grapple with theological issues and FASD. We may well wonder how our understanding of sin and redemption fit for people affected by FASD. We may ask ourselves whether people affected by FASD indeed have a deeper dependence on God's grace than those of us who depend to a large extent on what we do to try to obtain our salvation. These questions are difficult. There are no easy answers. In fact we may have to live without definitive answers, leaving all of ourselves entirely in God's hands amid the unanswered questions.

The church and FASD is a very *pioneering* area of ministry in 2004. I'd be happy to hear from people affected by FASD and members of their families. Let me know what you've learned and how God is continuing to teach you through FASD or through people who've been affected by it. Very little has been written about the Christian faith and FASD. I've begun to collect a few articles I'm finding and you can find these on the MCC Canada web site at www.mcc.org/canada/health.html. If you have stories or insights to share you can send them to me at 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3T 5K9 or ikj@mennonitecc.ca. ■



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.



**AGNES KORNELSON
1919–2004**

Agnes Kornelson (nee Nikkel), 85, passed away peacefully Thursday, February 26, 2004 at the Steinbach Bethesda Hospital. She leaves to cherish her memory her husband, John D., of Steinbach, Man.; sons Ronald (Sue) of Steinbach, Gordon (Becky) of Mitchell, Man., George (Chris) of Regina, Sask.; daughters Mary (Abe) Hiebert of Steinbach, Agnes (Jac) Friesen of Steinbach, Marge (Gary) McLean of Mitchell; 18 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; two sisters.

She was predeceased by her parents, Erdman and Maria Nikkel; eight brothers; six sisters; four half-sisters; as well as one great-grandson.

She was born January 24, 1919 in Rosenfeld, Man. Mom was baptized upon her confession of faith on May 29, 1939 at the Rosenfeld EMM Church by Bishop William H. Falk. She met Dad while working in the Rosenort, Man., area and they were married June 28, 1942 in Rosenfeld by minister Peter W. Friesen.

Mom made Dad's family her own, like the text at their wedding, found in Ruth 1:16, "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God." She also transferred her membership to the EMC in Rosenort. Their first few years together were spent on the Kornelson farm, followed by a brief stay in Dryden, Ont., at a CO camp.

They moved back to Rosenort for a short period of time and then decided to move to a farm in the Bristol, Man., area with their two sons. Here they lived in a small two-bedroom house and four more children were added to their family. Two years after the birth of their youngest child, the family was excited to move into a two-storey, four-bedroom house complete with running water and indoor plumbing. Circumstances required Mom to become an at-home nurse, learning quickly how to administer insulin shots.

Following a struggle with a heart condition for many years, Mom had

successful major heart surgery in 1996 and we thank God for granting us another eight years with her. After 49 years of living on the farm, Mom and Dad decided to move to Steinbach—first to an apartment, then into Woodhaven Manor.

Throughout their lives, Mom and Dad had the opportunity to travel to many places, such as Europe, Hawaii, Australia, Inuvik and Belize.

During Mom's life she was active on the farm and in the community, helping out at the museum as a volunteer on many special occasions. She spent many hours quilting with the Mission Sisters, as well as making blankets for her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. She was an excellent cook and seamstress, and enjoyed puzzling and playing table games. Singing was a passion of Mom's and this

was evident when she helped start the Mitchell senior choir. Mom and Dad both felt that it was their mission to help a young church grow and so when Evangelical Fellowship Church (EMC) was established, they transferred their membership and became involved. She was a kind, caring and wonderful wife, mother, grandmother and Oma, who will be sadly missed.

The family would like to thank Dr. Thiessen and the nursing staff at the Steinbach Bethesda Hospital for the compassionate care given to Mom.

The funeral service was held at the Steinbach Evangelical Mennonite Church on Monday, March 1, 2004 at 2 p.m. Interment followed at Heritage Cemetery. Arrangements entrusted to Birchwood Funeral Chapel, 150 Penfeld Dr., Steinbach, Man.

Her Family



**JAKE GIESBRECHT
1930–2004**

Call upon me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not (Jeremiah 33:3).

Jake Giesbrecht, beloved husband of Mary, father and grandfather, passed away peacefully at the Portage General Hospital on February 15, 2004, at the age of 73 years. Dad was born to Isaac and Helena Giesbrecht in Plum Coulee, Man., on May 3, 1930.

In Dad's late teens he acknowledged the spiritual need in his life. At the age of 19 he asked Christ to be his Saviour and was baptized on June 19, 1950, on confession of his faith. He was a committed Christian, loved the Lord and served Him with all his heart.

On October 25, 1952, Dad married Mary Loewen of Landmark, Man. In 1961 they moved to MacGregor to help out in the work of the MacGregor EMC. The church was a very important part of Dad's life. He was always actively involved in the church's work: he taught Sunday school, was a Captain in Christian Service Brigade, was a youth leader for a number of years and served many years on the Youth for Christ board.

For 27 years, he was actively involved in the Gideon work. He especially enjoyed visiting elementary schools and distributing New Testaments to the grade 5 students.

Dad is remembered by his friends as an active, honest and sincere community businessman. He formed the Norfolk Construction Company and built many homes and buildings around MacGregor and the surrounding area. In the early 70s he built the Thrifty Carwash and in 1985, Dad and his son Ivan renovated the Masonic Hall in MacGregor into the Giesbrecht Apartments.

On February 14, as his condition deteriorated, the family was called to be with him. Six of our family members were at Dad's bedside when at 12:55 a.m. on February 15 he was ushered into God's presence to life eternal. We believe that Dad has now joined the "great cloud of witnesses that is surrounding us" and in this we find comfort. We have the full assurance that he is now with his Lord and Saviour.

Dad was predeceased by his infant son Bradley, his parents Isaac and Helena Giesbrecht, two sisters and two brothers.

He will be lovingly remembered and missed by his wife, Mary; his children and grandchildren: Beverly (Winkler, Man.); Sheldon and Linda, Nolan, Candace and Megan (MacGregor, Man.); Ivan and Cheryl, Stephanie and Jenna (Landmark, Man.); Kenton and Sandi, Jeffrey, Katie, Angela and Jamie (Marshall, Sask.); Beryl and Reynold Brandt, Dustin, Alexander and Lynette (Carberry, Man.). He is also survived by three sisters, three brothers, many relatives, friends and acquaintances.

We keenly feel the loss, and yet we rejoice in the hope of our salvation in Jesus Christ—the hope of eternal life that will reunite us with him someday.

His Family



**LILLIAN FRIESEN
1937-2004**

Lillian was born in Kleefeld, Man., to her parents Jacob W. and Mary Friesen on August 18, 1937. She was the youngest in a family of 11 children. On Tuesday, March 9, 2004, at age 66, she passed away quietly to be with the Lord.

Lillian received her education in Kleefeld in the Gruenfeld School from Grade 1 to 8. In her late teens she attended Steinbach Bible Institute where she graduated with a diploma in Bible. She was a top student in her academic pursuits.

Lillian first entered the labour force at the Kleefeld egg grading station to assist with family income. After completing her Bible school training she gained further experience at Addressograph Multigraph, Winnipeg, in office work, but more important to her was the experience at Hull's Book Store.

She had a desire to serve in a ministry which led her to serve in the Western Tract Mission store in Saskatoon, to where she moved on January 1, 1965. From 1978 to 1982 she lived in San Francisco, California, taking treatments for depression and training as a librarian.

In 1983 she began librarian work at Aldersgate College in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. When the college ceased to function, Lillian obtained employment as a receptionist/librarian at the International Bible College nearby where she served for several years. By the mid-90s she was doing homecare until she was diagnosed with cancer in 2000.

Lil enjoyed books and cooking. Surprisingly, she could cook very tasty dishes considering that she lacked a sense of smell. She accumulated a great number of books which kept her abreast of the times with respect to the latest devotional, doctrinal and spiritual emphasis books. It was a pleasure to browse through her private library on those occasional visits to Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, where she resided.

Lil also enjoyed traveling. Over the years she has visited such places as Nova Scotia,

California, Mexico and, best of all, Israel. Ironically, though, when she finally determined to relocate to Manitoba it wasn't possible. Her physical condition had deteriorated too much and the frustrating mountain of bureaucratic complexity became painfully obvious. Unfortunately, family members could not be with her in her final months, weeks and days of life, much as she and we would have preferred.

Throughout her life Lil has been no stranger to physical afflictions. For many years she struggled with low self-worth and depression, victim mentality, anger and unforgiveness. She felt rejected and misunderstood until she finally experienced healing and victory. We believe she has forgiven and has been forgiven. All praise to Jesus for spiritual victory!

But the end was not yet in sight. Still to come were these challenges: fibroids, a hysterectomy, a badly shattered ankle resulting in a release from her employment and, last but not least, that cruel enemy, breast cancer.

That challenge was overcome with radical surgery in 2000. At that point, she chose to refuse chemotherapy and applied natural herbal treatment instead, which was costly but worked well for a while. In the summer of 2003, however, an MRI revealed a recurrence of the disease now in the bones, namely in the spine and rib cage. Progressively the cancer overpowered other internal organs.

In early December she had to be hospitalized. In January 2004 she was transferred to Pioneer Lodge and shortly thereafter transferred to Extencicare Nursing Home where she passed away.

Lillian was born again in 1951 at age 14. She received baptism and became a member of the Kleefeld EMC. Over the years she has been in fellowship with several denominations so that it would be fair to say she was a Menno-Bapti-Metho-Costal. Most recently she worshipped at Hillcrest Apostolic Church.

Our special thanks are extended to Pastor Carol Ferguson, Maggie Ridley and Alexina Carrobough for their ministry to our sister while in the hospital and care homes.

Special appreciation also includes the doctors and nurses of the Union Hospital in Moose Jaw as well as the nursing staff of Pioneer Lodge and Extencicare Nursing Home. A sincere note of appreciation to Todd Sjoberg, Parkview Funeral Chapel of Moose Jaw, for his compassionate assistance. Thanks also to Sheldon of Loewen Funeral Chapel.

Waiting to be reunited with Lillian are her siblings: Albert (Elizabeth) Friesen, Annie (Jake) Reimer, Mary Penner, Jake (Helen) Friesen, Betty Reimer, Dora, Abe (Mary) Friesen, Harvey (Doris) Friesen, Helen (Dave) Loewen.

She was predeceased by her parents; brothers Frank and Peter; sister Elizabeth; brothers-in-law Jacob C. Penner and Abe Reimer; sisters-in-law Mary (Jake), Adina (Frank) and Annie (Albert).

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14)

Her Family

Weddings

REMPEL - DUECK: Ernest, son of John and Maria Rempel of Leamington, Ont., and Carissa, daughter of Peter and Trudy Dueck of Arborg, Man., were married on February 14, 2004 in Winnipeg, Man., with Peter Dueck officiating. The couple lives in Arborg.

REMPEL - BUDALA: Anders Rempel and Suni Budala were married on December 27, 2003 in Blumenort, Man., with Barry Plett of Blumenort officiating.

Births

DUECK - to Jason and Natalie Dueck of St. Norbert, Man., a son, Ransom Matthias, on November 24, 2003.

PENNER - To Neil and Sheryl Penner of Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Sarah Denae, on January 24, 2004.

KOOP - to Monica Koop of Steinbach, Man., a daughter, Katie Patricia, on January 27, 2004.

WIEBE - to Pete and Agatha Wiebe of Aylmer, Ont., a son, Nolan, on January 28, 2004.

HARDER - to David and Anna Harder of Aylmer, Ont., a son, Ricky, on February 4, 2004.

FRIESEN - to Donovan and Kendra Friesen of Winnipeg, Man., a son, Ryker Zachary Kale, on February 10, 2004.

PETERS - to Derek and Heather Peters of Winnipeg, Man., a son, Jaxon Reece, on March 2, 2004.

DUECK - to Jason and Gaylene Dueck of Lorette, Man., a son, Evan Jeremiah, on March 20, 2004.

Correction:

KLASSEN - to Dwayne and Shannon Klassen, a daughter, Jasper N., on December 2, 2003. (Not as printed in the February 11 issue.)

Remember to register and make lodging arrangements early for the EMC Convention in Swan River, Man., July 2 to 4.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Steepprock Bay Bible Camp, near Birch River, Man., seeks **counsellors, handyman, cooks and speakers**. Camp runs five weeks starting June 27. Some wages are available for counselors, lifeguards, and speakers. The handyman, who could start in June, receives free room and board. The camp is geared toward First Nations people. Contact Ang Thiessen at 204-238-4244 or ang_thiessen@hotmail.com or Walter Oberlin at 204-734-4269.

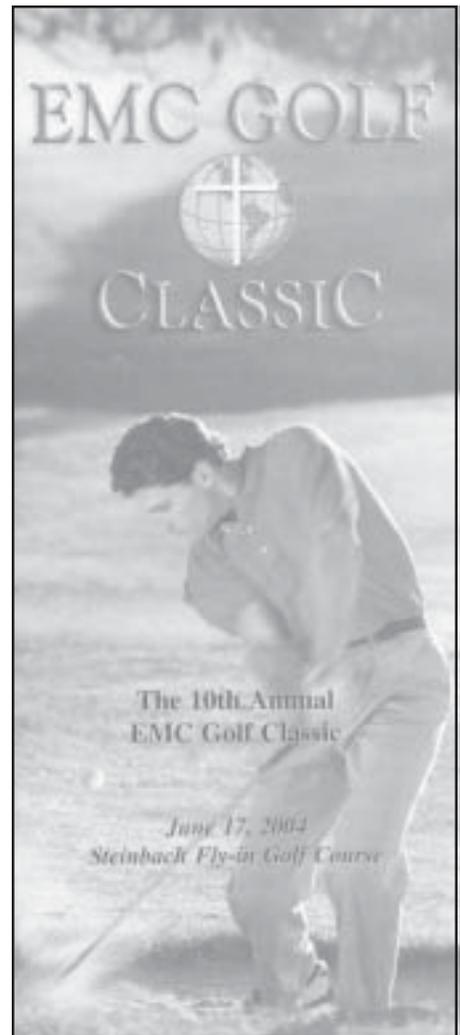
Pineridge Fellowship Chapel (EMC), Hudson Bay Sask., seeks a **full-time pastor**. The town has a population of 2,000 and serves an additional 2,000 people in the surrounding area. The warm, friendly congregation averages 75 for Sunday worship, with a cross-section of age groups and an active youth program. Our church family is from diverse church backgrounds and we are very much a community church. We offer a good remuneration package that includes a manse with heat and lights included.

Contact David Sparling, chair of the search committee, 306-865-2235 or e-mail d.sparling@sasktel.net.



**Reporters,
keep the news
coming!**

**Fetal Alcohol
Syndrome Presentation
(one hour)
May 16
Pleasant Valley EMC
Rosenort, Man.
Phone: 204-746-2008
or 204-261-6381 (MCC)**



For information phone:
204-255-8062
204-746-8200
204-378-5224

Please send registrations by
May 20 to Ruth Penner,
48 Newcombe Cres.,
Winnipeg, MB R2J 3T6

For information on Mennonites visit



Third Way Café
www.thirdway.com

The Personal Touch

A coincidence: Two girls and a wish

Gertrude Friesen

TUESDAY morning on our way to Invermere, B.C., we picked up a hitchhiker on the south end of Dry Gulch.

It was a cold -14 Celcius morning and we saw woman with her long coat and scarf flapping in the breeze, but nothing on her head. She was so grateful to get into a warm car. She was on her way to the SAAN store to exchange some wearing apparel she had bought yesterday.

"It is too small," she said. "I have been sitting on my behind all summer and I got fat." She didn't appear overweight, but we had no way of knowing what size she was before.

"I sat and drank beer all summer," she explained. "Last week I took in 800 empty cans."

We asked Becky how long she had lived here and she said 20 years. Then we mentioned that we had moved from Manitoba six years ago and she said, "Oh, I was born in Winnipeg and have been in Brandon, The Pas, and Flin Flon." Now we felt like buddies!

We stopped at SAAN and I overheard her say to a clerk, "I'm so embarrassed, but these clothes are too small for me."

It was the beginning of November and I dropped into the Dollar Store looking for items for Christmas Child shoeboxes. While I was at the till, Becky walked up and treated me like an old friend, asking, "What one shall I take?" She was holding black ear muffs in both hands—one had a plain black velour, while the other had tiny silver

sparkles in the fabric. "Oh, this one," I said, pointing to the sparkly one.

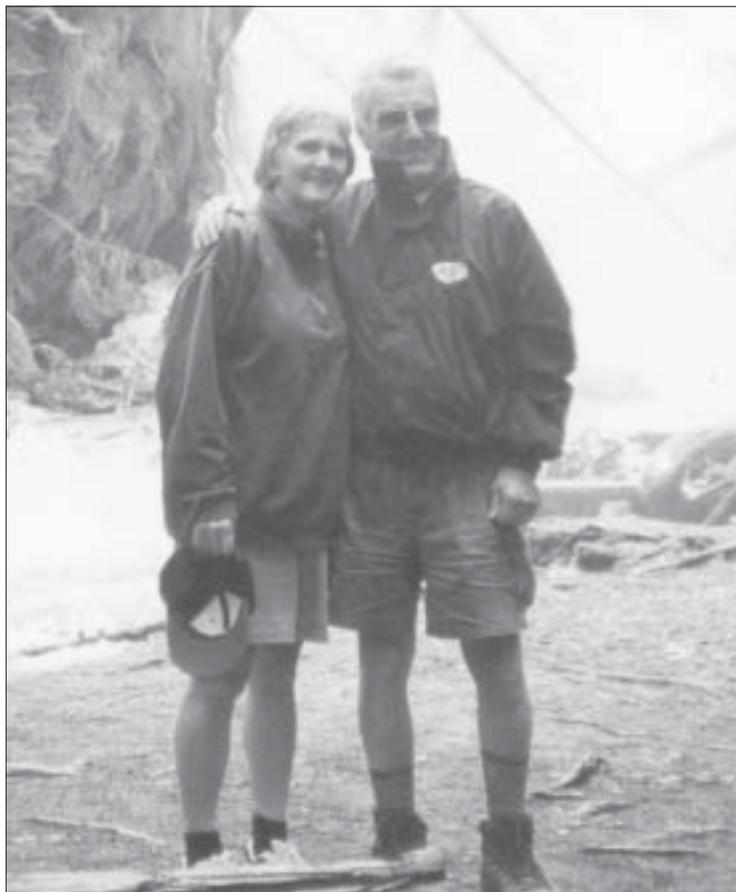
Then she asked when we were going back to Radium and if I saw her on the road to pick her up. There was a definite alcohol smell on her breath. We did not see her again.

That evening I walked a young woman dressed in a sari, a dress style from India. She was introduced as Francine. I asked a man if she was his daughter and he said no, laughed, and then joked, "She is my mother." Evidently she has worked at one of his construction jobs and now their paths crossed in Radium.

Francine said, "The reason I am wearing this outfit is because my friend told me to prepare myself to go to India and help the women there. They are less valuable than cows." She proceeded to tell me that she is giving away her clothes and she was wearing the traditional poor woman's clothes—pajama-like pants, a short dress-like top and a flowing scarf.

After Bible study, my heart was turning over the coincidence of meeting Becky and Francine in one day: one with 800 beer cans and needing new clothes; the other giving away her western garb and demonstrating her goal for the next while.

I have a fond wish that they could meet. ■



For the past six years Gertrude Friesen and her husband Frank have enjoyed retirement in the scenic area of Radium Hot Springs, B.C. Before that, they lived for many years on a farm in the scenic area of Swan River, Man., where they were involved in Community Bible Fellowship.

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.