

# *The* Messenger

## The Medieval Warrior and the Public Boast

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EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE  
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## Evangelical Christians and discrimination

**A**N APRIL 20, 2004, article in *The Globe and Mail* (*Key Martin aides debate June election*) said that Liberal pollsters were asking Ontarians whether they were “more or less likely to vote for the Conservative/Alliance if you knew they had been taken over by evangelical Christians.”

The article goes on to say, “This was clearly a campaign-style poll to test-drive a negative campaign against Mr. Harper” by “portraying [him] as a “right-wing extremist.” (Stephen Harper is the leader of the Conservative/Alliance party.) It is appalling that the Liberals are using religion, particularly evangelical Christianity, to discourage voters from supporting the Conservative/Alliance party in a possible June election.

Our constitution tells us we are to be free from discrimination based on religion. It would seem that does not apply when there’s a political election to win. Or when it’s evangelical Christians who are being discriminated against.

Christians sometimes gain the label of right-wing fundamentalist because they don’t share the views of other Canadians. Stephen Harper supported the war in Iraq, which could promote better relations between Canada and the U.S., but alienates the many Canadians who didn’t support the war. (While I don’t support the war, the portrayal

remains unfair to Mr. Harper.)

Many evangelical Christians have been vocal about not supporting same-sex marriage, which goes against the views of about half of Canadians.

The Liberals are attempting to portray evangelical Christians as backward right-wing extremists, people most Canadians don’t want to vote for.

Perhaps it’s time to counteract the stereotypes and do a little Christian self-promotion. This doesn’t mean snapping back at people who project their stereotypes on us; that would further the stereotype of evangelicals as small-minded. Rather, let’s really live out our faith by being excited about who we are, who Jesus is, and who we are in Him! (We can also write a kind but firm letter to the Prime Minister to express our displeasure with this discriminatory campaign tactic.)

The world will still see us as backward—but it certainly saw Jesus as backward—but we’ll be standing *for* something (for Jesus and how He calls us to live) rather than just reacting to what’s wrong in society. In a society that is corrupt and confused, we could certainly win a few points by standing for what’s true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8).

Becky Buhler  
Assistant Editor

## Spiritual hunger and a moving target

**T**HE DALAI LAMA gains a hearing in Canada. Millions of people attend *The Passion of the Christ*. Both events speak of the spiritual hunger of people in Canada and elsewhere. But where will they find their needs met?

Ironically, some people want to give up on the Church. They have been hurt. The record of such hurt is as old as the New Testament itself. But the Church has an ever-relevant message; at its core, it is people committed to Christ and to each other and to serving others in his name.

The Church offers new life in Christ, a life not to be lived in isolation. It is, as Pastor Layton Friesen reminded ministers in a recent devotional, a treasure that is worth selling all that we have to gain (Matt. 13:44-45).

Editor Dave K. Schellenberg said years ago that the EMC needs to change. “One thing we will have to face. In order to win [people] we will have to make concessions. Concessions that we can well afford to make because eternal issues are at stake,” he said.

“Let me add, lest I be misunderstood, I am not referring to Biblical priorities when I speak of concessions, but of those things often, that either attract or repel” (Jan. 7, 1966, p. 2).

Editor Schellenberg wrote that 40 years ago, and the EMC has changed a great deal since then. However, the need for change is never over. When we’re trying to hit a moving target, to stop moving is to miss.

Terry M. Smith

## The Messenger

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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 Medieval Warrior and the Public Boast

Arley Loewen, Ph.D.

**I**MAGINE the medieval age in the Persio-Islamic world. Likely, it was very much the same in medieval Europe. A king and his army marched out into battle. For the soldiers it was not simply another war, but another opportunity to prove themselves as heroes.

As armies faced each other, two warriors from either side stepped out onto the battleground in public view of their kings and armies. They were about to engage in a hand-to-hand single combat. It was like a public exam whereby warriors verified their manliness.

An important part of this combat was a ritual and very public boast. As he stepped into the arena of battle, he would dare an enemy to challenge him, “Come to the battleground! Show what manliness (valor) is all about.”

The warrior flaunted his battle horse and armour—the purpose is to intimidate his rival. He shouted his own name and by his bombastic talk, he sought to establish his identity and well-being before the watching armies.

The more heroic he was, the greater his worth among his people. His boast was an effort to boost his self-worth. Indeed, he went beyond the boast. He ridiculed and insulted his opponent, trying to destroy his rival’s heroism. If he could ruin the other person by verbal ridicule, it was almost as if he had won the actual battle. And then the battle began. The warrior’s one purpose in the battle was to hear the words, “*Well done!*” from the spectators, especially from the king.

Again and again the medieval texts speak of a warrior who set out to perform a public feat “so that as long as the world stands, people will talk about it.” For him, this social approval was his baptism of authentication. It meant that he was accepted, that he really belonged. This was his *glass of life*, or we could say *eternal life* because his name would continue to live on and on. He had to protect this *glass* at all costs.

On the other hand, to be insulted and

ridiculed was to lose public status and recognition. It was to lose face, which was, alas, worse than death. His glass of life had crashed, and nothing and no one could gather up the shattered pieces.

## The need for recognition

Even though we consider ourselves to be pacifists, the ways of the medieval warrior provide a vivid psychological reflection of all human behaviour. One of the most *fundamental struggles in human life is to gain approval from society*. Without approval or acceptance in a group, we do not really belong anywhere. We feel cut off and isolated, alone, almost as if we are dead. A person who is ignored is being treated as if he does not exist. To ignore or reject someone is, in one sense, social murder.

This need for approval is basic to human nature. From the first cry of a tiny baby to the last breath of a dying man, the human person longs for and needs recognition. Without it, he will die. This approval is his glass of life. Without it, his glass of life is destroyed and he has died.

**T**he public single combat is an ancient and most bloody struggle for recognition. The philosopher Hegel considered it to be the primordial struggle for recognition. Fortunately, the struggle is not always so bloody and deadly. Yet, indeed, it is still very much a universal struggle. The athlete has to win, the businessman has to make a profit, the student cheats to get first in class, the mother is determined that her child will be first in class. Why this obsession to win? For public recognition. Knights and warriors always said that an unnoticed deed is not a worthy deed.

## Recognition in religious practice

Even in religion, maybe even more so in religion, people feel they must achieve and gain approval in society. Religious leaders in Jesus’ day would pray, fast and perform their good deeds in public, or at least they would talk about their good deeds. Jesus said, they “have” their reward in full (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16)—the praise of men, the word “well-done” from society.



Arley Loewen, Ph.D., is a Literature and Persian culture specialist with Caravan Project, Central Asian Development Agency. CADA is a branch of OP Mercy. CADA is registered in the country and runs numerous projects: Kabul English Education Project, cultural research and literature projects, relief, reconstruction and community development in northern Afghanistan, and public health in rural northern Afghanistan.

Even in our own Christian spiritual experiences, we often feel we are in a public arena or public-square. Through our prayers, testimony, spiritual rhetoric, we engage in spiritual showmanship, hoping to gain approval and praise from those around us.

To be true, Jesus said that we should let our light shine before men so that people will *see* our good deeds. However, the purpose of performing good deeds is not to bring praise to ourselves, but so that people will praise our Father in heaven. This is completely different from a person who performs religious deeds for the “praise of men”; such a person is still seeking public recognition rather than seeking to glorify God.

Sir Lancelot is considered to be one the great legendary heroes of medieval England. Some medieval scholars have described him as one who had one single purpose in life: to gain public praise. He engaged in good deeds in order to gain a name for himself.

Walter Hooper describes a conversation with C.S. Lewis, the scholar of medieval literature:

We had been talking about one of our favorite books, Mallory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, and I mentioned how disappointed I sometimes felt when, say, Sir Lancelot went out to deliver a helpless lady from some peril or other. Then, just at that point where you can’t admire him enough for his selflessness, he explains to someone, as though it was the most natural thing in the world, that he is doing it to ‘win worship’—that is, to increase his reputation. We recognized it as an inheritance from Paganism.

Without intending any embarrassment, I asked Lewis if he was ever aware of the fact that, regardless of his intentions, he was ‘winning worship’ from his books. He said in a low, still voice, and with the deepest and most complete humility I’ve ever observed in anyone, ‘One cannot be too careful *not* to think of it.’ The house, the garden, the whole universe seemed hushed for a moment, and then we began talking again. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and other Addresses*, ed. W. Hooper (New York: Touchstone, 1996, p. 15.)

Perceptive as he is, C. S. Lewis

understood this obsession to “win worship” (praise) from society as pagan. In other words, it is the way of the world, not the way of Christ.

Now, in psychological terms, the human need for validation, authentication and a sense of significance is legitimate. Indeed, it is proper that we celebrate human achievement and acknowledge and appreciate a work well done. When we have received recognition we feel we have become human. As stated earlier, a person who is perpetually ignored will gradually feel less than human.

The problem is deeper, however. The desire to win worship becomes an obsession. None of us ever receives as much recognition as he feels he needs. Hence, we always feel less than human, less significant than others. We feel others have achieved more than we have or receive more recognition than we do.

It is for this reason that a person begins to boast about himself, to “talk” and to magnify his deeds. He engages in bombastic rhetoric and public performance of deeds, irrespective of his actual and real “walk” and inner character. His purpose: To build up his public image.

**A**s the person enhances and embellishes his life in the public square, if he is good at it, he begins to receive more attention, more approval. His personal rating in the court of public opinion has gone up.

But if the boast is not enough—and usually it isn’t, because this is not how we truly receive significance—a person moves on to criticizing, insulting and degrading others. Since he feels small and insignificant while others appear so important and large, he tries to cut off the other’s legs (criticizes him) so that he himself can appear bigger.

### **Grace is the basis for acceptance**

Boasting is a human and pagan effort to authenticate oneself before society and even before God. It is the way of the world. However, when we come face to face with the “grace of God” and understand its life-changing power from the depths of our hearts, the boast seems blasphemous.

When we realize that God has accepted us “in Jesus Christ” even though we are sinners and have tragically failed in the public arena, it is then that we are authenticated, validated and approved. Our acceptance is based not on our great performance, but because God loves us. We are His children.

We belong to Him. He has accepted us. He says to us “well-done.” In the divine arena of God’s love we celebrate and rejoice in this truth. As the apostle John writes: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1).

Such a person no longer needs to boast because he has received the divine approval that is greater than any praise from man. For those “beloved of God” boasting is cancelled. ■



# Opportunities abound for ministry in Africa

Seated under the mango trees serenaded by cultural music, over 100 people met on February 28 in Samogohiri, Burkina Faso, an almost exclusively Muslim village, for an important dedication ceremony of two volumes of Bible portions translated into Dzùungoo. In addition to church leaders and members, guests included civic and cultural authorities.

Seeking to bless the community, a Cyber Café has been opened as a service to the community while also providing a point of contact to share the Gospel with people who come for coffee or Internet access. A small nucleus of followers of Jesus seek to circumspectly share their faith stories with others. By God's grace a truly Wolof reproducing church will be planted.

Ninety-two years ago, workers with a

provision of permanent roofs for two chapels.

Be prepared to dance or preach if you join AIMM missionaries in Botswana, South Africa or Lesotho for a worship service in an African Independent Church, which could continue for several hours or overnight. African Independent Church leaders invited AIMM to send Bible teachers to give instruction to their church leaders, who often lack advanced education. Today some leaders taught by missionary teachers now lead classes to teach others.

African Independent Churches do not belong to any particular denominational church and AIMM does not intend for these churches to become Mennonite churches. The goal centres on equipping leaders so the churches can be strong Biblical churches.

Living in Southern Africa quickly alerts one to the crisis situation related to HIV-AIDS in this part of the world. AIMM workers have sought to minister in this crisis through various avenues: teaching God's standards, establishing a counseling center, starting a married couples club, teaching a morality course in the school system, working with youth, helping in an orphanage, and more.

Continuing and expanding these programs in six countries in Africa requires additional workers, financial contributions and faithful prayer support.

AIMM is a partnership of four Mennonite Mission agencies: Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Fellowship of Evangelical Churches, Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Church USA Mennonite Mission Network.

Restructuring of AIMM, presently in process, opens the door for direct church to church ministry and for multiple other connections between North America and Africa.

Join in the hard work, blessing, frustration and fulfillment of cross cultural mission for God's glory and for the building of His Kingdom.

Leona Schrag, AIMM



In Burkina Faso a dedication was held for two volumes of Bible portions translated into Dzùungoo. Among the leaders present were Ali Traoré, Fabé Traoré, Byema, and Abdias Coulibaly.

Since 1987 Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) workers had been living among Samogho people with the goal of Bible translation and church planting. What a day of rejoicing!

This ministry represents one way in which AIMM seeks to live out its goal taken from 2 Corinthians 4:5, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as servants." Work has begun among three other people groups in Burkina Faso whose unwritten language is being analyzed and recorded for the ultimate goal of Bible translation, evangelism and church planting.

In Senegal, among the Wolof, where the Bible is already translated, missionaries reach out in friendship evangelism.

newly formed Inter-Mennonite Mission (Congo Inland Mission, now AIMM), arrived in the then Belgian Congo to share God's message of salvation with Congolese who had never heard it. Today in the Democratic Republic of Congo AIMM relates to two established churches with memberships totaling around 100,000 who worship in hundreds of congregations.

Recently financial assistance from AIMM made possible evangelism and church planting visits by Congolese church leaders to the Bateke Plateau, an area resistant to the Gospel for many years. Following a trip made in February to May of 2003, the Congolese evangelists reported 37 baptisms including a tribal chief. During a more recent visit they helped with the



Team members worked on two construction projects in Nicaragua, but found that their greatest gifts went beyond their labours.

## Nicaragua

# Spiritual prosperity and financial poverty

Don Plett

**A** MISSION work project is a uniquely personal experience. No one comes home with the same memories and no one comes home with exactly the same experience—experiences of work and play, trust and faith.

We were sent to Nicaragua to do a job. We packed our suitcases with adequate tools and equipment to do a good job. Even before we left Winnipeg, we decided what we would need and made sure that once we got to Managua we would be out of the airport running. We took skill saws. We took welding rods. We took tie twists for re-bar. We took hammers, screwdrivers, chalk lines, electrical tape, ear plugs, electrical drills and paint brushes.

Once we arrived, we were met at the airport by pastors Arnulfo Vado and Ramiro Moreno. Our luggage was piled high and tied down on the pickup truck. We drove through dimly lit streets of Managua to our night's lodging at *Quinta Primavera*—the Mennonite Guest House.

Next day we worshiped with the Mennonite Church at Morazan and visited the active volcano, Santiago. That night at Camp Maranatha a local marimba band and a typical dance troop was out to help make our welcome colourful and musical. Monday morning it would mean getting to work. We all wondered how much we would get done in two weeks.

Next morning, to our dismay, we found out we only had a few boards to do all the forming needed to do the concrete work. To make it worse, the engineer had decided to go to Managua on an errand, instead of attending to our needs at the campground. We were worried. Hadn't we been sent to Nicaragua to help in the construction of the dining hall at Camp Maranatha? Is this all the lumber we get? No engineer until tomorrow, if indeed he would show up tomorrow?

Arnulfo noticed our anxiety. He gathered us around him and attempted to explain to us that this was all the material we had. He explained to us that the situation in Nicaragua is difficult. Nicaragua is in crisis. "We bought as much material as we were able for you to do the work," he told us.

We continued to be perplexed at how we were expected to do the job with so little material. By suppertime all the lumber available had been used up. Some

The Nicaraguan work team dates were February 7 to 20. The team members were (back) coordinator Don Plett (Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship), David Buhler (La Crete Christian Fellowship), Ben Plett (Springstein Mennonite Church), Dennis Friesen (Pansy Chapel), Brian Siemens (Pleasant Valley), Harvey Plett (Blumenort), Ray Giesbrecht (Winkler EMMC), Lee Gregory (Arborg Christian Fellowship), (front) John L. Plett (Blumenort), Menno and Elvina Hamm (MacGregor), Lawrence Dueck (Rosenort EMC), Dennis Kroeker (Arborg Christian Fellowship), and William Peters (Swift Current). Missing is Charles Brandt (Rosenort EMC).

(photos provided by Dennis Kroeker and Dennis Friesen)



hard questions were being asked. How are we justified even being in Nicaragua and not be able to work because of a lack of lumber? What is the price of lumber around here anyway? You mean to say for \$100 US we could get enough lumber to finish the project? It seemed wrong to even think of not going out and buying more lumber.

Over supper and throughout the rest of the evening we wondered what our task was really all about. Was this task about us Canadians, or was it about our partners, the Nicaraguan church? Had we come to help them, or was it about helping us? Who would be changed in the process, us or them?

We talked a lot, jokingly, sometimes nervously. Hadn't we been told during orientation in Winnipeg that we had come to build relationships? In fact, how much of what we were sent to Nicaragua to accomplish had anything to do with what we thought we were sent to build? Rice, beans, fried bananas, swimming in the lagoon, eating bunuelos and bajo and drinking coke. We went as strangers—we were becoming family.

And then during our visit at the Mennonite Church in San Jose de Gracia, pastor Maria de los Santos explained to us again that the situation was difficult. When someone is called to be a pastor "we take that very seriously." Although none of our pastors earns a salary, we have no vacancies in the

On February 7, fifteen adults flew to Nicaragua to participate in a two week work project with EMC Board of Missions. Once there, we divided into two workteams. The first team of six members went to the city of Diriamba where they worked on the construction of the initial stage of an administration building for a rehabilitation facility for street children involved in the drug and sex trades.

The second team of nine members worked on a dining facility at Camp Maranatha. When we arrived at the camp the foundation and three feet of cinder block wall were already in place. Over our time there, we welded sixteen purloins and installed them in a concrete girder, in an upright fashion in preparation for the installation of the roof purloins. On our final day there we were able to prepare and hoist two rafter purloins into place.

While work was intense, we looked forward to our daily noon hour five kilometre trips to the Laguna de Apollo for a refreshing swim. The motto soon came to be *No Laguna, No Cemento*. On the last day there we visited the typical market in Masaya. Next day, February 20 we returned to Winnipeg.

19 churches, the pastor said. In addition to the regular pastoral duties, many churches had places of outreach they attend to on a weekly basis.

The churches are growing and proud to be identified with the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith tradition, Maria explained, a tradition based on five hundred years of history. "That is why teaching Anabaptist History in our Bible Institute is important," Maria told us. As

we drove out of San Jose de Gracia, our hearts were warmed, remembering Maria's words. Words of passion, commitment and dedication.

Although they were struggling financially, we realized they were the ones to have given us richly from their spiritual abundance. The memories we would be taking home with us were of relationships built, and of spiritual prosperity in the midst of financial poverty. ■

## They also serve who hold the bags

RECENTLY I was invited to preach in one of our EMC churches. This is always an enjoyable privilege. I took the opportunity to give a brief report on EMC involvement in missions.



**Window on Missions**

Lester Olfert  
Foreign Secretary

administrative support. All are important and necessary.

There are so many people that serve behind the scenes. There are parents that bless and

release their children and grandchildren to go to another country. Volunteers stuff envelopes to send *Prayer Corps* letters and newsletters; they make a significant contribution. Board of Missions members serve by giving five or six full days a year to attend all-day meetings, plus some give two days of travel time for each meeting.

Local mission committee members that promote missions in their home church serve; the pastor that preaches the importance of going into *all the world* to share the good news of Jesus serves an important role. We could not do without the administrative assistants in the office or the editors of *The Messenger*.

Frequently there are volunteer work teams that go to help with construction and at the same time they encourage the missionary family. When they return, they begin praying more and give more regularly to missions. Young people that go on mission trips become motivated to serve actively in the local church or in a ministry in their community. They are important to building the missions vision.

I'm reminded of the story recorded in 1 Samuel 30. Two hundred of David's men became too weary to march farther to fight the Amalikites. So they stayed behind to guard the supplies. When David returned from battle, he made no distinction between them and the ones who had fought in battle. David said, "All will share alike." The Bible says that this became a guiding principle from that day on (1 Sam. 30:24-25).

Everyone is important in the Kingdom of God. Each person has a role to fulfill. No service for Christ is insignificant. God

Later as we reflected on the visit, I recalled *The Gift of Love*, an article written by John Schlamp. He states that, "All of us are important and we make valuable contributions; by our very being we are valued members." I agree wholeheartedly and would add that this widow's praying faithfully is as important as a missionary or pastor preaching the Word of God.

We definitely need more people that take intercessory prayer seriously. Why not pull the *Prayer Calendar* out of *The Messenger* right now and put it with your Bible so that you'll be reminded to pray.

However, I do think it is appropriate to feature missionaries at Annual Convention and Conference Council. By featuring a missionary we are giving broader exposure than is possible in any other way. It just is not possible that missionaries will visit all the EMC churches.

Cross-cultural ministry in other countries is a joint effort, an effort that often cannot be done by one church alone. Giving a missionary opportunity to report does not minimize the importance of the rest of the people that give financial, prayer or

## With Our Churches

### St. Vital to meet in new building

St. Vital (Winnipeg, Man.):



On March 28 a parent-child dedication service was held: Neil and Sheryl Penner with Sarah, Mike and Amy Toews with Kolby, Derek and Heather Peters with Jaxon, Jason and Natalie Dueck with Matthias, and Wes and Kellie Bergen with Tanner and Nicholas.

This photo was taken on March 26. We're hoping to move into our new building by the beginning of May. Come visit us at the corner of Warde and St. Mary's some Sunday. We meet at 10:30 a.m.

Participating in a December 7 parent-child dedication service were Michael and Melody Froese with Elizabeth, Jeff and Lynelle Thiessen with Delainey, Mark and Maxene Pelletier with Emma, and James and Mary Wahl with Sarah.

Heidi Friesen

### Item of praise for Pelly Fellowship Chapel

**Pelly, Sask.:** About a year ago our new young bride Connie and her husband Don Hamm found out that Connie was losing her hearing. Most of her hearing was gone in one ear and the other ear was deteriorating. As a church we prayed and sometimes felt that time spent waiting to get in to a specialist was just too long.

Finally, early in January her appointment time came. The result? She was told that her ears were healing themselves and that her hearing should, in time, return to normal. We rejoice with Don and Connie that this is happening.

Al Friesen, from Winnipeg, came the weekend of April 2 to 4 to minister in Pelly. We had anticipated this family seminar for some months and were not disappointed. As a church family we felt very blessed; Al had much to offer for each session.

The youth group has had a different event planned for most weeks. One Friday evening a month is set aside to gather at the Youth Centre in the village of Pelly. This seems to be turning out well. Most of the youth in the group are girls, but now some young fellows having been coming as well.

Vivian Anfinson



One of the activities the youth group did this past season was cookie making. Pictured with plates of cookies ready for delivery are Shayna Negraeff, Amber Frampton, Sarah Prokott, leader Twyla Johnson with Hannan, Tiffany Frampton and Caitlyn Cassidy.



Trailblazers are moving to the music. The bandanas were given to participants in the club.



Katelyn Friesen and Rebecca Krahn are two of the many Trailblazers.

## Trailblazers Kids' Club at Roseisle

**Roseisle, Man.:** *Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).*

This was the theme verse for our after-school club program that began on January 22. The overall theme for club was *Trailblazers: Following Our Faithful God*. Just under 30 energetic, enthusiastic kids descended on our church every Thursday, ready for action. Before starting the games, they were energized by a snack provided by generous volunteers.

Elaine Peters kept the action and noise level going as she involved the kids in a variety of games. Following the games, Faith Krahn led the music, which, at times, also got our Trailblazers moving. Pastor Randall encouraged Scripture verse memorization with variety of activities and actions.

After this general opening, the Trailblazers were divided in two groups. Our group went to the Bible story time and the other to the craft project. Ruth Harms was our storyteller. Using Bible lessons from the life of Peter, she emphasized following God, courage, persistence, trusting God and teamwork. During craft time, each student made a lantern out of a tin can—pounding holes so the candlelight could shine through and painting the outside of the cans with a variety of bright colours. Many teen and adult volunteers were ready and willing to help in every area of our club program and it was so much appreciated.

For our wind-up on March 4, we invited the parents to join us for supper at the

*Trailblazer Café* in our church. Many accepted the invitation, with approximately 70 people enjoying a meal of chili on a bun, veggies and dip, ice cream and toppings for dessert.

Our prayer is that the students will continue to grow in their love for God and desire to obediently follow and serve him.

Eleanor Friesen, Sunday School Superintendent  
Reporter: Nancy Peters

## Pastor, program and a prayer

**Straffordville, Ont.:** Our pastoral couple, John and Lorna Wall, are back in our midst and we welcomed them back with a potluck supper on April 10. Welcome home, John and Lorna—it's great to have you back!

While John and Lorna were gone, our church functioned quite normally. A big thank you to Ike and Maria Froese and the rest of the ministerial for the way you kept things flowing.

Our Programs Committee planned a program for the last Sunday of every month. In January, we had a Talent Night. Some hidden talents came out with people sharing in singing or playing an instrument. The evening was a real blessing.

In February, we had a Fun, Faspa and Fellowship night. The church got together at three o'clock in the afternoon for games. Then we had faspa (a light supper), followed by a time of praising the Lord in song.

In March, we were blessed to have a group from Tillsonburg, Church of Living Water, bring us a program. They took us through the Easter story with music and reading, a children's story, and ended with testimonies.

A couple from our church, John and Maria



Lorna and pastor John Wall have returned from a brief ministry in Mexico.

(Messenger)

Krahn, have left us to go to Paraguay, where they will be teaching school and doing music ministry. They left on March 22 and plan to return in December. Our prayer for them is that they would have courage and wisdom and that God would use them to bless others.

Margaret Berg

# Challenges of 2003 contribute to growth in 2004

**Wymark, Sask.:** 2003 has been a very challenging year, but then challenges come to everyone. The blessing in this is that we are growing and being strengthened.

A family with six children moved into a big house so we planned a big gathering for a housewarming. The kitchen was full of ladies, the front room was full of men, the basement full of children, and the table full of food. Praise the Lord. We sang and prayed for Philip and Helena Fehr to be blessed in their new place.

The Ladies Fellowship got together at the church to make blankets. This is our first project of the year. Around 40 were made and have been sent out. It was this reporter's birthday at that time so the folks had a big surprise meal for me; it was a wonderful day.

The Christmas banquet was very well attended and the program afterward held a good mix of young and old. The theme was *Christmas in Other Lands*. Phil and Claudia Olney (former missionaries) shared about the Philippines, Thomas Dyck told us about Belarus, and Lynette Wall spoke of being in Mexico as a missionary kid.

New Year's Eve—Blaine and Donna Friesen had the evening planned. We were divided into teams and given an amount of cash. The money was used to bid on the project we wanted to build, the construction materials, and a handicap.

For example, our team got to build the Eiffel Tower out of cardboard and with our right hands taped behind our back. When time had run out each project was inspected. Blaine then related it all to our need to be a team in our church with Christ in control.

The Valentine's banquet also had a good turnout of couples and a single to hear how the Lord had brought certain couples together. It was very entertaining to hear the stories for the men's point of view and then from the ladies'. God's hand was directing it all.

A number of students have been coming here from Millar College of the Bible. They have been a great blessing to all of us.

Please join us in prayer as we are searching for a pastor.

Holly Lightfoot

## EMC Youth Leader Retreat

October 15-17, 2004  
Wilderness Edge  
Pinawa, Manitoba

Speaker: Jim Harms  
Phone 204-326-6401



Jim Harms



Jake Fehr, Archie Neufeld, Nellie Dyck and Sylvia Neufeld presented music at the church Christmas banquet.

## Heading to the Philippines

**Abbeydale (Calgary, Alta.):** On February 1 the congregation was delighted to hear from Danny and Barb Hicks, missionaries waiting to leave for the Philippines where they will serve at Faith Academy in Manila, a boarding school for children of missionaries.

Barb has been a member of our congregation since 1990. She married Danny in February 1993. Since their marriage they have served in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, as teachers, house parents and sports director at Hillcrest International School; and in Suriname as supervisor of students studying by correspondence.

They returned to Canada with their children Veronica and Duncan in January 2002 so Danny could receive medical help

for chronic fatigue and to evaluate his ability to do future work overseas. They also used this time to meet with supporters and report to various churches in Canada and the U.S.

Before leaving for their next adventure, Danny wanted to become part of Abbeydale Christian Fellowship, his wife's home congregation. He told us about life in South Africa as an MK (Missionary Kid). At age 15 he made a definite choice to follow God and was baptized in South Africa.

"Believing in God is what makes life worthwhile," he said. After sharing his testimony he was formally welcomed into our church family.

Brenda Dick



Danny and Barb Hicks, with their children Duncan and Veronica, are planning to serve the Lord in the Philippines.

# Going out, coming home

**Morweena, Man.:** Leap Day was a memorable day for our congregation, as we gathered for an evening of short-term missions reports.

When we were ushered into the dining hall and found tables set up, complete with delicious snack food and drinks, we knew we were in for an enjoyable, informal and informational evening.

After some rousing singing, Ray and LaVissa Reimer took the stage and brought us some of the sights and sounds of their mission trip. Using video and a PowerPoint presentation, Ray and LaVissa took us through their six-week stay in Ecuador and Costa Rica, which was organized for them by REACH Missions, out of Rosedale, Ohio. They were there from December 2003 into February 2004, and were quick to point out that they'd gone from -50 to +40 degrees Celsius in one day.

They spent a good deal of their time at the Shekinah Foundation, a home for street kids. LaVissa did a lot of laundry and Ray did some devotionals with the boys, but their main focus was to give love to the children. They also spent some time in Spanish classes.

Their time in Costa Rica was a return for Ray, who spent nine months there a few years ago on a mission assignment with REACH. Ray and LaVissa subsequently honeymooned there. Now they were able to renew old acquaintances, visit orphanages, and do some construction work. The hospitality among Christians, they reported, was amazing; they stayed in only one hotel during their trip, and that was in Toronto.

During their travels, they saw huge cruise ships, crocodiles, communities with no access to hospitals, and kids who need a lot of love. One video clip showed Ray at an orphanage, lifting and flipping child after child over his shoulders, with no end to the lineup. LaVissa closed by saying that the trip was a real eye-opener, clarifying



Various church groups worked together on the MDS project in Jackson. Morweena participants were (in front) Reg Dueck and Nelson Loewen, (first row, first girl) Angela Loewen, Amanda Reimer, Brent and Delphine Loewen (team leaders), and (far right) Rachel Plett, and Wayne Reimer (middle row, left).

what's important in life.

Another report came from eight young adults who took time from their jobs to go on an MDS assignment to Jackson, Tennessee, from February 14 to 23. Ed Reimer, our MDS representative, was instrumental in coordinating this trip. Personal reports and another PowerPoint presentation gave us a glimpse of their experience.

Jackson was hit by a tornado more than a year ago, and there is still much clean-up work to be done. MDS has been involved there for some time. Along with the team from our church, there were groups from other denominations, including a Catholic church from Chicago, an Amish church and an old order Pennsylvania Dutch church. They all stayed at the Dream Center, a former hospital.

Wayne Reimer gave us an overview of their schedule in Jackson: Every day, they got up between 6 and 7 a.m., made their

lunch at a buffet table spread with sandwich fixings, ate breakfast, and had a devotional. The work groups put people together from different churches, and from 8:00 to 4:30 these groups worked at building and finishing new houses, renovating and cleaning up existing homes, and a variety of other jobs. In their free time they did some sightseeing.

Some trip highlights: Delphine Loewen appreciated the unity gained as a church group. Brent Loewen enjoyed working alongside and getting to know Amish fellows. Mandy Reimer admitted wondering how useful women could be on such a trip, but found that she

had a different job every day, including landscaping, painting, hauling garbage, and drywalling.

Reg Dueck told us about the house he had worked on, where a tree had fallen through the roof seven months ago and the roof was still not repaired. Everyone agreed that the biggest highlight was to meet the owners of the homes where they worked and to see how much this work meant to them.

The evening ended with Jake Dyck, our youth pastor, reporting on plans for a grades 11 and 12 youth mission trip to Kansas, Texas, and Mexico.

By now, these young people have gone out and come back as well, and we anticipate some more out-goings as well as some home-comings in the months to come.

Janet Hamm



LaVissa and Ray Reimer served in Ecuador and Costa Rica.



Supper in Jackson, Tenn., for the Morweena MDS group: Wayne Reimer, Amanda Reimer, Angela Loewen, Reg Dueck, Delphine and Brent Loewen, Nelson Loewen, and Rachel Plett.

## Dr. Harvey Plett is ‘sowing seeds’ and living his dream

Harvey Plett, retired former president of Steinbach Bible College, gets excited when he talks about his teaching experiences in the Steinreich Bible School in Mexico.

He says he is “sowing seeds” and living his dream of using his teaching skills in a setting where he feels he is making a difference.

“It is very challenging and very exciting work—it is pioneer work in terms of education,” says Plett, who is preparing for his fourth year of teaching at the school located at Campo 28 1/2 located about 70 kilometres north of Cuauhtemoc, the major business centre for Mennonite colonies in Mexico.

Plett, who still works as a part-time professor at Steinbach Bible College, is an ordained minister who speaks Low German and has a keen interest in the history of the Mennonite church and worldwide church.

He had planned to teach in developing countries when he retired in 1999 and is excited he has found a setting that is a “good match” for his training, interests and language skills.

His wife Pearl has opportunity to use her experiences and training as a registered nurse to teach a nurses aide course at Steinreich Bible School.

The school term is three months—January to March. Students get a diploma in Biblical Studies when they complete 12 courses in four years.

“We train students to go back to their churches,” he says, noting graduates serve the church as pastors, Sunday school teachers, Bible study leaders and youth workers.

“Some call it education—I call it sowing



Harvey Plett and students at Steinreich Bible School in Mexico.

seeds. I’m seeding ideas, interpreting the word of God and hoping that the seeds fall on fruitful ground.”

The language of instruction is Low German—the common language for students who come from Mexico, Belize, Seminole Texas and southern Alberta, southern Ontario and southern Manitoba.

Students complete written assignments in either English or German. Students from Seminole, Belize and Canada generally complete assignments in English and students from Mexico in German.

In 1996, student enrollment was 10 students. By 2000, the first year that Plett taught there, the enrollment had increased

to 80 and this year the enrollment was 140.

“It has just mushroomed, almost too rapidly,” he says. “I think there is an awakening interest and hunger for education. To me the Bible school is a symbol of the spiritual growth and development in Mexico.”

The school that started in a chicken barn is now on a campus that has four buildings. A new building opened this year that houses three classrooms, gymnasium, library, music room and administration offices.

The school is supported mainly by the Mexico General Conference along with assistance from the General Conference Mennonite Church USA (formerly known as General Conference) and the Evangelical Mennonite Conference and Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference in Canada and Mexico.

Most of the students are from the Mexico General Conference churches, which Plett describes as the most progressive thinking churches in Mexico.

Some of the students come from the Old Colony village school system and can’t read or write when they come to the Bible school but their strong desire to learn makes it possible for some of them to meet the graduation requirements.

“That’s very exciting,” he says, adding the school is giving Mennonite people in Mexico the opportunity to get an education at an affordable cost in a language they understand.

Gladys Terichow

Reprinted with permission from *The Carillon*.



Archivist's Alcove  
Loren Koehler  
Volunteer Archivist

### THE ARCHIVES NEEDS YOU!

DOES EMC history interest you? Would you consider helping out in the Archives on a part-time basis?

It has been eight months since I began volunteer work in the EMC Archives and, with only a couple of months left before our family is due to return to Africa, I have been thinking about the kinds of things I have been able to help with during this time.

Our Archives consists of historical material on the Conference and its congregations as well as other material donated by various individuals. The documents are classified and stored in special cardboard boxes in the vault.

The vault is now very full, so some material is also stored in the Archive office and another storage room. All Archive contents are found by reference in a three-ring binder, and work is underway to enter this information in a computer database for easier lookup.

Would you consider helping out in the Archives on a part-time basis as I have been doing? No special skills are required and I could help get you started. Just contact Terry Smith at the Conference office to discuss how you can be involved.



**ESTHER KROEKER  
1911-2004**

Our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother left what she called "This old building" and was welcomed to her "new building" and eternal home on March 6, 2004. Although we already miss her very much, at the same time we also rejoice that she is in the arms of Jesus. As we continue to reminisce and reflect on her life as a role model for all of us to follow, we are again and again impressed with "who she was" and the impact her life has made on all of us.

Esther Reimer was born to Isaac W. and Margaretha Reimer on May 27, 1911 in a farmhouse near Steinbach, Manitoba, the sixth of 17 children, two of which died at infancy. She attended grade school through the seventh grade after which she had to remain at home to care for her younger sisters.

On May 20, 1932 she married John D. Kroeker. Until 1949 they lived in Steinbach, Manitoba, at which time the family moved to St. Catherines, Ontario. After Dad's retirement in 1977 they moved to Hillsboro, Kansas, where Mom lived until her death. Together they had four children and to this date 16 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. Dad preceded her in death on October 23, 1984. Of her 17 siblings, she still has four sisters and two brothers who survive her.

At age 18 she accepted Christ as her personal Saviour, was baptized the same year and joined the Evangelical Mennonite Church. In 1982 she, along with Dad, transferred membership to the Hillsboro Mennonite Brethren Church.

Those of her immediate family who are left to cherish her memory are: Raymond and wife Esther Kroeker, Laverna and husband Jack Braun, Eileen and husband Dean Hiebert, Sylvia and husband Eddie Unger, 16 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren.

Her Family

## A tribute to my grandmother

God has ministered to me in many ways and through many people during these past few months. One of the most precious ways is the hope that He has instilled in my heart that I will see my Grandmother again someday. I have prayed that she would come to know Christ as her personal Saviour, from the time that I learned to pray as a little child, until now. There were so many times when I wondered if God ever heard my prayers and if He was ever going to answer them.

Praise God, He has given me hope in two ways. One, in the fact that He is not willing that any should perish; and, two, in my Grandmother's own words, "I realize I need to trust the Lord." It is out of a sad, but rejoicing heart that I was able to put onto paper some fond memories of and feelings I have for my Grandmother.

I hope that in some way by including my poem here, that it can encourage those of you who have also lost loved ones or are praying for family members who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

### Grandma's House

Through the open door,  
The door that was never closed,  
Wafts a familiar, tantalizing smell...  
The pleasing aroma of fresh raspberries  
and chopped rhubarb  
Causes my mouth to water.  
What was more delicious or more inviting  
than her raspberry-rhubarb pie,  
Bathed in cream,  
Smothered in a scoop of vanilla,  
What was more a sign of her love than  
this?

Her delightful and delicious creations  
were her way of saying,  
*"I love you."*

I hold in my hand another creation of  
hers.  
And again a familiar smell awakens  
my senses, my memory...  
Tanning chemicals blended with smoke,  
Tell me I belong.  
The softness of the leather  
Assures me that I am special.  
It's perfect fit around my foot,  
Represents the security I felt in her love.  
The fur tickles my nose  
Just like the laughter we shared, tickled  
my soul.  
The beadwork paints a beautiful picture  
of her heart,  
a heart from which this creation flowed.  
Its stitches are many, but each one  
reminds me that the treasure in my hand  
*Was a labour of love.*

Upon my bed lies another priceless gift.  
Many pieces, joined together, make a  
masterpiece.

Such beauty stands as a marker of time,  
A reminder of one of my accomplishments.  
But to me, it is so much more.

It is a part of her,  
Her warm embrace when life is cold,  
*A covering of her great love.*  
My burden has been lifted,  
All those prayers prayed since childhood  
no longer seem for naught.

Peace, sweet peace floods my soul,  
my spirit, my being,  
Renewing, assuring, healing.  
The memories I hold dear,  
Her gifts I will treasure,  
*But nothing surpasses the knowing that  
one day...*

Through heaven's door,  
The door that was never closed,  
*Will waft a familiar, tantalizing smell...*  
And as I feast at the table set for me  
I will share raspberry-rhubarb  
cream pie with my Saviour.  
I will see a marvelous patchwork quilt  
draped lovingly over the arm of His  
throne chair,

And upon His feet will be the most  
amazing beaded-leather slippers I have  
ever seen.

*And then I will know I am home...  
I will know I am home, in Grandma's house.*

Karlene Thiessen  
In loving memory of  
my Grandmother, Lydia Foster

## Births

**GIBBONS** - to Tim and Danae Gibbons of Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Kaia Layne, on October 17, 2003.

**BRAUN** - to Darryl and Aganetha Braun of Winnipeg, Man., a son, Bryan, on November 4, 2003.

**GIESBRECHT** - to Ed and Sabrina Giesbrecht of Grunthal, Man., a son, Isaiah John, on December 16, 2003.

**REIMER** - to Fernando and Angela Reimer of Grande Prairie, Alta., a son, Ashton Colby, on March 31, 2004.

**DYCK** - to Kelly and Carla Dyck of Winnipeg, Man., a son, Riley Mitchell, on April 2, 2004.

**PENNER** - to James and Ang Penner of Grunthal, Man., a son, Joshua James Menno, on April 14, 2004.

## Weddings

**QUIRING - PETERS:** Jake Quiring and Susie Peters were married March 13, 2004, at the Oasis (Mexico) EMC.



## Pages from the Past

Dave Schellenberg  
Steinbach, MB



# Regions, a proposal that looked to the future

LIKELY many of our EMC pastors have never known the Conference other than a series of regions, but it has not always been that way. There was a time, not so long ago, when Conference matters were almost totally centred in Manitoba.

The year 2004 is a significant one as far as conference administration is concerned. Twenty-five years ago, in 1979, a paper was presented at Conference Council, which would alter some parts of the make-up of the EMC. The proposal, among other things, was to divide the EMC churches into six different regions.

Through the years many changes have come about in the conference. Growth is one of them.

In 1951 we saw the need of an annual convention, which has been held every year since. The year 1952 saw a name change from *Kleine Gemeinde* (Small Church) to Evangelical Mennonite Church, which became Evangelical Mennonite Conference in 1960. By then we had grown to 13 churches with 2,647 members.

By 1979, some 20 years later, we had 46 churches. But, remarkably, although we

There was a time, not so long ago, when Conference matters were almost totally centred in Manitoba.

had 700 members outside of Manitoba, the EMC Executive was composed only of Manitoba members. Sooner or later someone noticed the imbalance, likely the Executive itself. Three men were delegated to come up with a proposal that would spread Conference administration

throughout all the churches—Ben Friesen (Crestview), John Koop (Vanderhoof) and me (Steinbach).

A Conference Executive memo dated April 10, 1979, to these three men read: "Churches which are some distance from the southern Manitoba area have often felt they did not have adequate input and representation in Conference affairs. This is particularly true of Board representation..." Suggestions were given and the committee was asked to come up with a draft proposal by the annual Conference in July.

The committee presented a draft. The paper proposed to divide the 45 churches into six regions and that all regions would have representatives on boards and committees. It noted that the EMC

Executive, EMC's top administrative committee, had no members from outside of Manitoba, despite 700 members from other provinces.

The draft proposed enlarging the Executive to ten members and to change the name to something like General Board. The committee also proposed engaging a full-time Executive Secretary. This restructured Executive would meet four times a year. Representation would be broadly based on regional membership. Regions would submit three names for each one person up for election.

The committee recommended that annual conventions could occasionally be moved to other provinces. Regional conventions would be the responsibility of the region.

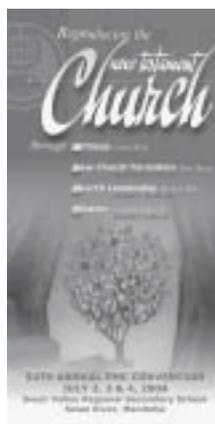
The committee closed the draft by saying, "The following is not proposed with only the immediate present in mind. Were this so the surgery proposed might not be as drastic. But the proposal looks to the future and the possibility of maybe doubling our membership by the year 2005! (We have doubled in the last 25 years.) This immediately brings the situation into an entirely different perspective as far as administration goes.

"All growth brings challenges. We dare not abandon or give up the children (churches) we have brought to birth. Much more we need to rise to the challenge and meet the administrative needs as they arise."

Edwin Plett and Henry Kornelsen were added later to assist in formulating this proposed draft for Conference reorganization. It became a subject for discussion at 1979 December Council meeting at Rosenort, Man., and at the July 1980 Conference Council held at Steinbach Bible College. At the 1980 December Conference Council held in Kleefeld, Man., the reworked draft was accepted for a three-year period, to be reviewed after that.

At the 1981 Conference Council in July the EMC Conference Executive gave the following report: "At our December [1980] meeting the Conference Council accepted a revised administrative structure for our Conference. According to the new structure the Conference churches have been divided into eight regions. Each region is to elect or appoint one or more member(s) to the General Board. The General Board consisting of 15 members will replace the present executive. It will hold its first organizational meeting at the time of our annual convention in July 1981. The new structure should reflect a greater regional representation on the Board."

Now in retrospect, I think the time was ripe—actually over-ripe—for the action we took in proposing the creation of regions. And one can only thank those in charge for their foresight and far-reaching vision. It was a necessary move to accommodate the entire community of our churches from B.C. to Ontario, the value of which has proven itself over the ensuing years.



Peter Dueck



Mike Plett



Cameron McKenzie



Conroy Koop

## Plan to attend the 54<sup>th</sup> 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

# 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.

Do you feel called to work with children? Manitoba House, located in Winnipeg's North End, has openings for **summer staff, full-time workers** and **volunteers** to form positive relationships with children aged five to twelve. The goal is to teach the gospel, instruct the children in life skills and to help them gain stronger academic skills.

Applicants need to have a strong calling for inner city missions, have good communication skills and be well-organized. It is expected that a full-time worker will be able to raise their own support with some help from the board. For information check <http://members.shaw.ca/ManitobaHouse/>

Please submit your resume to Steve Brown (204-222-0797) at [manitobahouse@shaw.ca](mailto:manitobahouse@shaw.ca)

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.

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 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.

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.

Steeprock 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.

Morweena Christian School, located near Arborg, Man., is seeking applicants for several split-grade classroom **teacher** positions. Teacher's certificate not essential, but preference will be given to applicants with teaching experience and a Manitoba teaching certificate. Contact Tim Reimer, principal, Box 1030, Arborg, MB R0C 0A0 (204-364-2466/3008).

MCC Manitoba seeks a **resource generation team leader** in Winnipeg, Man., office. Working with churches in constituency relations and with staff in material resources, communications and resource programs, this position 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 are 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, MCC Manitoba. Phone 204-261-6381, [jms@mennonitecc.ca](mailto:jms@mennonitecc.ca) or [sjj@mennonitecc.ca](mailto:sjj@mennonitecc.ca)

## Coming Events

**May 16**  
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Presentation  
Pleasant Valley EMC  
Rosenort, Man.  
Phone: 204-261-6381

**July 7**  
MDS alumni gathering  
Information evening  
Winkler Berthaler  
Mennonite Church  
Winkler, Man.  
Phone: 866-261-1274

**June 13**  
Eden Foundation and Big Brothers/Big Sisters 12th annual Charity golf event  
Winkler Golf Course  
Winkler, Man.  
Phone: 204-325-5355 or [www.edenhealth.mb.ca](http://www.edenhealth.mb.ca)

**July 15**  
IronMangolf marathon  
Winkler Golf Course  
Winkler, Man.  
Phone: 204-325-5355 or [www.edenhealth.mb.ca](http://www.edenhealth.mb.ca)

**June 17**  
EMC Golf Classic  
Steinbach Fly-in Golf Course  
Steinbach, Man.  
Phone: 204-255-8062

**Oct. 15-17**  
EMC Youth Leaders Retreat  
Speaker: Jim Harms  
Pinawa, Man.  
Phone: 204-326-6401

**July 2**  
EMC Ministerial Meeting  
Pineridge Fellowship Chapel  
Hudson Bay, Sask.  
Phone: 204-326-6401

**Nov. 12-13**  
Christians Responding to HIV/AIDS in Africa  
Dr. Allen Ronald  
Calvary Temple  
Winnipeg, Man.  
Phone: 204-452-1374 or 204-895-0608

**July 3**  
EMC Conference  
Council Meeting  
Community Bible Fellowship  
Swan River, Man.  
Phone: 204-326-6401



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# The Personal Touch

Humming the theme from *Jaws*

## Let me tell you a story

Wes Dueck

“SIR, your days on this earth are numbered,” the doctor had told him. He sat there numb, listening to his six-year-old getting ready for bed. *How do I tell him he will grow up without a father? Will his young heart understand that his heavenly father will take over when his daddy is gone?*

“Story time” came the little guy’s voice and Dad entered the room to do what he did best: story telling. His stories must teach his son to live a life dedicated to God.

That little guy was me. My Dad told me a lot of stories in his final days on earth. He would go well past my bedtime. He would tell of the exploits, failures and successes of the Children of Israel, concluding with a life lesson: God loves you, Wesley. Always remember that!

As I watched them lower my Dad into the ground, his words still echoed: “In times of trouble, call to God; He is near and He loves you.” In my heart I called, but He never

answered, at least I never heard Him at the time, nor did I see Him even though He was always near.

The path that my Dad showed me was soon left behind and I followed the road that was flooded with booze, drugs and other “pleasures,” convinced that a loving God would not let my dad die.

“Story time” came the sweet voice of my wife, Melody. I crawled into bed with her and I did what I enjoy best: story telling. The ones she seemed to enjoy most were the Bible stories, even though we were not Christians at the time.

She had never heard them as a child and she often listened in a quiet, worried way as I informed her that we were living in sin. I could not believe how someone could know so little about God. I got a kick out of painting dark pictures of Christianity and its failures. I failed to convince her as she kept asking for more Bible stories.

I told her of the time when Moses came to the homes of the Children of Israel and told everyone to close the door and not go out into the night because the angel of death was coming for the firstborn of each household.

After Moses called everyone down, they asked if there was not some way out. Moses instructed them to kill a lamb and paint the lamb’s blood on the doorposts of all their houses. (I now quietly lay beside Melody, humming the theme song from the movie *Jaws*. Melody lay there, eyes wide open with fear.)

The screams were getting closer as all the Egyptians were losing their sons. The sobbing and the screaming seemed to be coming from hell itself. The Israelites huddled together in little group hugs wondering if the lamb’s blood would save them. After unwrapping Melody off me, I told her not to worry, that the blood worked.

However, the stakes have been raised and now the angel of death is coming for all of us. Jesus represents the lamb, and His death on the cross is what will save us. We must now put His blood on the doorposts of our hearts so that when the angel of death comes, we will go to heaven and live there forever. If we do not, we go to hell. I laughed and told her that was what Christians believed. But as for us, we will not worry about this right now. Melody worried well into the night.

To make a long story short, she convinced me to become a Christian with her together. Now I tell these stories in Sunday schools and churches not just for entertainment, but to convince kids of all ages that God loves them and to make sure they have applied Jesus’ blood on the doorposts of their hearts. For it is true what my Dad told me, our days on this earth are numbered. ■



Melody and Wes Dueck live near Morris, Man., and are members of Rosenort EMC along with their sons, Jeff and Chris.



Wes Dueck with his parents Jacob A. and Margaret Dueck in 1965.

*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.*