

Reflections on Christians and money

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Lest any man should boast part two

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The Messenger

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE
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Don't blame Arden Thiessen!

Don't blame Arden Thiessen, please. He tried.

Years ago at Steinbach Bible College, Arden Thiessen taught on the need to avoid materialism and to develop inexpensive hobbies.

He told us of how Dr. Francis Schaeffer advised people to go to the dump to see what is thrown away. Schaeffer counselled

Holiday travels, upgrading to larger houses, and higher standards of living seem quite common where I now live.

people to avoid trash heap lives—lives lived for what does not last—and Thiessen reminded us of this.

With this call to simplicity, what have I done?

Not enough.

As a young Christian I purchased a book on simple living put out by a Church of the Brethren member. Later, I grappled with what simple living meant in a northern mining community that seemed to have a lot of adult toys—boats, snow machines, and quads.

Then as I moved into southeastern Manitoba, my impression was that it had even more toys than were up north. I wondered aloud what a simple lifestyle now meant.

Holiday travels, upgrading to larger houses, and higher standards of living seem quite common where I now live.

Many in our conference have worked hard to rise rapidly in economic status. When it comes to per person charitable giving in Manitoba, for instance, communities highly populated with Mennonite church members often rank highly. This is no accident. There is a relationship between what people are taught and practice.

There is generosity, even if there seems to be less simplicity.

But then I hear that 80 million people in India live on a dollar per day. Reminders come of how HIV/AIDS ravages southern Africa. One in six Canadian children lives in poverty. When I hear this, then I know for sure that my lifestyle isn't all that simple or generous.

Terry M. Smith

Who possesses you?

HOW do you honour God with your possessions? Does your life show God's mark of ownership?

Sometimes I see people who always need to answer their cell phone. Or they can't go camping without bringing along their Gameboy. I wonder, *Who possesses whom?* If our possessions possess us, what place does God have in our life?

God says to Israel in Exodus 19:5, "You will be my treasured possession." In Ephesians 1:14 we read that we "are God's possession." If we are God's possession, it will show in how we live. That is, God will run our life; we will not be driven by the things we possess.

This also means not being driven to possess more and more. Matthew 6:32-33 tells us not to run after food, drink and clothing, because God knows our needs and will provide.

The society we live in tells us, "If I want it, I should buy it." In the commercials everyone has limitless resources to buy that new car, renovate the house, and shop till you drop at

the mall. You can have it all and more. Fad diets tell us we can eat what we want and still lose weight.

Don't buy the lie! If we seek to supply all our wants, we may not have enough left over for what we truly need.

Paul tells us we should also keep something to "share with those in need" (Eph. 4:28).

To counter the lie that happiness comes through self-indulgence, we need to be more willing to practice self-denial. Christ didn't say, "Take up your fancy car, your big house, your three-piece Armani suit and follow me." Carrying the cross may be less comfortable, but the rewards are greater than we can imagine.

Becky Buhler

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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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Peter and the Public Boast

Arley Loewen, Ph.D.

And Peter wept bitterly.

A friend who was a martial arts expert, once asked me why Jesus' disciples were so cowardly when He was being arrested just before His crucifixion. Why didn't they stand up to defend their master like heroic warriors? Instead, they secretly and fearfully sneaked away from the arena of danger. Indeed, typical of any coward, they left Christ all alone.

Medieval texts on knighthood stated repeatedly, "Real men do not run from battle!" Yet, from all appearances, the first followers of Christ proved to be wimps and cowards—no badge of heroism for them. Certainly, nothing to boast about.

Peter, perhaps the most vocal of Jesus' disciples, certainly tried to be loyal to Christ. And he constantly talked about it. Throughout the three years as a disciple, Peter wanted to make a good impression on Christ. It wasn't that he willfully tried to deceive Christ by a sly, pretentious profession of faith. Not at all. He truly loved his Master and desired to be faithful to Him. A brief overview of some of Peter's public deeds and statements demonstrates his devotion.

He rashly jumped into the water to walk to Christ. He publicly declared that Christ is the Son of God. He rebuked Christ for talking about suffering and death. In Peter's view, Christ's talk about death was an admission of weakness. Certainly, unworthy of someone destined to be king. Christ should talk about victory, not about suffering!

He spontaneously suggested to Christ that they stay on the Mount of Transfiguration. He wouldn't allow Christ to wash his feet. In Peter's view, Christ was too kingly and superior to stoop down and wash his feet. If Christ washed his feet, it was another sign of weakness. He courageously declared that he was ready to die for Christ, to follow him to the death. "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.

Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you" (Mark 14:27-31).

In all of these deeds and public statements, Peter genuinely wanted to be true to Christ. Nevertheless, his spontaneous reactions reflect the human habit of boasting and bombastic talk. Peter showed great determination and public spirituality. But what happens to Peter? How far does his determination *really* go? After his boast that he was ready to die for Christ—a boast we often hear today among Christians—the disciples follow Christ to the Garden of Gethsemane. Here Christ prays about his upcoming arrest and crucifixion.

Instead of joining Christ in his deep struggle, Peter falls asleep in the garden, along with the rest of the disciples. Physical exhaustion overtakes his spiritual determination. A few hours later when the soldiers come to arrest Christ, Peter draws the sword in a manly way. He is ready to heroically defend his master. Finally he is in the public arena of battle where he could prove himself.

But suddenly everything changes! Jesus rebukes this attempt of manliness, "No more of this!" (Luke 22:51). "Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew. 26:52). This kind of heroism was not the way of Christ, but the way of the world. Christ's strange, but strong words must have shocked Peter and the rest of the disciples. It is too much for them. They all flee from the soldiers. Nevertheless, Peter still does not give up. He follows soldiers and the arrested Christ, though, carefully—as we read, "at a distance" (Mark 14:54).

And then, alas, tragedy strikes. Peter—this great warrior, the hero of the 12 disciples, the one ready to jump onto the water and into the arena of battle, the one who only hours before had said, "I will never disown you"—denies Jesus three times. He tells three different individuals that he knows nothing about Jesus. As the cock crows, its screechy sound pierces Peter's heart. He remembers. He has been a coward.

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The Scriptures say, “Peter went outside and wept bitterly” (Matt. 26:75). This is not typical of Peter. Only hours earlier Peter had been his true confident self. He had drawn the sword, ready to battle. He had declared his total commitment Christ.

Peter was a man of impulse, quick to speak and act. He could speak well; he always seemed to have the right word. He made great claims of what he would do for the Lord. He even walked on water. He was ready to go with Jesus to death, even if the rest failed to do so. In each case, Peter’s response was like that of hero. A hero never fails, never is short of words, always has the right answer and a good word of advice.

As he watched Jesus and the crowds that followed the Master, perhaps Peter was thinking, “This is a great new revolution. We must show that we are stronger and superior to others. Christ is our leader, the answer to our political, social and spiritual problems.” Peter’s method was still the human system of achievement and domination—seeking to build and increase one’s influence and prestige through public rhetoric and showmanship. But his foundation was weak. At the end, Peter denied his Master.

Peter’s behavior is typical. In normal conversations, people use their tongues to show off their feats, knowledge or virtues. It is common for people to boast and exaggerate about their lives, habits we know all too well. It is easy to fall into a “war of words.”

The Arabic and Persian languages have huge word families, which provide great word studies on etymologies. The word for exaggeration comes from the root verb that means to achieve something or to attain maturity. The active participle of this verb refers to the one who has become mature, or has reached puberty. The noun of this root verb means eloquence. It is also used to

True Christian heroism begins when a person realizes that he is a failure in himself. He bows his head and weeps before Christ. Here a person experiences true grace—that Christ loves him and accepts him, even though he has failed. And so, he has nothing to boast about, except that Christ has accepted him.

describe the rhetorical devices used by poets and prose writers. Some scholars conclude that the person who speaks with “eloquence” has in fact attained maturity and manhood. Hence, he who boasts well is mature, a true man.

We can then understand why a person is so prone to express threats or make wonderful promises that he has no intention to actually carry out. The ability to articulate verbally and to exaggerate (to be flowery, flattering, eloquent, bombastic) creates a sense of manliness and significance. Once a person has spoken eloquently, there is no need to perform the deed.

After all, he has reached maturity and manhood. The spoken word becomes the deed already done. One Arab politician said, “What is ‘planned’ is already as good as achieved.” Public boasting and eloquent promises reduce the psychological pressure to actually do carry the deed.

Jesus spoke a short parable of “two sons” (Matt. 21:28–32). The father asks both of them to work in the vineyard. One son says he will go and serve his father, but he does not. The second son said he will not, but then he does. It is the second son that Jesus affirms, the son whose life “speaks” louder than his words. Jesus does not want talk; he wants a life of action and deeds.

Let’s return to Peter. Peter failed tragically. He did not keep his word. His talk was completely different from his walk. When there is a clear inconsistency between a person’s boast and his life, a person is obsessed with covering up his inconsistency. He will deny what he said or perhaps blame someone else. But when Peter sees what he has done, he breaks down and weeps bitterly.

Indeed, he has failed. He can do nothing but admit it. He realizes that he is not all that he has made himself out to be. He is no hero, but a tragically flawed human being. After his great boast that he would serve Christ to the end of life, Peter comes to his end. He sees himself naked before God with nothing he can do, no more excuses, no more blaming others for one’s own failures and weaknesses. There is no boast.

Here in the divine arena—before God and before society—he is embarrassed and devastated. He can only respond with bitter weeping. When he finally breaks down, there is hope that he will be built up. Christ’s character will begin to take root in his life. And as Acts tell us he becomes one of the greatest preachers of the early church.

True Christian heroism begins when a person realizes that he is a failure in himself. He bows his head and weeps before Christ. Here a person experiences true grace—that Christ loves him and accepts him, even though he has failed. And so, he has nothing to boast about, except that Christ has accepted him. ■

What is your money saying?

Money and the Witness Factor

Edwin Friesen



THROUGHOUT the history of the Christian church, the gospel has had an impact not only on the heart but also the financial practices of those who embraced its teachings.

When Zacchaeus turned to follow Christ, he immediately gave half of his wealth to the poor as well as offered restitution to those he had defrauded (Luke 19:2-9).

Realizing that the rich young ruler was too distracted by his wealth, Jesus challenged him to sell what he had and give to the poor. He would then have freedom to follow (Matt 19:16-24). The early church believers sold possessions as necessary to provide for the needs of the people who stayed on in Jerusalem after Pentecost (Acts 2:45). Clearly the gospel has implications for how we manage money.

People watch us as we work, invest, spend, and share. Each financial transaction is an act of witness and enhances or undermines our reputation in the community. From buying a car to paying for a meal in a restaurant, people observe. Squeezing deals so that we can brag to our relatives at the Sunday dinner table may earn us the admiration of family and score points with our peers. Unfortunately, sometimes those same transactions may leave people less interested in hearing about our God. Often our financial reputation precedes our verbal witness in the community.

I have always been intrigued and somewhat puzzled by the terse statement found in Luke 16:11: "So if

you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" Whatever additional meanings there might be, the most obvious interpretation and application of this verse is that managing our earthly possessions responsibly is a prerequisite to handling spiritual responsibility; that handling worldly wealth with integrity prepares us for handling "true riches."

We may be tempted to think that since our possessions are temporal, it doesn't really matter how we acquire and use them, but Luke suggests otherwise. Before we are ready for major spiritual responsibilities, we need to learn how to manage our earthly possessions with an eternal perspective.

When instructing new believers, we emphasize spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible reading, service, sharing our faith and fellowship but too often leave any discussion about money to the very end, if at all. This suggests to people that how Christians manage money and possessions is not very important. That is the wrong message.

Learning to manage money as a steward for God should be one of the first learning tasks of a new Christian. Why else would Jesus devote so much of his teaching to the subject?

From paying debts to making investments, how we manage our money is an integral part of our witness. What is your money saying in the community? Is it undermining or undergirding your witness of faith?

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

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So you want to do a miracle?

Several years ago I woke up in the middle of the night and had a revelation. I don't know where it came from or why. I got up and went to the cupboard and looked on a cereal box. It said one serving is one-quarter cup (40 grams). That calculates to about one-tenth of a pound. If I assume 50 pounds per bushel, that makes 500 servings per bushel and 10 bushels then serves 5,000 people.

If farmers were to get \$5 per bushel (most would happily take that), then \$50 would feed 5,000 people. If this grain were shipped to Africa where our government adds to this by 4:1 ratio, then it costs only \$12.50.

If you as a donor are in the 33% income bracket then Revenue Canada gives you back \$6.25 (you had to earn about \$18 to get \$12.50). You are now out of pocket \$6.50 for feeding 5,000 people.

My math makes a few assumptions but I dare you to find a place that will sell five loaves and two fishes for \$6.50. I always thought that feeding 5,000 people would be cool, but I never dreamed God would make it so easy.

Ray Plett
Winnipeg, Man.

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Jim Harms

Is paying taxes a Christian duty?

John Longhurst

DO CHRISTIANS have a religious duty to pay taxes?

The Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales says yes. And not only that, they say Christians should be happy to do it.

But wait, there's more. The bishops also say that wealthier Christians should pay more taxes, in order to ease the burden on the poor.

"Taxes are very much based on the principles of solidarity, which is based on the commandment to love your neighbour," said Bishop Howard Tripp at the February 23 launch of Taxation for the Common Good, a 40-page document that is designed to spark discussion about taxation and public services in the United Kingdom.

According to Tripp, Christians should "rejoice" in the chance to contribute toward the sort of society that they want. "This document is suggesting taxes are a way to play our part and it is something we should be pleased to do," he said. "It's all part of our duty to our neighbour."

Added the Most Reverend Peter Smith, the Archbishop of Cardiff, who headed the committee that created the report: "Taxation is a sign of social health, a moral good. Our willingness to pay it is a sign of our solidarity with one another, and of our humanity."

Given the many reports of government waste at all levels, the last thing many Christians want to hear is that we have a religious duty to give politicians our hard-earned money.

But the bishops have a point, except maybe for the part about being happy. There is a moral foundation to taxation that includes Jesus' command to love our neighbours— whoever they are, and wherever they live. It's a shared commitment to creating a society that serves the common good, with a special concern for the neediest among us.

One person who tried to put this kind of plan into action was Alabama Governor Bob Riley. Riley, an evangelical Christian and Republican, stunned many of his conservative supporters last year when he advocated a tax reform plan that would have shifted a significant amount of the state's tax burden from the poor to wealthy individuals and corporations.

In trying to rally support for the plan in the heavily-religious state, Riley argued that it was a matter of Christian duty to reform a tax system in which a family of four making as little as \$4,600 a year paid more taxes, percentage-wise, than the richest of the state's residents.

Said Riley: "I've spent a lot of time reading the New Testament, and it has three philosophies: Love God, love each other, and take care of the least among you. It is immoral to charge somebody making \$5,000 a year an income tax."

Under Riley's proposal, which critics called the "How would Jesus Tax Us?" plan, just the top third of income earners, plus corporations and large farm and timber operations, would pay more taxes, while anyone earning less than \$20,000 a year would pay no income taxes at all.

Christians in Alabama were divided over the plan, with some church groups in favour and others, mostly independent congregations, attacking it. "Never in Scripture does it say, 'Render unto Caesar so he can take care of the poor,'" said John Giles, president of the Christian Coalition of Alabama, which opposed the plan. "It is the church's responsibility."

When Riley's tax reform plan was defeated by Alabama voters in a special election last September, one observer was prompted to remark about those

Christians that opposed it that "for all the moral high ground" they claim, their opposition to the proposal showed that "they hate taxes more than they love Jesus."

When it comes to religion and taxes, other religions also provide instruction for adherents.

For Muslims, paying Zakat—a tax of 2.5 percent of their annual earnings to help the poor—is considered a pillar of faith. Judaism sees paying taxes as a way to benefit all; according to the web site Torah.org, governments have a right to tax citizens, and anyone who doesn't pay "has violated the Torah prohibition against theft." However, the government must also tax people fairly, otherwise it is stealing from taxpayers.

So if you're up late one night in spring trying to calculate your income tax, maybe it will help if you don't think of it as a burden. Maybe you will feel better if you see it as a way to serve God and love your neighbour.

But I think you will be forgiven if you don't feel happy about it.

John Longhurst is a free-lance writer from Winnipeg, Man. He has previously been involved with MCC Canada and is currently involved with Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).



Our riches, a caution from a senior

"And having food and raiment let us be therein content" (1 Tim. 6:8). Jesus suggested to the rich man, "Sell all you have and give to the poor" (Mark 10:21).

Our mentality, which we North Americans like to live by, can hardly accept the above teaching. Who then can? For the greater part of the world's population it will not be so hard, but for us?

What, then, could God do to bring us to that submission? He could let our farmlands dry up for only seven years. In the time of old, in Joseph's day, there were seven lean years.

If we would read and believe that the end of time and Christ's coming to get us Christians to the heavenly mansions was only a month to go, many then would let go of earthly possessions, sell out and quickly give to the poor.

Can we imagine such? Why not? Christ's coming may actually be that near, according to the Bible and even according to national events taking place, like earthquakes, pestilence, wars, and famine, which were prophesied to be before the end comes (Matt. 24:6).

In the meantime, we could follow the Spirit's leading and live contentedly, modestly, and simply. We could just work to give to others, leave our wants behind, and be satisfied with real needs.

But we like to add to our already complacent lifestyle more high-cost things. Can we not resist the great and powerful advertising the world does before our eyes? We are really in danger. "A man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

A life of earthly ease is associated with spiritual poverty. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain" (1 Cor. 3:20).

Peter B. Dueck
Steinbach, Man.

This was sent as a letter to the editor.

Reflecting on poverty and wealth

In my prosperity I said, "This is forever; nothing can stop me now!" The Lord has shown me His favor. He has made me steady as a mountain (Psalm 30:7).

Isn't that just like us? Things go well for us and we are on top of the mountain, king of the hill. Or we are king of the castle as we used to play as kids.

And those who were not on the mountain? Why, they were just dirty old rascals. By implication we think, not unlike Job's friends, that if things are not going well for someone, well then, they must somehow have fallen into God's bad books and He is just not blessing them.

So the Psalmist says he is rich and nothing can stop him now. That sounds like a misinterpretation of "if God is for us, who can be against us?" Am I suggesting by this that the wealthy somehow are not in God's favour? I would say that wealth is no indication of whether we are in God's favour or not. If that is an indicator, then people like Mother Theresa, or indeed Jesus himself, would not have been in God's favour because they were poor.

Is the converse then true, that if you are poor you are in God's favour? Let me repeat: wealth or poverty, in and of themselves, are very unreliable indicators of what God is or is not pleased with. We know God is not in favor of greed, but poor people are just as capable of greed as wealthy ones. We know that God is in favor of generosity, but again the poor and the wealthy are both capable of being generous.

One could argue that the rich can easily be distracted from the Kingdom of God by looking after their assets; you know, buying insurance on this, and worrying about the markets, or building security fences around that. You could also argue that the poor can easily be distracted from the Kingdom of God by worrying where their next meal will come from, or about how they will be able to provide shelter and education for their children, or about how the society is forgetting about them, and so on.

Can we conclude nothing then about which state God prefers? Some would suggest that God is on the side of the poor as evidenced by the Jubilee teaching in the Old Testament. Further, it could be said that if the love of money is the root of all evil, that would surely indicate that God is more inclined toward the poor.

But the poor can love money too, even if they do not have it in abundance. I don't think that the abundant life Jesus talked about in John 10:10 had very much to do with money or possessions. I will suggest then that it is not how much material wealth you have that is significant to God, it is the attitude you have toward that wealth that he cares about.

When Jesus tells the rich man to sell all he has and give to the poor, he strikes a nerve and the man walks away sorrowful, because he is not prepared to go there. Similarly, when the wealthy contribute heavily to the churches' coffers and are impressed with their own generosity, Jesus turns their thinking on its ear when he suggests the poor widow contributed more when she threw in her two cents worth.

According to Psalm 51 God does not want our offerings or our sacrifices. He is interested in our hearts being broken and contrite. It would seem to me that with a contrite spirit we would have a hard time seeing who has more than us. Instead we would see a God who is patiently waiting for us to learn our lessons and be impressed with his graciousness toward us.

It seems likely also that with a broken heart we will not be thinking about how important our large contribution is to the building project or the church budget. Rather we will be seeing



the largeness of God compared to our smallness. So whether we are wealthy or not, God wants the same thing from us. It is our attention and our obedience.

It is interesting to me that often when we talk about

wealth we compare one segment of our society to another only in Canada or in the West. When we look globally, most of us in the West have an appearance of wealth. Certainly we have a global God, so then we have to see ourselves in the same context. Suddenly I cannot say that I don't have as much as the next person in Canada, because I have far more than most people in Haiti or, indeed, in Iraq. Our wealth is more relative than we usually think. This means we cannot rationalize to the point of patting ourselves on the back for our generosity because there are still poor people left in the world.

According to David Hilfiker, a doctor who serves AIDS patients in a low income Washington, D.C., neighborhood, the church, as it now stands, cannot adequately care for the poor. He says, "If we asked churches to pay the costs of only three government programs—welfare for families, disability payments for the poor, and food stamps—every single church, synagogue, mosque, and other religious congregations would have to come with \$300,000 a year. For the average congregation, this would mean tripling its budget and spending all the increase on the poor."

I point this out not to discourage us from helping the poor, but to look to God for our direction as to what he desires of us. If it had been God's idea to wipe out poverty and sickness, surely the appropriate time to do this would have been when Jesus was walking on this earth, doing miracles. That does not excuse us from helping the poor or being generous. It only suggests that God has bigger plans, and in all likelihood we will only see the fulfillment of them in the next life.

So the wealthy need to adopt the attitude that whatever they do here, it will pale in comparison to what is to come. Faithfulness, brokenness, obedience, these are the things God desires. I cannot help but wonder if we had more of these attitudes if indeed the budget for the EMC Missions Auxiliary would increase dramatically, or if businesses would rush to help Mennonite Economic Development Associates take risks in helping the poor to succeed.

In conclusion I will say that I am convinced that the world would be a better place for all if we recognized that many of the problems that it faces are bigger than any, or all of us, and that the best we can do is to seek God's direction to determine how he wants us to have an impact in it. And, just perhaps, with that attitude, we would be able to see God do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine.

If you would like to know what happened to the man in his prosperity mentioned in the beginning, check out the rest of the Psalm.



Wally Doerksen is a farmer, Sunday school teacher, teacher by training and a member of the Social Concerns Committee.

Youth are leading the way toward 2010!



Abundant Springs 2003 (Messenger)

OUR CONFERENCE is at a crossroads in its history. In 2003 we celebrated 50 years of missions, highlighting the wonderful success stories of the years gone by. At the same time we looked ahead and realized that we needed to reinforce our missionary taskforce. Many pioneering missionaries will be completing their service in the next few years; as well, the work continues to grow and more workers could be used across the globe!

Then earlier this year an All Boards Meeting was held where we saw members from all of our five national boards come together to plan for the future, predicting what our Conference might look like in 2010. Again, strong indications arose out of this meeting that we are at the beginning stages of church growth both locally and internationally. But with this comes the need to have more warm bodies stepping in to do the work!

In the five years that I have been employed by you, the Conference, I have observed some unique things about how we function as a community of churches, particularly in regards to our teenagers.

Our churches have more paid youth staff now than five years ago. In these past years we have gone from just over 20 churches to nearly 30 churches now that have or are looking to employ a youth leader on their staff. This growth from 44% to 55% represents a 20 per cent increase over the last five years. This indicates to me that our churches are making a concerted

effort to have student ministry be a higher priority.

Churches are also proving the value of training their youth leaders at the Biennial *EMC Youth Leader Retreat* where the attendance has risen substantially from averaging 30 to 40 leaders in the 1990s to 90-plus leaders each of the past two events (in 2000 and 2002). This training and equipping weekend is a wonderful investment every church can and should make in the journey towards improving the youth ministry potential within their church and community, particularly with the volunteers in your churches.

And then there is *Abundant Springs!* Over the past 21 years this National Youth Event has been held 11 times. At the first event held in 1993 there were a total of 380 attendees, and the numbers have topped out at over 650 in 2001. In 2003 we were a total of 570 in attendance. The cost has also gone from \$50 per person in 1983 to \$155 in 2003, a very modest increase in 20 years.

This growth is a testimony to the legitimacy of this event and the spiritual impact that it has on our students. As you yourselves have often heard in the testimonies of the youth at their baptisms, *Abundant Springs* is referred to as a stepping-stone in their spiritual lives. In fact, last year over 40 students indicated a first time commitment to follow the Lord and another 270 either rededicated their lives to Christ or were specifically challenged to live more committed Christian lives.

While I am painting a positive picture about the youth ministry in our Conference, I would like to remind you that there is still lots of room for improvement. Take *Project Macedonia* for instance. This Tri-Conference short-term missions initiative has been in a slump the past few years.

The goal is to send teams of students to work alongside our churches both nationally and internationally, particularly giving opportunity to youth from our smaller churches that don't have the big budgets to do their own mission trips.

The EMMC had a very successful trip to Bolivia in 2001 and look to repeat that this summer in Belize. But our Conference attempts the last two times (2000 and 2002) have not resulted in substantial numbers of our own EMC students participating.

The ongoing cry for workers both in our local churches as well as in foreign mission fields speaks to the need of more of our youth becoming exposed to and involved in missions ventures.

Our churches do well in teaching our children in Sunday school, VBS, Awana and other kids clubs. Our youth ministries are generally healthy as ongoing discipleship moves the teens along. More than ever our young adults are entering into colleges and universities for ongoing occupational preparation. But what happens to them during this time away from home? How many of them come back to work in their home churches or pursue ministry options in our Conference?

A prediction I would like to make is that

A prediction I would like to make is that by 2010 our Conference will be more intentional about steering our youth and young adults into tent-making and full-time ministry instead of letting them slip through the cracks!

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I see congregations giving junior and senior-high students regular opportunities to be much more actively involved in their local churches. I see congregational small groups adopting

students into their midst who are attending local colleges and universities.

I see retired missionaries sharing their passion with youth in coffee shops and Sunday school rooms. I see the Conference office overrun with applications from people wanting to serve as foreign missionaries and church planters.

For this dream to become a reality, the work needs to begin one person at a time in the local church setting. Together we can intentionally train our children and youth to reach the goals set before us.

Gerald D. Reimer has been EMC Conference Youth Minister for five years. He works for both the Board of Church Ministries and the Board of Missions. He can be reached at emcger@mts.net



With Our Missionaries

Ottawa, Ont.

I AM, MPs and a pledge

As several hundred Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) missionaries entered the large Victoria Salon in the Marriot Hotel in Ottawa, Ont., our attention was first drawn to the backdrop at the front of the room. The backdrop was red with a maple leaf outline and the simple words *I AM* in the centre.

The annual conference of CCC was being held in this nation's capitol and this striking backdrop made us even more aware of it. The *I AM* had nothing to do with the I AM CANADIAN beer commercial. This was about the *I AM*, the one who always is, the God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

This was a meeting with God taking place in our nation's capital, and the great *I AM* had beckoned all of us to come together, to be on our knees, to seek Him and to ask Him for our nation.

This was my second time at an annual Conference of Campus Crusade. The five days were encouraging, uplifting days, growing closer to God, learning from one another, learning and listening to what God is doing across the nation and around the world. CCC has 14 different ministry departments in Canada—to name some of them: Leadership Ministries, Christian Embassy, Family Life, International Ministries, Athletes in Action, Campus Ministries, Women Today, Gain (Global Aid Network), Power to Change, I am Next.

The CCC Canada Mission Statement seeks to glorify God by making a maximum contribution toward helping to fulfill the Great Commission in Canada and around the world by developing movements of evangelism and discipleship.

I want to focus on two highlights of this particular conference. First, the inauguration of our new Campus Crusade for Christ Canada president, Len Buhler from Winkler, Man. Len and Debbie Buhler gave a striking and effective testimony how the Lord has lead them from the potato farm and implement dealership business in Winkler to become the President of Campus Crusade for Christ, Canada.

In his speech Len gave us some of his new visions of leadership, increasing the visibility of CCC internally and externally and expanding the board. He emphasized to his staff the point of forgiveness, repentance and surrender to God. Len's humble attitude came through and we were all moved when he closed his talk

saying that he is willing to die for the cause of Christ.

The second highlight was claiming our nation for God. We began this event by declaring our faith: "To live a surrendered life worthy of the Gospel believing that personal integrity is a critical platform for ministry. I will hide God's Word in my heart, daily allowing Him to transform me by the renewing of my mind. I will be wise in the way I interact with non-believers, making the most of every opportunity to influence them for Christ.

"I will express love to those in my world, demonstrating God's character and passion for all people. I will fearlessly initiate the sharing of my faith, believing that coming to know Jesus is the greatest gift I can give someone. I will attend and be involved in my local church, believing that I have a significant part in the body of Christ.

"I will seek to uphold the sanctity of marriage and strengthen families by carefully caring for those in my own home first. I will pray for the nation, my Canada, that God would pour out His spirit in new and greater ways to heal and strengthen this country."

Each of our Members of Parliament's names were written on pieces of paper and each paper was taken by a CCC missionary with the commitment to pray for this MP for the next year.

Then we made our way to Parliament Hill. In front of the Supreme Court on a large grassy area we formed a large circle and read five different passages: 1 Timothy 2:1-8, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 72:8, Colossians 4:2-6, Mark 11:22-24. We then divided into small groups of three to five to pray for our nation.

All 500 of us gathered on the steps of the Supreme Court and sang that powerful hymn *How Great Thou Art*.

We then disbanded once again, gathering once more in small groups throughout the area of the parliament buildings, to pray for our Members of Parliament.

At the close of the conference, our new leader Len Buhler handed out small cards to each worker. It was in two parts, one for us to sign and hand in and the other to keep in our wallet. It is personal with my name and phone number on it, and it says: "Dear God, I want you in the center of my life and I promise to obey and serve you Anytime, Anywhere, at any cost, to do anything. Signed and dated, Albert Martens, April 24, 2004."

Albert Martens



Albert Martens (Steinbach) works with Athletes in Action, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. He lives in Steinbach, Man., with his wife Edna.

Coming Events

June 13

Eden Foundation and Big Brothers/Big Sisters 12th annual Charity golf event
Winkler Golf Course
Winkler, Man.
Phone: 204-325-5355
www.edenhealth.mb.ca

June 17

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

June 22

Eden Foundation Spring Event Fundraiser
Edward Schreyer, speaker
Musical family *Barta*
Inspiration, celebration, dessert
Bergthaler Mennonite Church
Winkler, Man.
Phone: 204-325-5355

July 2

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

July 3

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

July 7

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

July 15

IronMan golf marathon
Winkler Golf Course
Winkler, Man.
Phone: 204-325-5355
www.edenhealth.mb.ca

Oct. 15-17

EMC Youth Leaders Retreat
Speaker: Jim Harms
Pinawa, Man.
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

For information on Mennonites visit



Third Way Café
www.thirdway.com

6,000 kms of tundra and people for whom Christ died

It is -60 degrees Celsius. The sharp wind whips the snow. We left the tree line several hundred kilometers to the south. In front of us is a large herd of reindeer pawing the frozen ground looking for something to eat.

Beside us a few tents are arranged in a wide semicircle. Nearby stand several sleds laden with huge bundles wrapped in tarp. Wisps of smoke blow out of the top of each tent. Welcome to the Yamal Peninsula of Northern Russia.

We are north of the Arctic Circle, beyond the 70th parallel. Summer here is only a few weeks. This is the land of the midnight sun. There are no gardens, no soil. The tundra, a mossy, swampy ground, only thaws on the top in the summer months when a few flowers grow. Who lives here?

Meet the Nensi, nomads living on the Yamal peninsula for over 1,500 years. From the reindeer they herd, the Nensi get clothing, food, tools, medicine and means of transportation. The Nensi live year-round in tents, migrating across the bleak landscape after their herds. Travel is by sleds pulled by deer or by snowmobile.

Visitors can only reach the Nensi by helicopter or reindeer. Nensi travel the tundra in an endless cycle, their only contact with the outside world being battery-powered radios and stops at government trading posts to trade furs for supplies.

The Nensi are in tune with the spiritual world. Herders communicate with spirits to ask for protection from sickness, starvation, or danger. Food is placed on sacred sleds for spirits. Reindeer antlers are hidden in sacred places to communicate with the spirit world.

Women are not allowed to walk around the back of the tent for fear their powers will come between the fire in the tent's centre and the sacred sled standing a distance away. Special dolls are placed at the entrance to cut off entrance to evil spirits. Other dolls, fed and spoken to for years, remind the Nensi of someone who has died. Toy dolls for children are made without faces and hands to prevent evil spirits from harming the children.

On the Yamal peninsula and in the regions nearby are the Khanti and Mansi, Selkup, and Komi. Farther are the Evenks, Kets, Dolgans, Nganasans, Evens, Enets, Yukagir, Koryak, Chukchi, and Yupik. I look

at a map of over 6,000 kms of Russian Arctic from east to west and think, "People live here for whom Christ died!" Paganism is strengthening and Christian witness is virtually nothing. There are virtually no churches and only a few scattered believers. Substance abuse grips many lives. People live on the tundra and in villages with no knowledge of God or his salvation.

But God has not forgotten these people and he has a plan. In September I visited Salekhard, the only city in the world situated exactly on the Arctic Circle. Located at the southern base of the Yamal Peninsula, Salekhard has about 30,000 inhabitants, a mixture of primarily Russian, Nensi and Khanti.

In Salekhard there is a small missionary team comprised of several Russians, a

second floor and to put on the roof. By fall we trust the Lord to have our building completed to where we can begin the process of training believers for church planting on the tundra.

Members of the missionary team will teach. Students will be chosen from among local believers and others elsewhere on the tundra. Daily classes will focus on scriptural knowledge, character formation, and evangelism and church planting. After IBL, each student should be versed in how to plant a church. They will move out for evangelism and church planting among ethnic groups.

How does one plant a church among people who follow the reindeer? How can the gospel reach out to the pockets of people spread over thousands of kilometers of inhospitable terrain? How can feelings of mistrust and discrimination be overcome?

Ethnic evangelists are our first route, but they must be found and reached with the gospel themselves. One idea is to start a Christian trading post run by believing Nensi to contact the reindeer people. The government has granted permission and land for such a venture, provided finances and personnel are found. Radio is another area we are exploring.

Pray for us as I consult with our team to see the funding becomes available

for the construction project, translation work, the trading post, radio programming and support of the national team living in Salekhard.

"For this is as the Lord commanded us when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the furthest corners of the earth'" (Acts 13:47). Are you interested in helping the work of spreading the gospel in the Russian Arctic? Contact us through the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

Dave Field



Dave Field (Steinbach EMC) is involved in teaching and leadership training in Russia.



couple of Nensis, a Khanti man, and a man from Kazakhstan. These folks are working to see the gospel reach across the tundra to ethnic peoples. There are two small home churches in the city and several in surrounding villages. The gospel of Luke has been translated into Nensi, as has other evangelism literature. I was asked to decide if the Lord would have me be an assistant-coordinator and representative for them to churches in North America.

There is a common goal: To see a centre for training Russian and ethnic church planters started in the city. When people leave the north for the warmer south of Russia for Bible training, few return. It's awfully cold here and the work is difficult. This is pioneering; financial support is low and teammates are hard to come by.

Enter the *Institute for Biblical Leadership*. The first floor is almost roughly done; a team of builders from Indiana came in March to help complete the

Prayer, Planting, and Praise within Region 6

Gerhard Dutoit, a revivalist from B.C., did a whirlwind introduction in three Rosenort area E.M. churches on Sunday morning, March 6. People returned consistently for the next five days to hear the truths he shared. Listeners leaned in to catch all he said, as he spoke powerfully about prayer, in a South African accent. He exuded energy and intensity.

He shared many thought-provoking statements: "A life surrendered to Christ. What will it cost you? It will cost you everything. But it will cost you more if you do not surrender to Him." and "Only that which is done for God will last." "You are here only because someone prayed for you. Are you praying for others?"

He called the family to holiness with statements such as, "Fathers have you laid your family on the altar?" and "We need praying mothers...so that

they [the children] will have to stumble over our praying bodies in order to enter hell."

It was obvious that Gerhard was intoxicated and saturated by the presence of God. He spoke lovingly about prayer warriors in history and of his various mentors. He shared many stories of praying people. It was deeply moving to immediately practice what he preached. Still seated, small groups of believers joined in prayer for specific needs between his talks. The murmuring of broken people, sharing their hearts desire for our community, was spiritually uplifting. People from the different churches, never having prayed together in their lives before, did so.

On April 17, we welcomed Peter and Trudy Dueck to share their vision of Canadian church planting. All five of our regional churches were represented, with about 30 men and women in attendance, at the Rosenort EMC. A delicious breakfast was served and the visual presentation was well done, providing much thought provoking information. The idea of birthing a church, instead of planting, was used in a humorous fashion and met with

much delight.

On May 4, many ladies from the Red River Valley EM churches enjoyed a Spring Tea at Morris Fellowship Chapel. Jennifer Siemens shared briefly about her childhood coping with a manic-depressive mother and then how the Lord helped her through her personal struggle with postpartum depression after each of her three children. Her testimony gave praise to God for being the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Cathy Wiebe spoke of her journey of youthful rebellion, which contrasted with the delight of she and her husband having

a daughter after many years of infertility. Jesus led and welcomed her back in His time.

The Wiebes, funeral directors in Morris, have two daughters now to love and cherish: their miracle daughter and their daughter's best friend from school, whom they foster. Both ladies exuded peace and confidence in their Lord and Saviour despite the trials they had faced. The beautiful decorations, music, testimonies and camaraderie around the tables were edifying.

Lorilee Scharfenberg

On April 17, we welcomed Peter and Trudy Dueck to share their vision of Canadian church planting.



Pastors Darren Plett (Pleasant Valley), John Driedger (Rosenort Fellowship Chapel) and George Toews (Rosenort EMC), and speaker Gerhard Dutoit spent many hours in prayer together for our community during our Prayer Encounter week.

Spiritual renewal meetings touch lives

Mount Salem, Ont.: From March 28 to April 1, we were privileged to have Cliff and Pauline Loewen come and share Spiritual Renewal Meetings with us.

The main theme verse of the week was 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Cliff spoke on topics such as *Prayer of Confession, Sovereignty of God, Call to Anguish, Opposition to Renewal, Role of God's Truth, and Reform*. Through these meetings, many people were touched and a few people also responded to the altar call. We also had special singing by Cliff and Pauline Loewen and their children.

On March 28 there was a men's coffee and donuts at our church with Cliff Loewen and on March 30 there was a ladies' breakfast with Pauline Loewen. It was a great time of fellowship and sharing.

On April 9, Good Friday, we also had an Easter drama called *His Majesty: Rise of the King*. This story line was to give us a brief overview of what it would have been like to be there that Easter morning. Before, during and after the drama we did a lot of praise and worship singing which got the congregation involved also. It was a great time to reflect on what Christ has done for us and to remember His sacrifice.

As we go on from day to day, I trust that we can always remember what the true meaning of Easter is and look forward to Christ's returning.

Sara Peters



Mitchell Janzen, Mikyla Janzen, and Rebecca Harder were baptized on February 1 at Morris Fellowship Chapel with Pastor Ward Parkinson officiating.



Completing the SEAN course under the instruction of Ward Parkinson were Eva Kroeker, Cliff Reimer, Eleanor Parkinson, and Howard Wiebe.

Baptism, SEAN, and Yukon

Morris, Man.: On February 1 we were blessed to have three of our young people baptized and join our church. Many relatives and friends of the two families joined in the celebration. May God bless you richly and may your testimonies lead other young people to follow your example.

For the past three winters Pastor Ward has been teaching the SEAN course

(theological education by extension). Though a number of people took part of the course, four diligent students completed it and passed the final exam. Congratulations!

On Easter Sunday, after our church council served us a lovely pancake breakfast, our junior Sunday school classes, led by Sherri Siemens, blessed us with a special Easter program.

Pastor Ward and Janine Parkinson have faithfully served our congregation without a break for 16 years, the first four as youth pastor. A change is better than a rest, so they'll pack their bags and head for the Yukon on June 21 to work at Marsh Lake Bible Camp for the month of July. We'll miss them and pray they'll come back refreshed in spite of 24 hours of daylight!

Betty Siemens

Abbeydale teens serve with Samaritan's Purse

Abbeydale (Calgary, Alta.): In December, JoLynne Enns and Shanon Plett went to Trinidad with Operation Christmas Child to deliver shoeboxes. Here is their report: We got the opportunity not only to share God's love with these deprived children; we also got to see God's hand at work.

One story that touched me, JoLynne, was going to this orphanage and seeing this kid get excited for his toothpaste and toothbrush. He didn't really care for his toys. When he found his toothpaste he started to eat it as if it was candy. He then found his toothbrush and couldn't stop brushing his teeth. He ate candy and had to brush his teeth again.

One incident that touched my heart (Shanon) was at a deaf school. As the children waited for their boxes, we entertained them with bubbles we had brought along. One little girl was especially drawn to the bubbles and told us through her smiles that she wanted bubbles for Christmas.

However, I knew that before the shoeboxes were sent from North America, they had been inspected. During inspection, all liquids were removed. I knew the little girl would not receive the

bubbles that she so badly wanted. When she finally got her box and opened it, a smile radiated her face. At the top of her box lay a bottle of bubbles! God had His hand on that box; it was designated for that little girl.

What makes these stories even more meaningful is that the shipment that was originally bound for Trinidad got lost in the Caribbean and never arrived in Trinidad. These boxes were the result of an emergency shipment, which Almighty God had *actually* intended for Trinidad.

Going with Samaritan's Purse to deliver

shoeboxes was truly an incredible experience that we will never forget. We encourage anybody to go with Operation Christmas Child on any distribution. Thank you for taking time to read this and go with us to Trinidad and experience these two stories with us!

JoLynne Enns and Shanon Plett
Reporter: Brenda Dick



JoLynne Enns hands boxes to children.



Shanon is with children at a distribution site.

Reflections for Father's Day

TODAY I am looking at another pitcher from my collection. It is a fat little periwinkle-blue jug with *Anne Hathaway's Cottage* etched in white on its side. My father, Abe Unger, brought it home from his '67 trip to Europe and Palestine.

So many memories of my dad flood my mind that I have to do some sorting. What were some of his characteristics that have made a strong impression on my development and have stayed with me? Probably at the top of the list is *his love for God's Word*.

One clear memory is seeing him at the dinner table, reading his Bible, while waiting for supper to be ready. He was a very busy man, and thus took every opportunity to absorb the Scriptures, even if it was only for a few minutes.

In today's politically correct world, someone might say he could have helped his wife to get things served rather than sitting and reading. But he seemed to have learned from Mary of the Bible, who sat at Jesus' feet whenever she had the opportunity. And Dad had no problem learning from a woman!

I also remember, as a young child, a little stack of cards that Dad had painstakingly cut from cardboard. On each card he had written a different verse from the Gospel of John. He used these cards to memorize the whole book of John while working at his cheese making job.

Cheese making was largely a manual operation in those days. Huge vats of the prepared milk mixture needed to be stirred constantly. Dad would walk around and around the vats wielding a big flat paddle. He had cards at each end of the vats and would repeat the verses to himself as he walked. Later, the curdled pre-cheese would be cut into ribbons using a long, lethal-looking knife. Again he walked back and forth, memorizing as he went.

At home our favourite pastime was to pick up the cards and call out a chapter and verse to see if we could stump him. I don't remember that it ever happened, but then, that is quite a few years ago.

A later, more heart-breaking memory is coming into his hospital room during the last months of his life. He was intensely labouring to recite Psalm 1, something he had had no trouble with before his first stroke. But to me he personified that "Blessed man" who is described in this Psalm.

Another memory is *his love for hard work*. It was good that he loved it because he had no choice. Our small farm did not bring enough income to feed and clothe us all, so in winter he went to work in Winnipeg, peeling logs for hydro-electric poles. This was backbreaking work and paid the "princely sum" of two cents per



running foot.

He writes that he often returned to his attic room around midnight (since the moonlight was bright enough to work by), with badly swollen, painful wrists. Next morning, wielding the peeling knife with both hands was very painful. But, he says philosophically, "[I] had heard that pain alone does not kill and kept at it."

When he was elected to the ministry at the "old" age of 44 his endurance and capacity for hard work stood him in good stead. He was the first chairman of EMC's Board of Missions, and like the rest of the board members, did the huge work of organizing and trying to get all the churches involved and satisfied on a voluntary basis in his "spare" time.

Trips to the Mexico field by bus from Winnipeg, which involved constant interviewing, visiting, peacemaking and sleeping in different beds for weeks did not seem to sap his energy. At least not that we noticed!

Dad was an interesting speaker. He seemed to be able to get into the Bible scene and take his audience with him, whether it was bailing frantically with the disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee or walking alongside the man "who fell among thieves" and was brutally beaten. I remember the latter story from primary Sunday school days, so it must have been rather dramatic. His dry sense of humour was also an asset. But preparing sermons was hard work for him, with many hours spent in reading, studying and praying. Because he still had to make a living, much of this was done at night.

He never had the opportunity to go to Bible school or college, but read extensively and enjoyed deep discussions on difficult subjects with whoever came by. So I remember his dedication to hard work, whether to feed his family or to serve his beloved Master.

But Dad also had *a sense of adventure*. In his pre-Christian years he roamed the West, doing everything from harvesting to working underground in a stiflingly hot copper mine, at times risking the loss of a limb as he jumped fast-moving freight trains.

Later when he fulfilled a dream of visiting the Holy Land, he couldn't resist identifying himself as "Father Abraham"

to the customs officer. Amusing to dad perhaps, but not to the ever vigilant Israelis.

A favourite Psalm of Dad's proclaims, "Blessed is the man [who] delights in the law of the Lord." I wonder if Dad were here to read this today, whether he wouldn't say with that slightly crooked half-smile of his, "And that is the most important."

Packing up my sins

I pack up my sorrows
I pack up my sadness
And put them
into God's bag
Which he holds out
for me
And I see them no more.
God takes care of them for me.

I pack up my sins
And slip them
into God's bag
And Jesus picks them out
And nails them
to the tree
And I see them no more.

Laura Plett Siemens

Daddy, Take a Little Time

Daddy, take a little time for me.
You work and fret and never stop,
And place me on your knee.
Just show you care, just once a day,
You know, I'm only three.

Daddy, take a little time for me.
You read and play and go away
And come home when it's late.
Just tuck me in, just once a week,
You know, I'm only eight.

Daddy, take a little time for me.
You buy and sell and make big bucks
I hardly know where all you've been.
Just talk with me, just once a month,
You know, I'm now a teen.

Daddy, take a little time for me.
You've made it now, can take your ease
And find the time to show your face.
Just sit with me, just once a year,
These bars are sure, so dark this place!

John Stoesz



The SBC Choir sang under the direction of Luann Hiebert.



Graduates enter the celebration.



Dr. Pierre Gilbert



President Abe Bergen



Valedictorian Justina Neufeld

Under construction

SBC graduates 27

April 18 marked a special turning point in the lives of 27 people as they graduated from Steinbach Bible College.

As President Abe Bergen noted in his invocation, each of them come with a good story of a different use for the education they have received. Nineteen received a Bachelor of Arts degree and eight graduated with a Diploma of Biblical Studies.

Justina Neufeld presented the valedictory address. She noted that the past year's theme of *Under Construction* was very suitable. The students' lives were developed through the education they received, as well as experiencing the actual building construction.

She thanked the faculty who taught them to seek God in everything they did. She appreciated that the faculty opened their homes, displayed Christ in their lives and showed care and love to the graduates.

Justina also thanked family and friends for the care packages and for being prayer warriors for them. She was grateful for the friendship displayed by the undergrads.

Justina then went on to reflect about their time at SBC. She commented on the inexpensive events, things that people with money would not do. She described how events like MissionX stretched them and developed true friendships that both stretched across borders or right next door. As Justina delivered her speech, it was easy to see the strong connection that these grads had with each other.

On behalf of the undergrads, Alex Loewen shared how the college was like a family gathering where they made memories, laughed together and did activities together; SBC is like a diverse unified family. He expressed appreciation for the grads who made the choice, first of all, to attend SBC, and then to be there for the others who followed, making the new

students feel welcome. The graduates became their role models. Alex ended his address by commenting that from this day to the last God is not finished with us.

Dr. Pierre Gilbert of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary delivered the commencement address. He directed his address particularly to the grads, but allowed the rest of those in attendance to listen in.

Gilbert shared five things that he challenged the grads to consider. First, have a clear purpose. Second, be confident. Focus not on one's own inadequacies but on the power of God. Third, be joyful. Fourth, remember God in all that you do. Fifth, follow and worship the true Christ.

He closed with a question for every day of our lives: Who will we serve? On which altar will we sacrifice ourselves—self, religion, political correctness or the living Christ? Choosing the living Christ will give life purpose, confidence, joy and meaning.

The program also included music from the SBC choir under the direction of Luann Hiebert. Every part of the program was fitting for a graduation service, including the music selections of *We've Come This Far By Faith*, *Be Thou My Vision* and *He Never Failed Me Yet*.

We extend our congratulations to the graduates of 2004 and pray that they continue to remember God in all they do as they make use of the education they have received.

On which altar will we sacrifice ourselves—self, religion, political correctness or the living Christ?

Debbie Funk
Assistant Editor, *The Chronicle*

Shoulder Tapping

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.

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.

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.

St. Aidan's Christian School seeks **teachers** for its inner city Grades 5 to 9 alternative Christian school, 418 Aberdeen Ave., Winnipeg, Man. Positions are open September 2004. Must have a missionary heart. Send resume and pastoral reference to Charlotte Holland, 240 Prichard Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2W 2J1. Fax: 204-586-1416, e-mail adulated@gospelmission.ca

Landmark Youth for Christ seeks an **executive director** to run its full-time youth drop in centre (Flatland Drop In). The centre is situated on Main Street. Its newly renovated and very cool building will hold up to 60 teens on any night. This exciting new facility is revving up and ready to go to work, but we are missing the most important person: the director. Is it you? Contact Janice Schultz at siskinbay16@yahoo.ca

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.

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 the 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 or sjj@mennonitecc.ca.

MDS workers needed in Newport News, Virginia (response to 2003 hurricane). Project directors Dan and Elaine Zehr, phone 757-884-9356, mdsnewportnews@aol.com. **Jackson, Tennessee** (response to 2003 tornado). Project directors Bob and Kathy Weichman, phone 731-664-5188,

mennonite@bellsouth.net. **Julian, California** (response to 2003 wildfire). Project directors Freeman and Verba Hershberger, phone 760-765-2345, julian@mds.mennonite.net.

Canadian volunteers, remember to connect with the MDS office in Winnipeg prior to making service arrangements directly with an MDS project. This will ensure that you receive a border crossing letter, travel assistance/receipting details and other important MDS information. Extension office: 866-261-1274.

Menville Christian School (MCS), near Riverton, Man., invites applications from **certified teachers** committed to teaching the province's curriculum from a Christian perspective for two full-time multi-grade positions: Kindergarten to Grade 3 (all subjects) and Grade 8 to Senior 2 (all subjects). For details contact principal Randy Hiebert at 204-378-5576. To enrich the program of the school through music or other specialization is an asset.

MCS is an independent, government funded school with 45 students. MCS offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Various housing options are available.

Send resume, statement of faith, and three references (including one pastoral reference) to Roger Friesen, MCS Board Chairman, Box 448, Riverton, MB, R0C 2R0. Applications may be faxed to him at 204-378-2594.

MCS thanks all applicants for their interest. However, only those chosen for interviews will be contacted.

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) is a charitable foundation serving seven Anabaptist church conferences across Canada. MFC is seeking a **full-time stewardship consultant** to manage its new Calgary office and promote biblical stewardship in Alberta.

Candidates for this position should be able to communicate effectively in group settings and with individuals; possess an understanding of charitable gift and estate planning; be creative, organized, and self-motivated; support MFC's stewardship mission; be a contributing part of the staff team.

Each candidate must be a member of one of MFC's seven participating conferences. Submit applications by June 30, 2004 to Robert Veitch, General Manager, 12-1325 Markham Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6. Phone: 800-772-3257; fax 204-488-1986; e-mail rveitch@mennofoundation.ca www.mennofoundation.ca



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Choose your heroes carefully

WHO IS your hero? Is he someone that you admire because he is famous or popular, or because he has special ability? Is he a basketball star skilled in acrobatic slam dunks? Does he hit doubles and triples and homeruns? Is he a spectacular skater or stick handler?

We admire sports stars and enjoy watching their skilled play. But are sports stars really heroes? Have they done something heroic?

A real hero is someone who takes a huge risk to himself in order to help someone else. He is someone who has compassion for people or animals hurt or in danger. He shows bravery and courage as he risks danger to help the hurt one.

We may think someone brave has no fear and as a result he can do the brave deed. But this is not so. A brave person fears the danger he sees but he is determined to help; he does the brave act in spite of his fear. That is courage. A real hero is someone who risks his own safety, someone who has strength and courage to stand up for what he believes is right even though he may be afraid of the danger involved. Do you know anyone like this?

Let's look in the Bible for examples.

Joseph is a hero. Joseph had a dream he believed in. Telling his dream involved the risk of being laughed at. He lost his family. He was sold as a slave, accused of attacking Potiphar's wife, and thrown in prison. Yet he continued to believe in his dream and helped his prison mates with theirs even though he was forgotten.

His risk was being forgotten forever and never again

seeing his family. Another risk was that Pharaoh would not like what his dream meant and kill him. Joseph might have been afraid and in despair. But his faith in God was greater than his fear. Joseph knew God was with him, still, his actions took courage.

Daniel and his friends are heroes, too. They stood firm in their decision not to worship King Nebuchadnezzar. If they did not worship him, the King said, they would be thrown in a burning furnace. But they believed God would protect them. The risk was that

if God chose not to save them they would surely die. Their decision took courage and they put their faith in God. God did save them, Nebuchadnezzar, and all his kingdom.

Another hero is Queen Esther. She knew she was risking her life when she asked to see the king; the law said that everyone who requested to see the king would be put to death, except for the one he pointed to. Her request took courage. But she believed God had sent her to save her people. She was afraid, she knew the danger well, but she put her faith in God and her people were saved. Her actions were heroic.

Both Miriam and her mother risked their lives to save Moses. They disobeyed Pharaoh's law that all baby boys should be drowned. Instead they hid him in a basket on the river Nile. Their actions took courage.

As Miriam guarded the basket floating on the river she risked being discovered. She had the courage to speak to the princess and was brave to suggest Moses' mother as a nurse for him. Both Miriam and her mother trusted God more than they feared Pharaoh.

Everyone needs to have a hero. It is important to know why they are our heroes.



Find the Tree answers from April 21:

1. knowledge
2. sycamore
3. gourd
4. juniper
5. mulberry
6. gopher
7. palm
8. burning bush

Finish the sentences below:

1. A person who is my hero is: _____.
2. This person is my hero because: _____.
3. Two words that describe this person are: _____; _____.
4. One thing this person does that I admire is _____.
5. One way I can be more like my hero is _____.
6. Are you a hero? Have you ever done something that you think is heroic? If you have, write a few sentences to tell about it: _____
