

The Messenger



Sisters Ann, Betty, Kathy, Dora and Elsie

**Dora Friesen says that growing older is part of
God's plan, but don't get too comfortable!**

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CONFERENCE
VOLUME 42 NUMBER 13 JULY 14, 2004



Kick off those slippers and head for the mountain!

Dora Friesen

SINCE February 1995, when I returned to Manitoba after many years of missionary service in Mexico, I have been asked many times, “Are you retired now?” I often respond with the question, “What is retirement?”

Sometimes I get an answer; sometimes I don’t.

An article in *Moody Monthly* says, “Retirement is not scriptural.” We find that the Old Testament priests served only to a certain age. A dictionary defines *retirement* like this: “to go into privacy or seclusion...to withdraw from active service.”

Gary Collins says in *Man in Transition* (Creation House, 1971, p. 137):

For centuries men have been concerned about old age. Early in Bible history Abraham was promised long life and a “good old age” (Genesis 15:15), apparently as something desirable. Wise King Solomon thought of old age as a time of glory, especially for righteous people (Proverbs 16:31). It is also recognized that the end of life could be unpleasant (Ecclesiastes 12:1). The Psalmist prayed that he would not be “cast off” or forsaken when he was old and weak (Psalm 71:9, 18).

So, according to the Bible, getting

older is something “good, desirable, a time of glory, pleasant.”

In 1935, the U.S. government put 65 as the retirement age. It has become a hard and fast law. I tried to prepare for retirement. I don’t think I am very successful. I did read a book *Climbing Down the Ladder* by a Christian Mennonite professor. He stresses the importance of learning to draw back and letting the younger generation take your job. Also, he puts much emphasis on the fact that retirement can be happy and meaningful.

Whether retirement is scriptural or not, I don’t want to discuss. But aging is God’s plan. Therefore, it is something good and beautiful. God could have given us a life span of 70 years and kept us young and strong all of that time, but his plan was otherwise. I think we must think of aging as something good. I would agree with Katie Funk Wiebe about “the joy of aging.”

When I was still in Mexico, friends would write and comment about my retirement. Here are some quotes:

- Will you come back to Canada? I think it is difficult for missionaries to know where they belong when they reach retirement.
- I guess you wouldn’t consider retirement a storm, but I must admit that it seems that way at times. However, when I count my blessings, I find I have so much to be thankful for. I can even be thankful I don’t absolutely have to work when I don’t feel like it.
- It will be a different phase in your life to do a lot of things you could never do before.
- We know Canada won’t feel like home. (True!)
- Where have you decided to settle down? (It was a difficult decision. When I came back, I lived at Rosewood Apartments in Rosenort, Man., for two weeks.)
- A businesswoman said that there was a time of grieving in retirement. Some people cannot cope.

In the Steinbach, Man., area, 20 percent of people are over 55. There are many retired people. How important it is that we learn to be happy! At my first Seniors’ Camp, a worker showed us to our cabin. When I saw the bunk beds I remarked about sleeping on the top bunk. She responded, “Seniors don’t sleep on the top bunk.” Oh! (In Mexico, I had only been at children’s and youth camp.)

Retirement has been a drastic change for me, but I must add that God has abundantly blessed me.



1994: Dora with children.

Dora Friesen is a member of Rosenort (Man.) EMC. She began her missionary service in Mexico in 1958 and served for 37 years. She served in nursing, in women’s and children’s ministries, and, in retirement, as host of the missionary guesthouse in El Paso, Texas.



1993: Making tamales with ladies involved in Bible study.

There are many myths about retirement that need to be exposed, but I won't take the time. I was very impressed in a seminar with Katie Funk Wiebe. She counselled:

- Simplify your life. Buy only what you need.
- Don't have resentments.
- Forgive.
- Say goodbye to the past and hello to the future. (Paul said, "Forgetting those things that are behind I press toward the future.")
- Have an active prayer life.
- Be open to God.
- Be open to people.
- Take risks. (I took a risk and went down a waterslide.)
- Volunteer workers live long and are happier.



Nursing and midwifery—twins.

There is a tremendous waste of gifts if retired people don't have responsibilities. Don't withdraw into a recliner and a TV. Retirement should not be just play and socializing. It should be learning, serving, playing and socializing. Socialize with younger people. Celebrate, with more than eating out. Help others spiritually. Leave behind a spiritual inheritance.

Paul Fremont Brown has a chapter on *Abundant living in later years*. He says, "Don't have too much time for introspection. There comes a time in life when examining yourself too closely is like looking at your face in a convex mirror. Every pore looks like a moon crater and every wrinkle like the Grand Canyon. You can get so wrapped up in yourself that it's like living in a straitjacket. Before that happens you need to look you need to look outward and get involved with other people" (*further source unknown*).

Some of the happiest people are those whose hobby is people. Not only do we need people to maintain our sense of values and perspective, but we need them because we need to be needed by them.

I have some friends who are great examples in their retirement: some travel and serve in other countries, one bubbles with the Lord, another responds to cancer and poor health. They go through different states in their retirement.

Carl McMIndes, former president of Gospel Missionary Union (now Avant Ministries), quotes Martha Nafziger who said, "Ever since our retirement...we've been open to God's leading for another assignment."

"Thousands of Christians are joining the ranks of the retired, many of whom have plenty of energy to devote to other causes," McMIndes says. "There are more retired Christians in North America than ever before. What a potential force for God!"

McMIndes says in an article *Never Too Old to Go!* that we should "approach retirement with a purpose...God has given you the time, the expertise, and perhaps the financial ability to spend the next several years in fruitful Christian ministry" (*The Gospel Message*, 1994, no. 4, p. 15).

Of Caleb, J. Oswald Sanders has written, "To him, it was not 'petering out,' but pressing on to new achievement; not descending the mountain but attacking a higher peak; not senility and sterility, but adventure and achievement. His life moved steadily forward not to termination but to consummation. His later years were best."

So kick off those soft slippers, get out of the Lazy Boy rocker, and get ready to start heading for the mountain. God is looking for a few Calebs to rout some giants and claim some mountain strongholds for Himself.

Don't let retirement become the end of the road. Retirement simply provides you with an opportunity to begin a new journey. Don't stop climbing. The best is yet to come!

May, as the Bible says, your retirement be good, desirable, a time of glory, and pleasant. ■



May 2002: Dora with brother Nick Friesen.

Evelyn Barkman: Africa still needs many workers

Terry M. Smith

WHILE Evelyn Barkman faces changes, she wants EMCers to be aware of one fact that is unchanged: Africa still needs many workers.

Some changes she's aware of are minor: The Christian organization she works for, the Bible school she attended, the church she interned in, the city where she completed her missionary candidacy—all have changed their names.

More importantly, the organization she has worked with for 33 years is shifting in its strategy. And she has moved with the school she teaches at, now in its third location. Even Evelyn's health has changed somewhat.

But what hasn't changed for this veteran worker is the drive that took her to Mali, West Africa. Now she talks about it, sitting in the editor's office in Steinbach, Man.

Raised mostly in Landmark, Man., Evelyn Barkman is connected with Prairie Rose EMC. She took practical nurse's training, finished high school, studied for three years at a Bible college near Pambrun, Sask., and then interned in our EM church at Portage la Prairie, Man. She went on to candidate school in Missouri and then studied French in Switzerland.

Offered the choice of serving in Morocco or Mali, in 1971 Evelyn arrived in Mali. For much of her service she has worked as an administrator and teacher at a boarding school for girls who miss entering the public system—about 80 to 100 students.

Girls enter at age 10 or older, study for seven years, and emerge with perhaps the public school equivalent of grade six. There are three emphases—academic, Bible knowledge, and practical skills.

Since the age for marriage is 15 to 18—when many families feel cultural pressure—most girls are wed shortly after finishing the program. A few girls marry Bible school students and study further.

Mali, with a population estimated two years ago at 11.3 million people, is a former French colony that gained its independence in 1960 (*BBC*). Evelyn teaches in Bambara, the most widely-



Veteran worker Evelyn Barkman talked to *Messenger* editors about Mali, Avant's emphasis on "short-cycle church planting," being part of an interdenominational work, and the EMC discussion on women and church leadership.

spoken language in the country. French, Mali's official language, is taught in the Girls' School.

Because the school expanded, it has moved twice. Recently, though, there are more educational opportunities within villages. The need for a boarding school is declining, and its current enrollment is about 80.

Ten years ago the boarding school became part of the campus at Mana Bible School. Mana is a village located about 100 kms south of the capital city of Bamako. An estimated thirteen to fifteen thousand people live in the area (*Hands Across the Nations*).

Evelyn began teaching also at the Bible school. She teaches women and men—Genesis, Exodus, and courses on teaching methods come readily to mind—with an emphasis borrowed from New Tribes Mission on teaching the Bible chronologically. She seeks to teach at least one class with only girls.

In 1992 the country's first democratically-elected president, Amandou Toumani Toure, took over, and Mali's broadcast and print media are among the freest in Africa (*BBC*). Evelyn confirms the freedom of the press and adds that Mali has freedom of religion. The country does not reflect the tension between religious groups that can be seen elsewhere, she said.

Avant Ministries has been in Mali for about a century, she said. While there were four main Christian organizations in Mali—United World, Alliance, Baptist, and AMI—recently a "large number" of groups "have come in."

Baptists minister farther north in Timbuktu, a fabled location that Evelyn says hasn't changed much. The churches established by Alliance and Avant "are pretty well autonomous"—self-governing and self-propagating, though with some financial dependence, a strong, mature, imperfect church. Avant Ministries has 200 "churches or church groups," with some pastors serving more than one point. The Alliance is larger.

While people think Africa is "passé" and has more Christians "than anywhere else in the world," needs remain, she stresses. Mali is "at least 90 percent" non-Christian. In Mali, she estimates there

are 38 people groups, with about 20 being “unreached.” She said, “So there’s a lot of work to be done, and that is something that people don’t often understand.”

What should we know about Evelyn Barkman? She says, “I’m heading for retirement,” then shifts the focus toward Avant’s change in philosophy and wonders about the effect of eventual worker withdrawal from Mali.

Recently, Avant Ministries has adopted a philosophy of “short-cycle church planting”—where a team enters with its strategy and language learning completed, leadership is developed early, and workers pull out in about five years.

While Evelyn appreciates leaders with vision sought in prayer, she wonders if this approach will work equally well in settings that vary in their literacy rates and exposure to the Bible. She says that some settings might need a longer time.

As an EMCer in an interdenominational organization, how does she find that social concern, justice, or peace fit into the mix? “I think I have never felt stifled in any way,” she says. “I’ve felt I’m very free to be able to teach the Bible.”

“And as far as social concerns, we certainly do have a lot of opportunity for social concerns.”

At Mana, in past few years “we’ve done a lot of building,” improving the water system, and “are building a large medical clinic to serve the whole community.” There has been help with farming, especially for pastors, providing them with “cows and plows so they can be more self-sufficient.” There have been dam projects to improve water systems “in many communities.”

“The social aspect, I feel, has not been lacking at all,” she says.

“Now the peace position, as such, I think is not something that we particularly touch on. Certainly teach the Bible, but we wouldn’t be approaching it as an Anabaptist...too much.”

How does Mana instruct its students to be involved in political process or social justice matters? “They are encouraged to vote and to vote intelligently. I don’t think that we get involved formally in political matters in the Bible school, but certainly there is a lot of informal dialoguing going on,” she responds.

“The church also is not overtly political. I mean, we have tried to keep away from overtly supporting one party or the other as a church. We try to keep out of political things as much as possible.”

Lately, though, people have been encouraged to become more involved in the political system—“that there is a place for Christians to have a voice, especially in the local political scene. There are very few Christians involved.”

“Many times even the president has called in our church leaders for prayer, for advice on certain issues. So there is a good rapport there, and a respect for the church...There’s a good relationship, but it’s not overtly political,” she said.

How does she view the EMC discussion on women and church leadership? Evelyn says she has “been granted a lot of freedom in leadership.”

“I think the EMC has always, as far as our missionaries were concerned, probably gave them a lot more freedom than maybe in the local churches here.” She has served as a school administrator to whom male teachers were responsible and in the Bible school. “I haven’t personally felt that there was opposition to that. Perhaps there would be if I asked. I never asked.” She laughs.

“I feel that we have a lot of gifted women who could be used more in the church if there was maybe more openness to it,” she says. “But I also feel that the Bible does give us some guidelines to what level of leadership a woman should be involved.” In church planting, “as quickly as possible” they try to get men involved because male leadership is more culturally acceptable.

If the culture shifts in Canada, would she be more comfortable with women being involved in pastoral roles in Canada? Barkman “personally would not have a problem with a woman pastor,” but recognizes some churches would be uncomfortable with it. There is a lot of room for “team ministry,” but she prefers that a church choose a man as senior pastor.

Evelyn teaches in the Girls School and Bible School steadily for eight months. She spends Canada’s summer months here, where she undergoes check-ups for breast cancer.

But her health isn’t the focus of the discussion. Evelyn’s glad to be asked about current mission work because, when reporting locally in churches, “we can’t just say that in two minutes and have people understand where you’re coming from.”

But now she’s had more than two minutes. ■



Evelyn Barkman has served in Mali, West Africa, since 1971. “I think the EMC has always, as far as our missionaries were concerned, probably gave them a lot more freedom than maybe in the local churches here.”



Board members of AMAR, a ministry to people living with HIV/AIDS, are Judy and David Schmidt, Blas Arevalos, Bernardo Vovadella, Giovanni and Liz.



Youth, adults and children attend a youth meeting at the house church in Pirá Verá.

Field Visit

Many needs, challenging ministries in Paraguay

Lester Olfert, EMC Foreign Secretary

FIELD VISITS are one of the highlights of my job. Contrary to what some may think, it is not a vacation for me, although there are always times of relaxation. The highlights come from seeing how God is working in and through the lives of people and how the church is being built. Here are some highlights.

It is a privilege to worship with the Paraguayan believers in their churches. In *Pirá Verá* at a youth meeting we heard the testimony of four young men who had been transformed by the power of Jesus, experiencing forgiveness and healing of relationships. A year ago some were involved in a murder, but now accomplices and the victim's son worshiped together.

The *Itakyry Church* had their first service under a new roof the Sunday afternoon we visited them. The roof had collapsed in January and since then they had services without a roof, sometimes being interrupted by rain. They are looking forward

to tearing down the old walls and building new ones, and doubling the size of the sanctuary to accommodate a growing congregation.

There was evidence of maturing leadership. *Anival*, a relatively young Christian, gives leadership to the *Itakyry church*. They are reaching out to a neighboring community. During the communion service we shared, tears of joy and gratitude rolled down from his checks.

The three elders of *Our Refuge Church* in Roque Alonso give leadership to the church.

Missionary Dave Schmidt has passed on the baton of church leadership to these elders, to work in the AIDS ministry full-time. The elders each take certain areas of ministry in the church. They admitted to feelings of inadequacy but they were grateful that God was enabling them. Occasionally they call on

Dave for advice or a sermon. One of the elders has a vision for outreach.

Tomas, who lead the service in Pindó, took us to the local school after the service. As president of the local school board, he proudly showed us the new school and talked about the three additional teachers they had obtained during the last year. It was good to see a Christian involved in the community.

Some thirty leaders came to the monthly Leadership Seminar in Caaguazú. There was good discussion of Biblical texts and practical applications to their areas of ministry. Encouragement was given and received as they consulted with each other concerning challenges in ministry. These monthly training sessions are a key factor in building unity.

That same weekend the Annual Assembly of the Paraguayan Mennonite Conference was held. The Administrative Committee has been taking responsibility in getting their legal status and with good progress. It was time for election of officers, after serving two-year terms. The guidance of the Holy Spirit was evident as positions were filled with capable people.



A monthly leadership seminar is held. These leaders and teachers attended in May. That's Gil Rempel (back left) and Ernest Funk (far right).



Erna Plett, Chris Kroeker, Joanne Martens, Harold Fast (visiting Board of Missions member), Dave and Judy Schmidt, Elsie and Ernest Funk participate in a Paraguay Field staff meeting.

Outgoing coordinator Serafin Benítez did a fine job of leading the assembly meeting. Pray for Claudio Fernández, the newly elected coordinator, and the six other members of the Administrative Committee as they give direction to the Paraguayan Conference.

Plans are being made to expand the facilities at the Caaguazú Centre to accommodate the growing number of leaders that come for training. Attendance has doubled from 15 to 30 during the past year, so classrooms, kitchen, dining room and sleeping facilities are inadequate.

If funds become available, construction on the 30 x 65 foot building (classrooms, assembly hall, kitchen, bathrooms) would begin in November. The national church will provide some voluntary labour, but most of the finances will need to come from other sources. However, leadership training is a good investment for the growth of the national church.

New doors for ministry have opened through the counselling service being provided at the bookstore Ñeé Porá in Caaguazú. Agripino Presentado, former pastor of the Central Mennonite church in Caaguazú, was hired as full-time counsellor. The local national high school, with a student body of 1800, has requested classes on moral issues (drugs, sex, abortion, family relationships) from a biblical perspective. Agripino involves Erna Plett and Richarh Rojas in these classes.

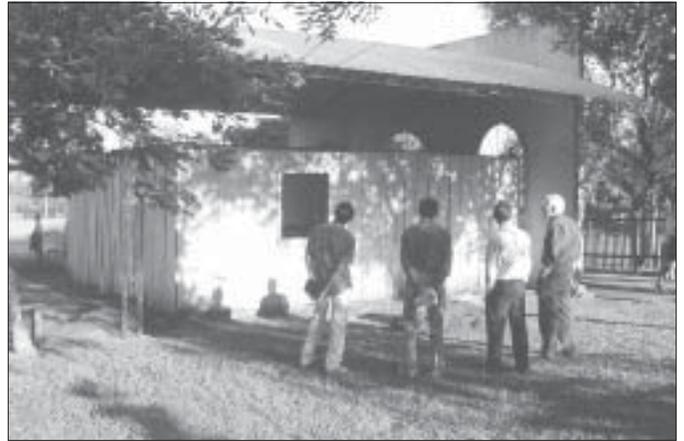
Leadership training is also being done by extension. Local leaders are taught in small groups in their churches. Gil Rempel and Ernest Funk are strengthening this aspect by developing lower level materials to teach and mentor leaders in the local churches.

We saw the reality of spiritual conflict in different ways. A couple of churches were experiencing internal conflicts dealing with Christians that had fallen back into a sinful lifestyle. A man

is now in jail in Argentina with drug-trafficking charges. The church, where he was a member, struggled to know how to relate to the wife and mother-in-law. A young man continues to struggle with alcohol addiction.



Lester Olfert is Foreign Secretary to the EMC Board of Missions, with responsibilities for overseeing efforts in Paraguay, Mexico, and Nicaragua.



Men of the church inspect the new roof at Itakyry Church. The old roof had collapsed. A larger roof was built first—with plans to expand the entire building.

A teenage girl recently came out of a drug-detox centre, became a Christian and is being mentored. Churches struggle to know how to relate to single mothers who want to follow Jesus, but are caught in a web of illicit relationships. The board that directs the Radio station, made the tough decision to terminate (upon mutual agreement) the main announcer because of immoral living.

Pray that the missionaries and national leaders would “be strong in the Lord and his mighty power,” and “put on the full armour of God so that they can take their stand against the devil’s schemes” (Ephesians 6:10-11).

Another wonderful highlight was to see the AIDS drop-in centre in full operation. Eighteen months ago we looked at a building that was ideal for this ministry. Ideal because it is located across the street from the hospital that treats infectious diseases. God, through the generosity of many people, provided the \$41,000 US to purchase the property.

Since September 2003, a *Place of Refuge* (the official name in Spanish), has been provided to people that are HIV+ and living with AIDS. We witnessed volunteers reading the Bible and praying with clients. Two women prepared a delicious noon meal that was served to clients and volunteers.

Meals are taken to AIDS patients in the hospital. Some volunteers that are HIV+ receive some financial support. One such volunteer goes to schools to talk to classes about AIDS and prevention from a Christian perspective. There are also beds to rest, medications and sanitary supplies available.

Daily 20 to 30 people drop-in. Everyone receives love and acceptance. The board of directors of this ministry thank God for the growing support of the churches, businesses and individuals. The majority of the funds for operating expenses come from local sources.

Finally, it is great to visit with the missionaries. It is encouraging to hear how they are experiencing God in their lives and ministry. Annabelle Friesen praised God for progress in the Spanish language, adapting to Paraguayan culture, and growing in character.

Doris Friesen prayed with two adolescent girls to accept Jesus while we were there. Chris Kroeker testified of lives changed through the radio messages and was thankful for unity in the radio board in dealing with a difficult situation.

Renita Rempel had the privilege of delivering twins. Each missionary, national leader and Christian needs our prayer support. They face struggles similar to the ones we face in everyday life and ministry. What a privilege to be partners in the gospel! ■

A private faith is a public loss

SOME Canadian politicians apparently say they separate their personal religious faith from their political life. What exactly does this mean?

Shouldn't Christian principles of *do not lie, do not steal, do not commit murder* apply within political life? Shouldn't a political philosophy benefit from the Jewish and Christian conviction of the purposefulness of human history? Human beings are made in God's image and human community is important—are these thoughts to be set aside when developing policies?

Some politicians apparently seem passionate to use political principles to influence millions of people, yet be content to reduce the sphere of their faith to quietly touch a handful of individuals (perhaps their family). This ignores how the Christian faith is relevant to the good of wider society.

Some political leaders who claim a connection to the Christian Church could study their faith's lessons a bit more. No faith is properly left at home, only to be retrieved

after work. Prophets in history held political leaders accountable for failing to live up to their obligations while within office (2 Sam. 12:1-13) and politicians do need wisdom (Prov. 8:16).

Soldiers of Christ don't just serve on private time; nor do they fight only in private wars.

Some political leaders who claim a connection to the Christian Church could study their faith's lessons a bit more. No faith is properly left at home, only to be retrieved after work.

What about the separation of church and state? There's nothing official about it in the Canadian constitution. Yes, the state should not enforce Christian beliefs and the Church should not simply bless the state. Beyond that, talk of separation can be so glib.

William Stringfellow, a lawyer and an Anglican theologian from the United States, said it well: "The Biblical image of the

Church is, to be sure, that of a stranger and alien in the world, despised by the nation, but the Biblical image of the Church is *never* one of an innocuous, isolationist religious society cut off from the actual affairs of men and nations in the world" (*A Public and Private Faith*).

Terry M. Smith

Passions and the Church's mission

VIOLENCE can never bring peace was a letter in May 2004 issue of the *Presbyterian Record*. Stanford Penner of Landmark, Man., wrote it. Stanford is a peace evangelist. Good for him!

Some EMCers are known for their commitment to missions and some for a passion for biblical education. There are people passionate about church planting and others passionate for the health of established churches in Canada. Some EMCers are passionate about serving Low German people with roots in Mexico, while others serve our country's cities.

Some church members are passionate for an enriched understanding of Anabaptism and others with a ministry to people with HIV/AIDS. These people are mentioned in a positive way; many others could be.

In the EMC, a small part of the Body of Christ, we need a diversity of gifts to grow into maturity. Various perspectives and

passions—gifts—are helpful. In fact, the EMC needs to recognize and incorporate even more passions than we have to date.

During the past 50 years EMC developed a passion for evangelistic missions. We have allowed it to change us, to define us and sometimes, sadly, to limit us. The mission of the Church is broader than missions. For a church to be mature means more than just to reproduce. We need to be committed to both reproduction and to maturity (Eph. 4:11-16).

We are Christ's people and He sees needs beyond what we do. Dare we be given an inheritance of radical Anabaptism and then rest comfortable in what our middle class lives invite us to settle for?

The Spirit works decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:33), but when He cleans house and sends us forth it can seem messy indeed.

Spirit of God, send us forth!

Terry M. Smith

The Messenger

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Terry M. Smith



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THE MESSENGER is the publication of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. It is available to the general public. Its purpose is to inform, instruct and inspire: inform concerning events and activities in the denomination; instruct in godliness and victorious living; inspire to earnestly contend for the faith.

Letters, articles, photos and poems are welcomed. Unpublished material is not returned except by request. The views and opinions expressed by the writers are their own and do not necessarily represent the position of the Conference.

THE MESSENGER is published twice a month (once a month in July and August) by the Board of Church Ministries of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, 440 Main Street, Steinbach, Manitoba.

Subscriptions: \$12 per year (Manitoba residents add 7% PST, total: \$12.84). Subscriptions are voluntary and optional to people within or outside of the EMC. In cooperation with the EMC Conference Council, members and adherents pay through their church.

THE MESSENGER is a member of Meetinghouse and Canadian Church Press.

Second-class postage paid at Steinbach, Manitoba.

PAP Registration # 9914

Publications Mail agreement

40017362

Canada

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

The magazine and its publisher, the Board of Church Ministries, are obligated to work within the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*.

Mailing information: All correspondence, including undelivered copies, change of address and new subscriptions, should be addressed to:

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On-line edition available at

www.emconf.ca/Messenger

MESSENGER SCHEDULE:

No. 16 - September 22

(copy due Sept. 10)

With Our Missionaries

Mali

Joyful excitement on MBS campus

Joyful excitement filled the air on May 10 as big buses and bush taxis rolled onto the Mana Bible School campus. Friends who had not seen each other in many years greeted others with hugs and tears.

The occasion was the first Evangelical Protestant Church of Mali (EPPM) women's conference.

For many years my Malian co-workers and Mana students had been busy preparing the campus, buying food, and making necessary arrangements to host this gathering of more than 600 women. A part of this preparation was to install a new solar water pump by Denis Keating from Prairie Rose EMC. Without this abundant source of clean water, this conference could not have been possible.

Local government officials, community leaders and representatives from the Catholic Church attended the conference kick off. A highlight was having the former and current EPPM presidents take part in the service. Most women wore outfits made with material especially designed for this occasion.

During the week, women were challenged and encouraged as speakers developed two theme verses. *Come, let us rebuild the wall* (Neh. 2:19) was a call to rebuild broken relationships, unstable homes, and struggling churches. *Arise, shine, for your light has come* (Isaiah 60:1) was a call to be shining lights for Jesus, and to bring this light to family, community, and unreached peoples of Mali.

Malians love to sing and dance so this was an important part of each service. Prayer also was emphasized. Each morning before daybreak prayer leaders would softly sing to wake women and call them to prayer. Faith stories, prayer concerns, confession and tears were shared in meetings and in private one-on-one chats.

Food was a major item of interest. Cooks worked hard to prepare abundant, tasty meals, which women enjoyed to the full. Most of them have had very few days off from cooking since they were young girls.

What did this conference mean to the women?

Ruti, along with husband Philip, is a missionary living in the Bozo tribe. She is raising her family of five young children in this isolated and strongly Muslim community, where she has very little contact with other Christian women.

Mariyama has struggled with health problems and grinding poverty as she faithfully worked alongside her pastor husband and raised her family in a village

far removed from mature Christians. She has had little opportunity for Christian fellowship since she graduated from the Girls School in the late seventies. Her warm hugs and radiant smile indicated what this time meant to her.

Many people, like Jenebu, are raising their children in congested cities where they face the daily stress of making ends meet and keeping their children from temptations around them. Several non-Christian women came at the invitation of a friend and began their walk with Jesus during this conference.

I believe that each woman left with a renewed commitment to serve Christ, a deeper trust in God's faithfulness, and a greater appreciation for this huge family of faith sisters.

Evelyn Barkman



The first Evangelical Protestant Church of Mali women's conference was held in May.

Senegal

Festivals provide occasions to share Jesus' message

In walking Senegal's dusty streets with their neighbors, the Friends of the Wolof daily live out their calling. They call themselves *talihibé Insa*, followers of Jesus Christ.

In a country where the word *Christian* evokes images of adultery, alcohol, eating pork, the medieval Crusades and American bombs, *talihibé Insa* offer friendship that breaks down stereotypes.

"Our purpose in reaching out to the Wolof is to offer the kind of satisfying friendship that God has so generously offered to us in Jesus," states a Friends brochure. "We are mindful that" the Wolof "too will befriend us as they share the bounty of their cultural riches.... Our prayer is that...we will together partake of God's eternal salvation so abundantly provided in Jesus and so graciously revealed in his body, the church."

Because Senegalese culture revolves around religious festivals, Friends use these celebrations to teach how Jesus fulfills the human longing for intimacy with God expressed in the festivals.

How to honour God and live out our faith in Jesus Christ while remaining faithful in celebrating the necessary cultural events in their lives is a key concern for Wolof believers.

Wolof believers take advantage of *ngentes*, baby-naming ceremonies, to teach Biblical parenting. The first believer to celebrate an *ngente* as a follower was a closet believer before the team arrived. Mentoring allowed him to make his faith

public and become the leader of a small group of *talihibé Insa* who meet weekly.

Six times a year, small local groups of believers have regional gatherings that assemble about 25 Senegalese and 10 expatriate believers for worship. These gatherings assure believers they aren't alone, a frightening stance where community relationships are of ultimate importance.

Friends plug into *Ramadan* and *Tabaski* to teach about sacrifice and the meaning of Jesus' death that offers salvation and eternal life to all who believe in him. Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, cultivates piety and purity in Muslim believers. *Tabaksi*, the biggest religious holiday in Senegal, celebrates Abraham's obedience and God's providence. Abraham was willing to obey God to the point of sacrificing his son and God provided a sheep.

At Easter, two sheep were bought and fattened. All believers invited their friends to hear the story of Jesus' resurrection. Neighborhood dignitaries spoke, adding their blessing to the assembled crowd. Lots of relationships were built.

Friends continue to follow Jesus alongside their Senegalese brothers and sisters. Together they search for ways of presenting Jesus' message so that it can be heard as truly good news. They operate a cyber café and are implementing an agricultural program.

AIMM/MMN

AWANA, YC and care groups

High Level, Alta.: Well, summer is well on its way to being the hottest one ever. It is only June and we are already feeling the heat. Many are beginning to think air conditioning might be a good investment right about now!

With the coming of summer brings the end of many fall and winter programs at High Level Christian Fellowship. AWANA, a Bible club for kids held every Wednesday night, said goodbye on May 26. It will start again in September.

To ease the pain of separation, a barbecue supper was held for the children and their parents. The turnout was not as high as in previous years, but the event was just as exhilarating. All year long, the clubbers earn small tokens called shares for having good behaviour, or completing a certain amount of sections in their handbooks. So, along with the barbecue, a shares store was also set up for the clubbers to spend their well earned shares on fun items and candy.

The youth group just returned from attending an annual youth conference called YC in Edmonton. This is always a great time of spiritual growth and development for the youth and young people of our congregation.

YC saw its tenth anniversary this year and

held special concerts and sessions in light of that. Speakers from all over North America ministered to the 16,000 youth in new, interesting and eye opening ways. Two of the most common statements heard from the youth after attending YC are, "It was awesome!" and "God has shown me so much." It is always exciting to see faith take flight.

Along with AWANA and the youth group are many other care group and Bible study programs coming to a temporary end. We thank God for the opportunities we've had to take part in these programs, grow in them, and minister to others through them.



Nikita Derkson, Amy Peters and Lihani DuPlessis read a handbook at the AWANA year-end celebration.

We pray that during the summer break we will not lose sight of what God has taught us, and that we will not cease to grow in our faith.

Desiree Krahn

Special prayer held for federal election

Steinbach EFC: Recently, a member of our congregation approached our pastors about a burden and vision that God had placed on her heart. It concerns bringing God's people together for prayer and fasting during the day of the federal election. This concern was also shared with a local pastors' prayer group. The result was a community prayer time for our country.

It was decided that prayer would be held at EFC beginning on election day, 8 a.m. to Tuesday 1 a.m. This corresponds with the opening and closing of the polls in the various time zones across Canada.

The day was broken into one-hour segments. People were encouraged to choose an hour, or part of it, that best suited them. Someone there gave direction to the time of prayer. Prayer focused on asking for God's choice of leadership in our country, for Christians who serve as MPs, for wisdom and the fear of the Lord for our country's leaders as they address important social and moral issues.

A key thought was to *Humble ourselves as God's people and seek his face and ask God to move in our land* (2 Chron. 7:14). It was not a partisan gathering praying for one political party over another.

Churches were encouraged to promote this through shoulder tapping, making a bulletin announcement, or whatever way was thought appropriate.

It was encouraging to see Christians from a variety of churches seek the Lord on behalf of our country. We were encouraged to be faithful in praying for those in leadership on all occasions (1 Tim. 2:1-4) and to shine the light of Christ in our nation through our actions and words (Matt. 5:14-16).

The night concluded with a celebration of communion and a time of sharing. Our hearts were stirred with the awareness of God's presence. Will this be the beginning of further community prayer times? I certainly hope it is!

Pastor Ed Peters



Twenty-one youth from High Level Christian Fellowship attended YC in Edmonton.

A year of beginnings at Ridgewood

Ridgewood (Giroux, Man.): So far 2004 has been a good year in Ridgewood. We entered the year under the capable leadership of Glen and Betty Koop, who came from La Crete, Alta., in fall and will remain as interim pastoral couple until October 2004. We are drinking deeply from Pastor Glen's teaching. He was the Old Testament professor at Steinbach Bible College from 1975 to 1996.

A new and enthusiastic College and Career group got under way with about 30 adults meeting under the leadership of Leon and Valerie Reimer. The Women's Ministry is much appreciated this year for Ridgewood ladies, neighbours and friends; it was back in full swing, starting with a supper interspersed with testimonies on the role of women. A Spring Tea followed in April. Fun and joy were the themes. There were a lot of smiles as everyone was encouraged to wear a hat. The group enjoyed emcee Janice Reimer's quick wit.

Ray and Nettie Reimer took up their new position as the eighth deacon couple in Ridgewood. They fall easily into the position of care groups supervisor. We have always appreciated their practical care and their intercession.

In February, four couples dedicated themselves and their children to live for the Lord. Also, Travis and Sharon Thiessen were voted in as our senior pastoral couple, to start duties in October 2004. Travis Thiessen was our much-loved youth pastor for seven years, until he began his studies at Providence Seminary in September 2003.

Congratulations to Anne Reimer, Arlene Reimer, Mark Reimer, and Jake Neufeld, who graduated from Steinbach Bible College; and James Reimer, who finished his course at Capernwray Bible School. Our newly-appointed youth pastoral couple Mike and Crystal Funk started studies at Steinbach Bible College in January; Mike commenced his pastoral responsibilities in April. In the past year our youth program has been run by a dedicated group of sponsors.

May 2 was the date of our sod-turning celebration for the extensions on the church building. Offices and a library will be added to the west entrance and a new kitchen is being built on the east side of the dining room. This will add much to the foyer and dining room.

As a congregation we are very grateful to God for the gifted people He has given us, and for their faithfulness to Him. It's only with God's help that we will do all that He has called us to do as a church and a community.

Jenny Reimer



On May 2 Ridgewood held a sod-turning for its building extensions. Representing the congregation were Pastor Glen Koop, Allan Penner, Victoria Rempel, Gilbert Unger, and Youth Pastor Mike Funk.

Prairie Grove feels loss of Tom Koop

Lorette, Man.: Prairie Grove is feeling very tender these days. Mr. Tom Koop passed away unexpectedly on June 12, 2004.

Tom was the husband to Pat and father to April, Monica, Karalee and Kimberly. He was the brother to Sid and Dora, and uncle to Jeff and Tamara. Tom was our Sunday school superintendent and congregational meeting secretary. Tom was our friend.

Tom was open and vocal. He said what he thought and he shared his heart. He sent notes of encouragement. He loved to tell stories about Africa, where he spent two memorable years with his family. Tom was energetic and very supportive of church activities. Just one week before his passing, he and Pat hosted a family communion evening around their fire pit on their scenic, woodsy yard.

On June 20, Father's Day, we enjoyed a beautiful service in honour of our fathers (Thank you, Bernice!). It was an emotional gathering, celebrating the fathers amongst us with heartfelt tributes and a power point photo presentation, while deeply mourning the loss of a husband, father and friend.



Pat and Tom Koop, together with three of their daughters—Monica, Karalee and Kimberly—presented a skit on Christmas morning, 2002.

Jolyn Braun

St. Vital benefits from new building

St. Vital (Winnipeg, Man.): The first service in our church included the wedding of Arnie Klassen and Penny Brown.

May 2 was a very exciting day for our church. All the years of fund-raising and months of hard work had finally resulted in being able to move into our new church building. This service was also very special because Penny Brown and Arnie Klassen were married at the end of the service. They provided coffee and donuts for Sunday school and lunch after church, so we got to celebrate and enjoy visiting through the afternoon.

The next week our church had a different sort of celebration. Peter Klassen went home to be with the Lord, and his funeral was in our church on May 11.

For both of these events, we were very thankful to have our new building, equipped with a kitchen, large foyer and gym that we use for services and meals.

Heidi Friesen



The church welcomed many guests on May 2.



Terrilee and Darryl Friesen led the worship at the first service at 2005 St. Mary's Road.



St. Vital is happy to have big individual Sunday school classrooms. The four-year-olds are here with teacher Rebekah Purnell.



Arnie Klassen and Penny Brown

Parent-child dedication at La Crete on May 8



La Crete, Alta.:

(Back) Gilbert and Wendy Morris with Lauryn, Andy and Connie Wiebe with Reiley and Jayda, George and Bonnie Fehr with Delayna, John and Barb Braun with Arianna, Peter and Lenora Braun with Emery, Ed and Darlene Bergen with Evan and Emma, Bill and Melanie Driedger with Dillon, Trevor and Suzanne Braun with Taylor, Kurtis and Marjorie Hewson with Marenn, Pastor Frank and Cora Winsor, (front) Dave and Sharon Schellenberg with Clayton and Adam, Bernie and Tena Doerksen with Malachi, Willy and Martha Schellenberg with Stacey, Jeff and Kay Hollinshead with Mackenzie and Jackson, Benj and Matilda Friesen with Lily (missing are Ray and Annie Wiebe with Landon).

Mimi Friesen

Ministry in uptown Chicago

Crestview (Winnipeg, Man.): For most of his childhood, Darrell Thiessen attended Crestview Fellowship Church. He has spent many years away from Winnipeg, but comes back “home” on occasion to touch base. The following is some of his testimony of his work in the mission field of uptown Chicago:

For the last one and a half years I have been living in the north side of Chicago in a Christian community (Acts 4:32-35) called Jesus People (USA). A community is never there for itself. It belongs to something greater—to the poor, the oppressed, to humanity, to the church, to God.

There are 400 to 500 people who live at JPUSA. The core group comes from all walks of life. Some have come from lives of addictions, abusive situations, incarceration, and some grew up in the church (1 Cor. 12:14). Uptown has become our mission field. There is great need to share the love of Christ to those in our neighbourhood (James 2:15-16). There are many homeless people on the streets, as well as young people involved in gang violence and prostitution.

The community has three shelters (Is. 25:4a), which I am blessed to be part of. We have staff that try to help with needs: food, clothing, housing. Most importantly, though, we want to let the love of Christ shine through our lives, and let them know God loves them and will meet them wherever they're at, and that Jesus wants to set them free from the bondage they are in.

I am part of the men's overnight program. On any given evening we will shelter 100 to 300 men. Most of those are homeless, addicts, prison parolees, or can't afford housing.

Cornerstone Shelter provides a men's program where men can get counseling, further education, Bible classes, housing, AA and CA, family and anger management classes. Many are hurting and in pain, and want to share and have someone who will listen and make time for them.

God has given us strength day to day, to help those who come through our doors, to pour out His mercy and peace. So many live, or have lived, a life we wouldn't or couldn't imagine. Poverty and crime is right on our doorstep and often is difficult to deal with. People have overdosed on our doorsteps as well as died from overdosing. It brings tears to our eyes to see these lives lost, especially when you are close to so many of them.

However, there is always a joy to see the Holy Spirit work and free them from all sin. Being part of that transformation through God's love is a blessing and I can't thank Him enough for letting me be part of His work in sharing His love to all in need.

Working at the shelter is not always peaceful, though. There are many conflicts and family troubles, as well as people's own daily problems. We have seen fights break out, stabbings, child abuse, child abandonment. Due to no income, jobs or housing, most of our clients live a life of depression and want. Christ is the only

hope and peace they have, and many have found a new life in God and are doing well with His guidance and strength.

Since last summer I've been doing case work as well as taken over the job of head cook for our shelters. I'll tell you, it's not always an easy task: cooking for 300 to 700 a day. God has blessed me with a great crew to help me out. Plus we are often blessed with volunteer, church, or youth groups who come and help out, and share their faith with those we feed.

We get about 60 percent of our food from the Chicago food bank, the rest is donations. So planning a weekly menu is hard to do at times. God has been so giving and gracious to the needs the shelter has; we have always had food to eat. Even when there hasn't been enough, He has miraculously provided for all to eat, which is a wonderful testimony to those we are feeding of His great love for them all.

I could go on sharing more about the community and the blessing they have been to me. So if you would like more information, you can look at our website: www.jpusa.org.

Thank you for letting me share a bit about the work God is doing in me and the community. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to spread the love of Christ in uptown Chicago.

God bless.

“Remember that the Christian life is one of action, not of speech and daydreams”—
St. Vincent.

Submitted by
Darlene Wiebe



Darrell Thiessen serves in Chicago.

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Jake Friesen tees off, while Ernie Koop and Greg Graham observe. (Lester Olfert)



Louella Reimer had the longest drive for a female golfer. (editor)

Loeppky), and even for registering last. Ron Penner thanked the many businesses that sponsored the event. Businesses entered many teams.

Terry M. Smith

EMC Golf Classic

Golfers played, then rains pounded

Talk swirled in the Village Green restaurant connected with the Steinbach Fly-In Golf Course. At lunch golfers spoke of the coming federal election, of weather, and of land conditions.

On June 17, golfers at the tenth EMC Golf Classic managed to do the Texas Scramble, and then headed for the clubhouse in Steinbach, Man., mostly before the rains came. The rains fell hard, briefly distracting golfers from what committee chairman Ron Penner was saying and causing one person to wonder aloud, "Is that hail?"

Lester Olfert, EMC Foreign Secretary, talked of a project to be assisted by EMC Missions Auxiliary, under whose authority the tournament is held. Funds will go to Nicaragua to assist a centre for children at risk.

The centre has a two-acre site and a building, with classrooms, a workshop, and an assembly hall being planned. Olfert also mentioned that last year's funds went to assist HIV/AIDS ministry in Paraguay, and were put to good use.

Kent Dueck of Inner City Youth Alive, a frequent beneficiary of the tournament, spoke of how last year's funds assisted in building outhouses at their Gem Lake campsite. This year, funds will assist the school that is developing on the ICYA location in Winnipeg. Kent said that "swinging the stick" (golf) is being involved in ministry. He thanked Ron Penner and the committee for their work in planning the tournament.

Each project will receive about \$10,000, according to Len Barkman, EMC General Secretary.

One hundred and fifty-four golfers competed. Women golfers were welcomed. Prizes were given for many reasons: the lowest score (Tim Friesen, Luke Friesen, Hub Blanchette, Cliff Dyck), the longest drives (Ken Friesen, Louella Reimer), for refusing to use a cart (Ken Toews, John Sawatzky, Ed Peters, and Jake



Golfers at the EMC Classic get ready to scramble. (Lester Olfert)

Thanks, Loren Koehler!

Loren Koehler was recently thanked by the EMC Archives Committee for his volunteer work from September 2003 to June 2004. On June 8, Loren received a restaurant gift certificate from the Archives Committee; later he received an honorarium.

Koehler, who works in Kenya/Congo with Wycliffe Bible Translators, was on North American Assignment. He worked three days a week in the archives, and brought much skill, effort and order to the work.

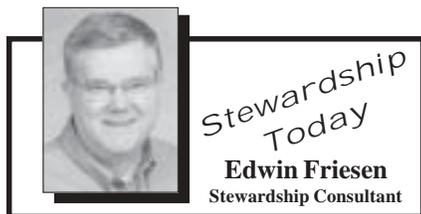
The archival space is better organized, a new computer was purchased, an improved database is in use, some materials are available on our website—and more.

The committee was consistently impressed by his efforts. Thanks, Loren!

Terry M. Smith
Executive Secretary
Board of Church Ministries



On June 8 chairman Don Kroeker (right) expressed the thanks of the Archives Committee to Loren Koehler.



FOR ME one of the most difficult experiences in receiving happened when our son Ken died.

People wanted to minister to us in our devastating loss, but I found it hard to receive. Usually I had seen myself as the strong one but now I was weak. In the past, others had leaned on my shoulders but now the roles were reversed. I felt I had nothing to give and found it very hard to receive.

Many people feel awkward being on the receiving end. In fact, many people see receiving as demeaning, as below their dignity or social status. Since childhood we have been taught that giving is not only better than receiving; giving is really the only virtuous option. After all it was Jesus who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). But is giving always better than receiving? Could there be times when receiving is not only better, but where that is the only Christ-like response?

Though most people prefer to see themselves as givers, all of us are first and foremost receivers. God, as the primary

Receiving graciously

giver (1 Chron. 29:11-14), has gifted us with the resources of the world, life, abilities, and opportunities. God has also given Jesus to be our Redeemer (John 3:16) and the Holy Spirit to be our guide. Our lives are further enriched by church, friends, and family. Yet many of us conveniently overlook the many different ways in which we receive from God, people, and the world around us.

Society has assigned the financially poor to be receivers and the rich to be givers. Giving makes us feel powerful and gives us an elevated social status. To receive implies need and strikes at our cherished self-image of independence. You can be proud and give but it takes humility to receive graciously.

In the context of the church, there are no have-nots. Each one has something to contribute to enrich the lives of others, and each one has the need to receive. The rich do not only give, and the poor do not only receive. The rich are not superior to the poor, nor the multi-talented superior to those who serve behind the scenes. All are equally called to share and receive from each other. Whatever our financial means or spiritual abilities, we have all been gifted for the common good (1 Cor. 12). We need to acknowledge that, and celebrate our interdependence.

It is in receiving that we give dignity to the giver. Jesus gave dignity to the woman who anointed him with perfume (Mark 14:3-9) by accepting her gift as is without protest. Jesus also gave dignity to the women who supported him and his disciples from their income (Luke 8:1-3). The women had received spiritual help from Jesus and now they reciprocated with financial support. It must have taken special grace, especially in the culture of the day, for a group of self-reliant men to accept the financial support of women.

Everyone longs to experience the blessings of giving but we frustrate that when we refuse or belittle gestures of kindness. Sometimes we are also guilty of overanalyzing a gift or the motive behind it. As a result, we slight the person who offered. How can someone have the joy of giving if no one receives? Only when we take turns being giver and receiver will fellowship flourish. That is God's way.

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



Susan P. Isaac
1919–2004

Susan P. Isaac was born on November 1, 1919, to Peter W. Siemens and Helena K. Siemens (Plett). She was born on the family farm at Riverside, Man., just a few yards from where she would give birth to her first son, Orvel.

Her childhood was spent in Riverside and Blumenort, Man. Susie was the middle child and enjoyed an idyllic life until the age of nine when her mother died at the age of 35.

Grandpa took his family to his in-laws for help with their rearing until 1932 when he remarried. His second bride was Margaretha K. Plett, an older sister to Grandma.

Mom attended Rosenhoff School at Riverside, Man., where she completed grade 3. It delighted her that her teacher, Mr. Peter Rempel, also taught Orvel when he began his education at the same school. At the age of 21, Mom, being a bit of a rebel, met and married Menno Simon Isaac. Dad was a farmhand working for Abe Loewen. They ran off to Winnipeg one night and came back as Mr. and Mrs. Simon Isaac on January 7, 1941. They celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary before Dad was taken from her on June 8, 1984.

Mom and Dad made their first home on Grandma and Grandpa Siemens' farmyard and later moved just down the road to Riverside. All of the children were born in Manitoba. Although Manitoba was always where Mom's heart was, her married life there was not without trial and tribulation.

In 1950 their hopes and dreams were washed away in the flooding of the Red River. Being strong people, they gathered household goods and began anew. Their troubles were not over; in late winter 1951, Dad was heating oil for his 1928 Whippet on a hot plate when it boiled over and ignited the curtains. Everyone escaped injury, but all of their possessions went up in smoke.

In 1956 the family moved to Alberta. They purchased Grandma and Grandpa Giesbrecht's farm at Crooked Creek and tried their hand at farming. They

experienced grain, cattle, gardening, operating a greenhouse and Dad's perpetual inventing, while he plied his lifelong trade as a dragline operator. Mom spent many nights alone with the children, as it was necessary for Dad to be away from home to work to keep his family fed. Mom's only experience with driving was when they still lived at Riverside and her children were small. She drove Dad's 1949 Dodge pickup to the store, but abandoned the truck and returned home on foot with her children in tow after an abrupt application of the brakes nearly put them through the windshield.

In 1978, Mom and Dad returned to Manitoba and were there at Riverside once again when the 1979 floodwaters ravaged their home. They then purchased a home just near the water tower at Steinbach.

She was lonely and missed her children who all lived in Alberta by this time. On August 7, 1993, we moved her to Rycroft, Alta., where she became the first resident of Unit 6 at Potter Villa. She joined the Rycroft Merry Pioneers and spent many hours visiting her family in Rycroft. One of her greatest pleasures was going to the café to eat—she never turned down an opportunity.

In her cozy apartment she knitted hanger covers, did Word Search Puzzles and watched her favorite TV shows. She especially enjoyed 100 Huntley Street, Little House on the Prairie and Who Wants To Be A Millionaire. She would take daily walks to the Merry Pioneers, the Co-op Store, and the Village Office.

Mom was a simple woman and simple things gave her pleasure, like visiting with friends and family and counting the cars going by her apartment. She had a profound faith and went home to her Lord on Easter Sunday at the age of 84, a fitting departure after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer.

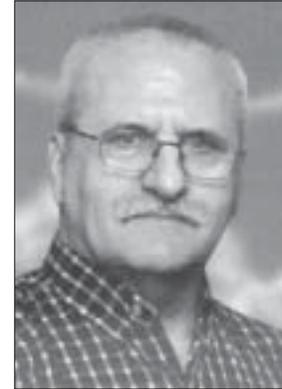
She left this life with all of her dreams, goals and aspirations fulfilled. She had a husband, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She was taken care of by her father, her husband and, finally, her children—she did not ask for more.

Susan P. Isaac was predeceased by her parents Peter W., Helena and Margaretha Siemens; husband Simon Isaac and great-granddaughter Alyssa Stinson-Isaac; as well as brother Frank, four sisters-in-law, and eight brothers-in-law.

Missing her are Orvel (Sandy), of Rycroft; Frank (Marj), of Crooked Creek; Eddie (Delia), of Entwhistle; Helen (Stan Smith), of Mannville; Carol, of Rycroft; Norman (Agnes), of Silver Valley; Phyllis (Ben Guenther), of Whitecourt; 34 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren; brother Jac Siemens (Tina), seven sisters-in-law, two brothers-in-law, and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Susan Isaac were held in Rycroft Community Hall, Friday, April 16, 2004, with Rev. Marilyn Carroll officiating. Interment in the Municipal District Cemetery.

Her Family



Peter Klassen
1942–2004

Peacefully on May 6, 2004, at the Riverview Health Centre with his family by his side, as a result of lung cancer and Parkinson's disease, Peter passed away.

Peter is survived by his wife Ruth; daughters, Margaret Bouchard (Ron) and Karen Peters (Keith); grandchildren Crystal Feuillatre, Denise Feuillatre, Samantha Bouchard, Kalie Peters and Kasia Peters. Also surviving him are his mother Anne Klassen of Winkler, Man.; brothers Henry, Barney, John and David; sisters Mary Fehr and Shirley Pontifex and their families.

Peter was predeceased by his father Bernard Klassen and sister Ann Truscott.

Peter was born in Winkler, Man., on March 12, 1942, and lived in Winnipeg most of his adult life. He married Ruth Penner of Steinbach, Man., in 1967.

Peter was employed with Reimer Trucking and was a bus driver with Winnipeg Transit for over 25 years, winning several safety awards.

Peter was baptized in March 1969 at the Christian Fellowship Chapel in Winnipeg. On August 19, 2002, he and Ruth joined St. Vital EMC. Peter became a prayer warrior for the church. Many Sundays he would stand up and give a testimony to what God had done for him and thank the congregation for praying. Pastors Al Friesen and Awln Davison were very important to him.

The funeral service was held on Tuesday, May 11, at 2 p.m. in St. Vital Evangelical Mennonite Church. He was laid to rest at Mennonite Memorial Gardens.

Donations in Peter's memory may be made to the St. Vital EMC Church Building Fund.

His Family

Coming Events

Sept. 11
Head for the Hills
Bicycling fundraiser
Eden Health Care
Services
Phone: 204-325-5355
edenfdn@valleycable.com

Providence College
and Theological
Seminary
Otterburne, Man.
Phone: 204-433-7488
www.prov.ca

Sept. 29-Oct. 1
14th Annual
Winnipeg Prophecy
Conference
Victoria Inn
Winnipeg, Man.
Phone: 204-889-8099
204-853-2095

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

Oct. 15-16
Southeastern Manitoba
Christian Education
Convention
Teaching for Spiritual
Growth
Dr. Perry Downs, TEDS

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

EMC Youth Leader Retreat

October 15-17, 2004
Wilderness Edge
Pinawa, Manitoba

Speaker: Jim Harms
Phone 204-326-6401



Jim Harms

Weddings

FRIESEN - EIDSE: Graham, son of Rick and Karen Friesen of Rosenort, Man., and Kristy, daughter of Kerry and Jo Eidse of Rosenort, were married on December 27, 2003, at Rosenort EMC, with Rev. Darren Plett of Rosenort officiating. The couple lives in Winnipeg, Man.

DOERKSEN - BERGEN: John Doerksen and Rosie Bergen were married on January 3, 2004, at La Crete Christian Fellowship in La Crete, Alta.

HAMM - FRIESEN: Jake Hamm and Angela Friesen were married on May 1, 2004, at Mount Salem, Ont., with Jim Froese officiating. The couple lives in Aylmer, Ont.

KLASSEN - BROWN: Arnold Klassen and Penny Brown were married on May 2, 2004, at St. Vital EMC in Winnipeg, Man., with Pastor Al Friesen officiating. The couple lives in Winnipeg.

FRIESEN - BUGARA: Derek, son of Dennis and Agatha Friesen, and Kelly, daughter of Brian and Marjorie Bugara, were married on May 15, 2004, at Fort Garry MB Church, with Pastor Al Friesen officiating. The couple lives in Winnipeg, Man.

WIEBE - WIEBE: Fred, son of John and Lena Wiebe of La Crete, Alta., and Vanessa, daughter of Henry and Agnes Wiebe of La Crete, were married on May 23, 2004, at La Crete Christian Fellowship in La Crete, with Frank Winsor of La Crete officiating. The couple lives in La Crete.

KROEKER - FRIESEN: Dalen, son of Wendell and Rita Kroeker, and Bonnie, daughter of Henry and Nancy Friesen, were married on June 5, 2004, at St. Vital EMC in Winnipeg, Man., with Pastor Al Friesen officiating. The couple lives in Steinbach, Man.

WIELER - JANZEN: Mike, son of John and Joyce Wieler of La Crete, Alta., and Rachel, daughter of John and Tina Janzen of La Crete, were married on June 5, 2004, at La Crete Christian Fellowship in La Crete, with Pastor Peter Janzen of La Crete officiating. The couple lives in Grande Prairie, Alta.

KLASSEN - NEUMANN: Jeffrey Mark, son of Dennis and Marion Klassen of Roseisle, Man., and Trisha Marie, daughter of Sieg and Wendi Neumann of Morris, Man., were married on June 19, 2004, at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Morris, with Randall Krahn of Swift Current, Sask., officiating. The couple lives in Winnipeg, Man.

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Correction

St. Vital church news, May 5, 2004
issue, should read: Jason and Natalie
Dueck with *Ransom*.

Births

SCHMIDT - to Marvin and Heidi Schmidt of Asuncion, Paraguay, a son, Bryan James, on November 27, 2003.

WALDNER - to Jerry and Renee Waldner of Rosenort, Man., a son, Noah Rys, on January 1, 2004.

MORRIS - to Gilbert and Wendy Morris of La Crete, Alta., a daughter, Lauryn Elizabeth, on February 1, 2004.

DRIEDGER - to Bill and Melanie Driedger of La Crete, Alta., a son, Dillon Joseph, on February 11, 2004.

JAYNES - to John and Diane Jaynes of La Crete, Alta., a son, Garrett, on February 12, 2004.

FRIESEN - to Benj and Matilda Friesen of La Crete, Alta., a daughter, Lily Joanne, on February 25, 2004.

HARDER - to Viktor and Gert Harder of Bolivia, a daughter, Megan Jaylin, on February 26, 2004.

MARTENS - to Billy and Mary Jane Martens of La Crete, Alta., a son, Luke William, on March 9, 2004.

KROEKER - to Matthew and Colleen Kroeker of Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Hannah Judith, on April 18, 2004.

BUECKERT - to Elsie Bueckert of High Level, Alta., a daughter, Brook Crystal, on April 22, 2004.

SAWATZKY - to Peter and Margaret Sawatzky of Aylmer, Ont., a daughter, Kimberly Faith, on April 25, 2004.

FEHR - to George and Karen Fehr of High Level, Alta., a son, Michael Graham, on April 28, 2004.

REIMER - to Lyn and Vi Reimer of Arborg, Man., a son, Damian Tyler, on April 28, 2004.

SCHMIDT - to Anton and Faith Schmidt of Asuncion, Paraguay, a daughter, Emily Charmagne, on April 30, 2004.

WOLFE - to Kevin and Lisa Wolfe of La Crete, Alta., a son, Kyler David, on April 30, 2004.

MASSEY - to Robb and Christa Massey of Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Olivia Rue, on May 2, 2004.

UNGER - to Travis and Stephanie Unger of Winnipeg, Man., a daughter, Rachel May, on May 3, 2004.

REDDECOPP - to Peter and Adrienne Reddecopp of Tillsonburg, Ont., a son, Anthony Bruse, on May 4, 2004.

GRYBA - to Bryon and Anita Gryba of Winnipeg, Man., a son, Wade Emmett, on May 12, 2004.

FRIESEN - to Ed and Linda Friesen of La Crete, Alta., a son, Gus Phillip, on May 14, 2004.

KOMARNICKI - to Mike and Shelly Komarnicki of High Level, Alta., a daughter, Hailey Aidan, on May 22, 2004.

BERGEN - to Frank and Lori Bergen of La Crete, Alta., a son, Matthew Alexander Jacob, on May 31, 2004.



**Reporters,
keep the news coming!**

Mennonites in Ukraine launch union

Four Evangelical Mennonite churches in Ukraine formed the Christian Union of Mennonite Churches at a meeting here on May 26.

Signing a statement announcing the union were representatives from the Zaporozhye, Kutuzovka, Kherson and Balkovye churches and their supporting missions: LOGOS International (based in Germany); MBMS International, the mission of Mennonite Brethren in North America; and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

According to the statement, the purpose of the union is "to foster fellowship, unity and common witness by its member churches." Its goals include sharing pastoral concerns, maintaining biblical faithfulness, supervising credentials of ministers, supporting planting new churches and joint mission and service projects, and being a channel for joint communication.

It has accepted in principle the Confession of Faith from the International Committee of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) as the confession of this union. Churches that accept the union's purpose and Confession of Faith may apply for membership.

Pastors of the founding churches form a Council of Pastors, which will be led for the next two years by Jakob Tiessen, Kutuzovka; and Ivan Dushenko, Zaporozhye.

Signing the document on behalf of the founding Evangelical Mennonite churches, in addition to Tiessen and Dushenko, were Cliff Dueck, Kherson church, and Andrei Nesterov, Balkovye church.

Signatories for the supporting missions were Andrej Rempel, LOGOS International; Tim Bergdahl, MBMS International; and Peter Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

The new union requests sister churches around the world to pray for them as they build on the foundation of Jesus Christ, adding, "For all of this we give the glory to God."

MWC

Pray for good weather for crops!

The agriculture sector is hurting in Canada from BSE and unsuitable weather for crops. Because of too much or too little rain in areas, farmers have been hampered in fieldwork and crops are damaged. Many Scriptures speak of rain and drought (including 1 Kings 17:1, 18:1; Matt. 5:45, 7:24-27; James 5:13-18; Amos 4:7-8). Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest for good weather by His grace.

Editor

June 30 Financial Update

Our thanks to the EMC constituency for your faithful prayer and financial support of the many foreign and local ministries of our conference. We are concerned, however, about the significant shortfall of receipts under budget as of June 30, 2004.

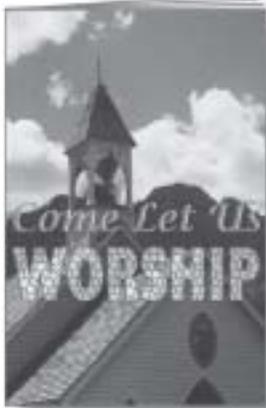
A comparison of the past four years:

Receipts	Disbursements	Shortfall	(June 30)
2004	\$560,994	\$775,993	\$214,999
2003	\$599,182	\$728,707	\$129,525
2002	\$581,556	\$723,324	\$141,768
2001	\$536,121	\$726,498	\$190,377

Board of Trustees

Evangelical Mennonite Conference

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Church Treasurers, Finance Committees, Church Leaders Seminars

Date: Saturday, October 16, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Aylmer EMMC in Ontario.
 Saturday, October 30, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Morrow Gospel Church, 755 Ste.
 Anne's Road, Winnipeg, Man.

\$25 registration fee to help cover speakers, facilities,
 noon meal and refreshments.

Topics include:

- Regulatory and Legislative updates for charitable organizations.
 - Incorporation and Liability Issues for churches
 - Church accounting, budgeting and reporting
- Church accounting software and applications for effective financial reporting.
 Pre-registration is requested.

Please contact Len Barkman or Ruth Anne Peters at EM Conference office.

These seminars are sponsored jointly by Evangelical Mennonite Conference,
 Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, Chortitzer Mennonite
 Conference, and Mennonite Foundation of Canada.

Shoulder Tapping

The Archives Committee, under the EMC Board of Church Ministries, seeks a **part-time volunteer archivist** to work out of the Steinbach, Man., office. Tasks involve the organizing, filing and tracking of historical materials within the vault and over-flow areas in the building. Assets are an interest in history and a skill or willingness to operate a computer database; an exceptional asset would be the ability to read German. For information, contact Executive Secretary Terry Smith at 204-326-6401 or emcmessenger@mts.net.

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.

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).

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 tomado). 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.

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

Riverton Gospel Chapel (EMC), a small rural town in Manitoba's Interlake, seeks a loving **leading pastor**. Housing is included in the salary package. This friendly and loving congregation has an average attendance of 75-100, with a high percentage of young families. The area 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.

Thompson Christian Centre Fellowship (Mennonite Brethren), a small, caring, congregation of 60-80 people, seeks a **senior pastor**. Our ideal candidate will have the heart of a shepherd, and will possess skills in congregational care and discipleship. Forward your resume to Pastoral Search Committee, 328 Thompson Drive, Thompson, MB R8N 0C4 or email keithderksen@yahoo.ca

Program officer(s) are required in Nuevos Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, Mexico. This is a MCC voluntary position for a two- or three-year term. For information contact the MCC Canada office at 204-261-6381 and ask for Marsha Jones or Mary Friesen. See web site for details: <http://www.mcc.org/getinv.html> (Service Opportunity of the Month).

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.

Needed in 2005: **MCC executive director** (Akron, Pa). This person will lead MCC and build understanding and support for its mission among an increasingly diverse constituency. Contact Donella Clemens, search committee chair, Box 64439, Souderton, PA 18964 or dmclemens@mindspring.com. Application review begins Sept. 1, 2004.

Evangelical Anabaptist Seminary Program

Certificate of Christian Ministry

The Evangelical Anabaptist Seminary Program provides pastoral training to ministry candidates from an evangelical Anabaptist perspective. The program is primarily aimed at students who identify with the Anabaptist tradition, but welcomes students of all denominational affiliations.

The certificate program includes nine hours in Bible, nine hours in history and theology, six hours in practical theology, and six hours in personal and professional formation.

What's Next?

At the present, MBBS has set into motion a study and consultation process to assess the feasibility of eventually offering a full degree in Winnipeg, in partnership with other seminary institutions. The results of the study and the consultation will be presented during the MBBS fall board meetings.

Fall 2004

Introduction to the Old Testament, Pierre Gilbert, Ph.D.
September 14 – Dec. 7, 2004
Tuesday evening, 6 to 8:45 p.m.

The Gospel of Mark, Tim Geddert, Ph.D.
October 18-22, 2004
Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Winter 2005

Hermeneutics, George Shillington, Ph.D.
January 4 – April 5, 2005
Tuesday evening, 6 to 8:45 p.m.

Formation in Ministry

To be determined
Systematic Theology in Believers Church Perspective, Terry Hiebert, Ph.D.

February 14-18, 2005
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Anabaptist Mennonite History and Theology, John J. Friesen, Ph.D.
January 3 – April 4, 2005
Monday evening, 6 to 8:45 p.m.

Spring 2005

Wisdom Literature, Pierre Gilbert, Ph.D.
April 25-29, 2005
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Discipleship and Ethics, Mark Baker, Ph.D.
May 16-20, 2005
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Evangelism, Art McPhee, Ph.D.
May 24-28, 2005,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For information, contact:
Pierre Gilbert, Associate Dean
Tel: 204-487-3300
E-mail: pgilbert@cmu.ca
Fax: 204-831-5675
Website: <http://www.amsb.edu/easp/>

The Personal Touch

Was it you who prayed so faithfully?

Anna (Rempel) Neufeld as told to Betty Barkman

ON DECEMBER 10, 2000, I sat in our home in Kansas and waited. Dad had called. He and Mom were almost home from Mexico and we should pray for their safety. Eagerly we did that, then started waiting.

Our family had been in a car accident in Texas when I was three. Of the four fatalities, two were my baby brothers. I'd had nightmares ever since. At 16, my faith hadn't matured yet—it was only about a year ago that I made my commitment to Christ, but I was confident. Surely another tragedy would not hit us.

When the Barkmans called to say that they were coming over, I was glad. I wouldn't feel so alone. *Nothing* prepared me for their news. Holding me tight and weeping together with me, they told me the unbelievable. *My parents would never come home again!* One patch of ice and someone losing control; *there were no survivors.*

Things mostly ran together after that. Yet some memories are vivid.

Their awfully beat up bodies. The smashed up truck. Someone put it on a flatbed and brought it to church. Fragments of the huge funeral service. Lots of relatives, coming from everywhere, many very poor, so the church ended up feeding them and us, for days on end. Of my own coping—life had become a cesspool filled with pain, darkness, fear and confusion.



In 2004, Anna (nee Rempel) Neufeld posed for a different photo: with her husband Herman and son Ricky in Leamington, Ont.

I wanted to stay in Kansas. Hadn't this been our parents' choice when we moved there three years earlier? We longed to stay together. We needed house parents. Milton and Mary Friesen came from Manitoba, and we loved it, but they couldn't stay. Offers came from Canada, but without papers it didn't work. Families offered us temporary homes in Kansas, but nothing felt quite right.

Finally, we became willing to return to Mexico and live with the Jacob Rempels (Dad's brother) and Grandma Rempel nearby. Soon we saw the advantages. They were Christians and financially well established—they could afford having us.

They had a good blend of real love and firm discipline. And finally, they were Kleingemeinde churchgoers. I had had an itching for more freedom, but so what? I struggled through and imagined that God had let me down. My confusion was growing and spiritually I seemed to grow weaker.

Then I met Herman. He was an absolute balm for my soul, helping at once to fill that gaping hole in my life, but he was not a Christian and showed no interest in such things.

I felt guilty about dating him, but I just couldn't seem to say no. And praying got me nowhere.

Grandma asked, "Don't you understand, Anna, that as Christians we must not date non-Christians?"

"Yes," I said, "I understand...but...I just can't help myself."

"Aren't you praying?"

"Yes...No..." My confusion leaked out and I began to weep. "I can't. It's not working."

I had an idea. "There are many people who have promised to pray for us. So right now when I cannot pray I will count on the power of *their* prayers."

I didn't know how right or wrong it was, but it didn't matter. I had something to lean on.

Herman's family began to get loving visits and invites. Herman was impressed and starting thinking, changing. Then his father, only around 40, got sick and was diagnosed with a galloping, life-threatening cancer. Herman was devastated. Thankfully, he turned to God in his crisis and began to seek the counsel of the very ones that



In fall 2000, Anna Rempel posed with her parents George and Agatha and her four brothers George, Johnny, Jacob and Benny. In December 2000, the parents were tragically killed in a truck accident.

had been showing love.

The Kleingemeinde Church people came through for him. He was wonderfully born again. I had a hard time believing it at first. *In spite of me and my weakness, God had answered the cry of my heart. And the prayers of all you faithful ones!*

Isn't He an amazing God?

Tears streaming down my face, I re-committed to Him.

Herman shared Jesus with his father and believes that he did accept Him. He also discussed me with him. His father liked me and frankly encouraged Herman to marry me.

After several weeks of serious illness, his Dad died. The grief was very real, but Herman's faith held him surprisingly strong. He was going to instruction classes by then, and was baptized shortly after the funeral, with a powerful testimony.

Herman and I married happily. And not long after that, Herman said, "Let's move to Canada." His papers were in order, so I could legally live here, in southern Ontario. Once my paperwork is caught up, I hope to start on my brothers'.

Friends of ours helped track down Leonard and Betty Barkman (then pastor of Mount Salem EMC) and we royally surprised them with a visit. Tears and hugs flowed freely that night, as did our fervent praises to God.

To every one who's been faithfully praying, here is a big thank you. May God reward you. ■