

CROSS WALK



LIGHTING Our Way - PATRICK PREHEIM

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All Beautiful the March of Days

O thou from whose unfathomed law the year in beauty flows,
thyself the vision passing by in crystal and in rose, Day unto day
doth utter speech, and night to night proclaim, in ever-changing
words of light, the wonder of thy name.

Francis Whitmarsh Wile,
HWB #159 v. 3

This morning I was out along the river trail as dark receded. I watched as a bright red dawn gradually ca-reened off clouds and sky—"ever changing words of light". It was another holy moment experienced in creation. It was a fall sunrise.

I can't imagine living someplace that did not have seasons. At the beginning of each season I find myself truly happy for the gifts of creation that appear in that specific moment of the year. I feel like I am greeting an old friend who has been absent for too long. I actually do not mind the first real hot days of June or July, and in early summer I do not begrudge the mosquitoes knowing they are food for

the migrating birds. Crocuses an-nounce the spring. Those first snow-flakes are magical. Now the leaves change, the shadows lengthen, the earth prepares for sleep.

Students, the newly employed, the recently married, the new parents are entering a spring time of life—it is a time of great expectation. The family and professional calendars some keep remind me of summer's crazy-ness when fruit needs to be picked, produce canned, crops windrowed all in the same day. Some are enter-ing an autumn season as professional careers wind down or children leave home; they await the feasts and rest
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BOARD Report

- BOB SAWATZKY



Cross Walk

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Our goal is to keep you informed and connected with one another. We would appreciate contact from you regarding any news items you may have about the joys and concerns of our church family.

Articles for the next Cross Walk are due on October 24

Welcome back to all of you who spent the summer at the lake or holidaying elsewhere. The months of July and August are relatively quiet ones for the board. We met again on September 20. Following is a brief review of our deliberations and discussion:

1. New board members were welcomed
Mitch Dahl as vice-chair,
Lois Tiessen as fellowship deacon,
Wayne Dueck as Christian education deacon,
Sharon Klassen and
Rhonda Krahn as co-missions deacons.

2. **Reece Retzlaff**, our recently appointed youth pastor, was also welcomed.

3. **Ross Borne**, treasurer, reported that we are very close to budget, and commented on the generosity of our congregational members.

4. **Wayne Dueck** reported that volunteers have filled all education positions with the exception of the sewing teacher in the Venture Club.

5. **Denelda Fast** reported that the worship schedule is complete to December, and that two microphones have been ordered to replace defective ones.

6. **Trish St.Onge** reported that her committee met in early September to discuss care groups, young families, visitation needs, and phone ministry.

7. **Sharon Klassen**, reported that the junior choir is taking a one-year leave due to low numbers. Also, A Buncha Gals, a young adult group of girls, would like to practice at Nutana Park beginning this fall. Reece will attend and welcome them.

8. **Lois Tiessen** reported that the CHEP fundraiser was a success. \$9500.00 was raised for this charity. The next potluck will be in November.

9. **Allan Klassen** reported on MC Canada meetings in the spring. A separate report will be included in

this edition of the Crosswalk. He also announced the dates for subsequent conferences: MC Sask in March in North Battleford, and MC Canada in July in Ontario.

10. **Carl Wiens** has been busy with a number of minor repairs – roof leaks, sprinkler system manifold, tap leaks, etc. He thanked Don Froese, Jake Rempel, and Jake Nickel for their abundant time spent in looking after our building.

11. Carl also reported on the renovation projects approved for fundraising last spring. A committee met on two occasions during the summer to discuss how best to proceed. It was felt that it would be prudent to acquire actual quotes for the renovation of the lobby as well as the paving of the parking lot. The board agreed that the actual quotes and costs for the renovations, and other pertinent details for each project should be taken before a general assembly of the congregation before proceeding. Further detail will be announced in the bulletin.

12. Four recipients of bursaries were approved as follows:
Stella Dyck Memorial bursary to Mackenzie Fast.
Theological Studies bursary to Terry Lynn Paulson.
Ray and Helen Fast bursary to Nancy Winder.
Bill and Elma Bergen bursary to Jacoba Fast.

Congratulations and best wishes to these individuals.

13. **Mitch Dahl** will follow up on the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy regulations, and the completion of a consent form for use of photos and personal information by the church.

14. **Lynn Driedger** brought us up to date on plans for the NPMC retreat at Shekinah scheduled for Oct 1 -3. The Sunday morning worship service will be held in the lodge beginning at 11:00 a.m. Lunch to follow.

WALKING Side by Side

By Bernie Retzlaff

As it happens, sometimes a very insignificant event may take on a life of its own. Thus, one day, Anne misplaces her glasses or maybe could not remember where she had left the car keys. While on the search she complained about her forgetfulness. With some measure of impudence I teased her saying, "That's because you are almost eighty."

Angrily protesting she shot back, "Do not so cruelly remind me of my age."

Somewhat defensively I responded, "I am not drawing attention to your age. I am trying to tell you that you have been around for a long time. That you have experienced many things. That you have gained heaps of wisdom. You know what is important in life. Therefore you should stand up and with humble pride declare, "I am almost eighty."

After I had reminded her a number of times that it is not about how old you are, it is about how long you have lived and learned, she finally accepted this approach and began to justify all kind of corny activities by declaring, "that's because I am almost eighty." She has also reminded me that it has not always been easy living with a crabby old man who is almost eighty.

We are both almost eighty. Sometimes we recognize it in jest and chuckle about it. At other times we remind ourselves, with tears in our eyes, that the limitations of aging are crowding in on us. Then we reach out to each other and with vigorous hugs, remind ourselves that walking side by side, life can still be beautiful.

Some forty-five years ago, as an unseasoned pastor, it was my understanding that an effective minister should be able to take away the excruciating pain experienced

occasionally by the members of the congregation.

The realities of living soon revealed that no person can take away or erase the pain of another. Gradually it became evident, that by walking alongside one another, the pain can be eased a little. Simply telling the one in mourning that tomorrow the sun will shine again does not take away the pain, it only adds to it. "Crying with those who cry" is more helpful than any sugarcoated words. Walking side by side we can encourage each other to take the next step. When the sun begins to shine again we can rejoice together.

I believe it would be acceptable to say that the purpose of the Christian faith, the purpose of the Church, the purpose of our meeting together to do some routine work in planning the activities of Nutana Park Mennonite Church is to help us to walk alongside each other. To learn how to let you come close to me and me come close to you. In this way we can fulfill the directives of scripture, "to bear one another's burdens."

Our prayer:

"As you O lord of heaven and earth do not always remove the difficulties of life from our paths, but walk with us through to the other side, so help us to walk alongside each other to support and to lift. As your Son, Jesus the Christ, while on this earth, walked alongside the rejected, the lonely, the sick, and the mourning, so may we too reach out to support each other. We ask your Holy Spirit to nudge us toward greater understanding of each other".

Amen

LIGHTING Our Way

- PATRICK PREHEIM
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which come in this time of life. There are those among us in the winter of their lives as they come to terms with physical limitations, illness, and the end of life as we know it. Some are deep into winter and long for the resurrection which spring promises.

Institutions as well as people are subject to the seasons. Some programs, like the early service, run their course and need to be allowed a death if a rebirth of spring is to happen. Other church offerings are quite healthy now, but need to be pruned or even put to rest in a few years. Some areas of church life are so ripe they keep us exceedingly busy. The lessons of the calendar give us permission to embrace things as they are.

Francis Whitmarsh Wile invites us to contemplate the way each unique season points to the self revealing glory of God. As church life resumes its fall rhythms and a new autumn bursts upon us let us consider our place in the seasonal calendar. There is, no doubt, beauty there. Perhaps there is also a tiredness which suggests a change may be necessary or even near. Our self assessment and reflection is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the beauty of the moment and in certain circumstances look to God for relief. The "march of days" gives us a framework to embrace reality without judgement, give voice to our praise, and acknowledge our petitions. Thanks be to God for the seasons.

Church Family NEWS



Above: The Youth Group participating in the farewell to Wendy Harder photo by Jake Nickel
Below: Sarah Hooge & Lee Warkentin
In Circle: Peter & June Dyck

We Rejoice With

Gerd & Lilli Nikel on the arrival of a daughter, Soraya Mayah, a sister to Jeffrey, Jamie and Liam

Our grade 12 graduates: **Peter Beug, Luke Derksen, Julia Epp, Torrey Falconer, Meghan Flath, Erika Hooge, Jordon Riekman, Anthony St. Onge, Nancy Winder**

Allison (Alex) Driedger who graduated from Canadian Mennonite University with a B.A. in Psychology

Lorene & Arnie Nickel and **Ray & Helen Fast** who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries

Our octogenarians: **Anne Friesen** and **Cornie Patkau** celebrated their 80th birthdays this summer

Congratulations to Those who were Married this Summer

Ben Leis, son of Tim & Anne Leis, was married to **Marlie Regehr** on July 10

Mark Driedger, son of Lynn & Marian Driedger, was married to **Mark McIntyre** in Montreal on August 1

Sarah Hooge, daughter of Peter & Diane Hooge, was married to **Lee Warkentin** in Saskatoon on August 13

Peter & June Dyck were married in Victoria on August 25

Lisa Unrau, daughter of Gordon & Phyllis Unrau, was married to **Hamish Tulloch**

Sterling Rempel, son of Delmar Rempel & Betty Brown, (and the late Alice Rempel) married **Tracy Wharton** in Calgary



We Welcome New Members to NPMC

Richard Letkeman, Nicole Hargesheimer, Stephanie Epp

May God go with you on your new journey

We welcome **Reece Retzlaff** who has joined the staff at NPMC as our youth pastor

Emily Toews was ordained as pastor of the North Star Mennonite Church in Drake on September 19. Her mentor was Anita Retzlaff

Susan, James, Ella & Colin Funk embark on a new adventure this fall. They will be spending this next year in Winnipeg and Germany.

Our Condolences to

Jake & Alvena Rempel on the death of Jake's sister, Mary Figley

Jack Driedger on the death of his brother, Bill Driedger

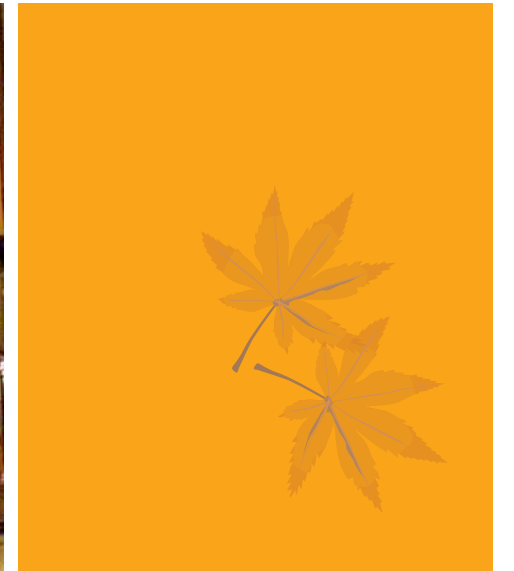
The family of **Martha Froese**, as she died on May 2

Trudy & Alan Reese on the death of Trudy's mother, Wilma Rozema

Sharon Klassen, on the death of her sister-in-law, Dawn Klassen

Anna Funk and **Bob & Joan Sawatzky**, on the death of sister and aunt, Louise Friesen

Alma & John Elias on the death of their brother-in-law, Lorne Bueckert



Above: Anita and Patrick welcoming new members to NPMC: Richard Letkeman, Nicole Hargesheimer, Stephanie Epp photo by Jake Nickel
In Circle: Reece Retzlaff



Gallery

is that you?



Above: Getting ready to bike from Emma Lake to Waskesiu: L-R: Patty Friesen, Peter & Lydia Schroeder, Carol & Norm Driedger, Lois & Paul Tiessen, Patrick Preheim, Hedie & Ross Borne, Peter & Marilyn Guenther photo by Yvonne Isaak

Left: Patty & Patrick focusing on the road ahead to Waskesiu photo by Hedie Borne

Below: Lauren Hooge modeling her grandmother, Margaret Enns' wedding dress
Bottom Right: Macaila Funk modeling her mother, Carolene Funk's wedding dress photo by Hedie Borne



The Celebration of Women Event



Art in the LOUNGE

Judy Kasdorf (Epp)

I grew up on a farm near Langham and currently live in Martensville. I remember being interested in drawing at an early age. From pencil sketches during school years, I went on to oil paintings in later years and then put art pursuits on hold to raise my family.

I studied with artist, Pat Grove and currently paint with the Prairie Palette group in Saskatoon. I especially enjoy painting wildlife and nature and have tried various mediums. In recent years I have used mostly pastels.

Over the years my paintings have received a number of awards at the annual "Reflections of Nature" Wildlife Art Show, which is the largest show of its kind in Western Canada. The show will be held October 22-24th at the Prairieland Exhibition Park Hall "B". I will have paintings entered in the show which are not displayed here.

A highlight of 2009 was twice receiving the BEST IN SHOW award for "Call of the Wild" (elk) - in August at the Exhibition Showcase of Arts and again in October at the "Reflections of Nature" Wildlife Art Show, Intermediate Division. At this show I also received the 2nd and 3rd BEST IN SHOW awards for two other paintings.

Many people have been a source of encouragement over the years and two special people that are no longer with us are my late father, Elmer Epp and my late brother, Douglas Epp. I recall my brother Doug wondered why on earth anyone would want to paint a gopher! He still showed appreciation for my efforts, even if the subject matter might not have been a favourite!

I am humbled and inspired by what God has created in the beauty of nature and wildlife that is ours to enjoy. It is a privilege to share my artwork with others.



Above: Monarch Butterfly pastel on sanded paper Judy Kasdorf

FAITH, film & fiction - PATTY PREHEIM

Our National Parks: America's Best Idea DVD series by Ken Burns is a lovely portrait of some of my favourite parks in the US - Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, etc.

Eat, Pray, Love with Julia Roberts is an enjoyable film true to the spirit of the book by Elizabeth Gilbert (image on right). I could identify with the mid-life crisis and longing for God, travel and good food!



Major Pettigrew's Last Stand by Helen Simonson is a delightful tale of a relationship between a British Major and a Pakistani shopkeeper that explores the familial and societal dynamics of love and race and relationships.

NEW TO LIBRARY - Patty Friesen

Anton by Dale Eisler is the story of a German Catholic in Communist Russia - a similar tale to the Mennonite persecutions. Not an easy read, but historical with a local twist.

Mennonite in a Little Black Dress by Rhoda Janzen is a memoir of a spiritually wandering young adult of the Mennonite Brethren persuasion. Irreverently funny and brutally honest, it isn't for everyone but would reflect where many young disenfranchised Mennonites find themselves.

Check out these and many other new fall books in the church library.

A Year in GERMANY

- ALINA BALZER-PETERS



Above: Marie Antoinette's pig
Below: The Eiffel Tower



My last three months in Germany flew by but I'll try and fill you in on some of the things that I did and saw. My very good RJC friend came all the way from Canada to spend some time with me. We went to Paris and found ourselves at a quaint little hostel with a spiral staircase and 3 floors of rooms. Not fun to carry luggage up. We took the first day and just chilled. We walked down to Notre Dame and wandered around without an agenda. We simply took in Paris in all its bustle and people and tourists. We enjoyed the cafes that are everywhere. We began with a free walking tour to get our bearings on this enormous city. It was perfect as we learned a little bit of history, found where all the big things were and learned insider information. 3 hours later we found ourselves at Champs D'Elysses. J and I decided to wander down the famous avenue and peer into all those shops I can't afford yet. You know Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior etc. And right at the end of the avenue is the Arc de Triumph! Later in the evening we went to Montmartre where you would find Moulin Rouge and a beautiful old church called Sacre Couer. It sits right at the highest point in Paris and you can see everything. We went to the Louvre – mostly to see the famous woman on the canvas. The Mona Lisa. And she's everything people say about her. Underwhelming, but you can't go to Paris and not see her. We headed to the Eiffel Tower cuz you gotta

do that too. And it was really cool. Friday was spent at the very very beautiful Versailles. We got a tour of the palace and then wandered through the gardens. It's just so gorgeous. My favourite part though was Marie-Antoinette's gardens. There were these little houses that looked like they came out of a Disney movie (or maybe Disney went here himself and was inspired...) There were farm animals and fish and flowers. As much as seeing a gold door makes you go 'wow' – being outside on a fairytale farm with a pig in the mud makes you go 'THIS IS THE BEST'. And there you have it. Versailles greatest feature is the farm animals.

Saturday evening at 10pm we caught our flight to Barcelona arriving around midnight... But you know what! It's Spain! So 1am on a Saturday means everyone's still awake and having a REAL good time. We found our way to the hostel and crashed though because we were exhausted. And Sunday was beach day. It was perfect. Except for the red shoulders afterwards. Sunscreen is a must. Monday we toured the city a bit, saw the markets, the Picasso museum and enjoyed the Barcelona architecture. But that beach called us again.

The Concept of time

I've been thinking about it often, this concept of time. And I've been thinking about how much we do things. If we think about it, if we only engage in an activity once a week and we do that

for a year, then we'd only have done that activity 52 time. ONLY 52 times. And in my head that seems so small. When I sweep and wash the floors at someone's house every week I feel like I've done it 300 times but can only remember 5 clear times I've done a specific action. And in all I've washed that floor over 30. So here's some numbers (really rough estimates):

Number of Weeks Here: 47

Visits An Individual Received: 42

Average number of visits I have done: 546

Number of rugs made Monday

mornings: 10

Hours on transportation: 148

And that's as far as I've gotten because that's just too much counting and I'm not really a numbers person. But I ate TONS of cake, like seriously cake has lost a little luster. And cake shouldn't. Cake should be awesome and delicious and amazing every time you get to eat it. Not anymore. I'm tired of cake.

Farewell.

I remember at the beginning setting a goal that I wanted to leave here either not wanting to go, or ready to go but very sad about it. And in the last month I've realized I've made my goal happen. Letting go has been hard, saying goodbyes has come too quickly. I feel at home here and I'm going to miss this community around me. My heart is heavy and I'm leaving a piece here in Enkenbach. So I'm just trusting that God has Germany in store for me again and that my path will wander over the ocean.

That's not to say I'm not excited to go home and continue my studies and see all my friends. That's really important to me but I'm letting myself be sad about leaving. I'm letting myself take it all in and be humbled by the love and blessings people are giving me.

I've had an amazing year. I've had a year where I've grown so much more than I thought I would. I learned German; didn't master it but I can get around. I have met some of the most outstanding people in my life that I admire so much. I've made some really good friends that I hope will stay with me in the years to come. I've learned to deal with people I don't necessarily

like. And I've learned that I don't like everyone and it's okay. I've learned how to travel in Europe, where to spend the bucks and where not to. I've learned to let go a little. I've learned how to play Chinese checkers. I've learned a lot. And I know I've been sad at points. So sad that I couldn't think about anything but how sad I was. But that just made me a stronger person. And now I look back and I recognize those moments as important parts but they don't stand out. I have much better memories that stand out and make me love Enkenbach more.

I'm really going to miss this town and these people. I'm going to miss speaking German everyday. I'm going to miss hopping on a train and being in a different country in a few hours. I'm going to miss all the little things that make German people German and that makes me smile.

It's been 3 weeks now since I've landed in Canada and it's been a whirlwind. I feel like I haven't had enough time to soak in all I want to say and tell about Germany - it feels too recent, too current to my life. But at the same time it is far removed from my current reality.

But a big thing I've been able to say is that I would make this decision to take a year off with Intermento over and over again. I think it is one of the best choices I've made so far in my life. I think it will continue to affect me for years to come in ways that will surprise me. Now I enjoy telling little stories here and there to who will listen but I'm also re-immersing myself in this Canadian culture. All those things I missed about Canada are coming back to me in tiny surprises like Twizzlers, French on the packaging, and Coffee Crisps. Unfortunately I can't appreciate Tim Horton's coffee anymore after the strong German coffee. Soon I think I will start to miss Germany too but I'm happily in a Canada Honeymoon Period soaking it all in as best I can between my busy class schedule.

Time to Say Goodbye

Below: In front of the gates of Versailles



MC CANADA Reports



“My sense is that if I was one of the claimants I would feel good about having someone like Larry hear my story.”

“Driving with his wife, they came across a revival crusade tent. Thinking that maybe it was a circus, they ventured in out of curiosity, and God intervened in his life.”

Do Residential Schools & GOOD NEWS Go Together?

Workshops: Allan Klassen

My highlight of the MC Canada Assembly in Calgary (June 29-July 3) was the two workshops led by Vancouver area lawyer Larry Plenert. He is one of the Indian Residential School Adjudicators with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Process. In his workshop introduction he outlined pertinent history regarding Indian Residential Schools in Canada. His role as an adjudicator carries very considerable responsibility and authority. Claimants appear before him in a safe and suitable venue to recount their stories of mistreatment and abuse while attending residential schools. Counsel for the claimant and the Federal Government may be present but are not allowed to question

or cross examine. After hearing the claimant's story, Larry has the sole responsibility to determine what financial settlement, if any, will be awarded to the claimant. Settlements vary, depending on the nature and severity of the abuse. To date he has heard about 60 stories, with an average adjudication of about \$120,000. The maximum allowable is \$275,000. I was pleased to know that he has been selected to the task. My sense is that if I was one of the claimants I would feel good about having someone like Larry hear my story. His quiet, gentle nature and his Christian commitment to justice bring integrity and graciousness to the process.

Journey of HEALING

Workshops: Allan Klassen

The second workshop was mostly spent hearing the powerfully moving life story of Darrell Royal, and a video "Journey of Healing" documenting the Aboriginal Healing Centre in Alberta. Darrell's story was also briefly covered in the August 23 issue of Canadian Mennonite under the title "With God, all things are possible". It was one of the most moving stories of redemption that I have heard. Darrell, now in his late 60's, is a Blackfoot member of the Siksika Nation in Alberta, and attended both Anglican and Catholic run residential schools. As he described it, the schools created a "very dangerous person". He spent some 20 years in prison for a variety of crimes and also acknowledged abuse toward his wife. Of his early friends, a gang of 21 young men, only two survive. All the others have died violently or through suicide. On

September 20, 1981 Darrell Royal's life changed. Driving with his wife, they came across a revival crusade tent. Thinking that maybe it was a circus, they ventured in out of curiosity, and God intervened in his life. He recalled going forward at the altar call and every day that the crusade was around, to make sure that being saved actually took hold. It did, and he subsequently became a Calgary police officer, attended Bible School, and now leads various programs in anger management, domestic violence, and cultural camps for youth. To me Darrell Royal's story is a powerful witness to God's transforming power and tells me that even in the most desperate lives there is hope, and that we must not give up on people, but must seek to create opportunities for these transformations to take place.

Financial SITUATION

By Gord Peters

Since the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly occurs almost half way through the fiscal year, the financial statement is really old news. Most people are often wondering what's happening this year. The year that ended Jan 31, 2010 showed a surplus of about \$400,000, half of which was generated by careful spending and the other half coming from the sale of the former Thompson Mennonite Church in Thompson Man. The money from the sale was divided up as per financial policy. As a result, MC Canada was able to replace some of the losses it had incurred in previous years.

Little discussion took place on the floor for either the Financial Statement or the 2010/2011 budget. One of the round table discussion topics concerned the long term trend of

dwindling budgets. Andrew Ressor MacDowell presented a paper on the downward trend and showed how as giving has reduced slowly, budgets have to follow. MC Canada has tried working directly with churches in their giving programs and has also had some "success" working with corporate and individual donors. When donation records by churches and other Mennonite institutions are reviewed, we were told that total donations have risen continually, while the dollars coming to MC Canada have gone down. So, we know it is not a matter of not having money around. Many Mennonite institutions have begun large building projects that will require substantial amounts of money. How will this affect our donations this year, or next year?

“donations have risen continually, while the dollars coming to MC Canada have gone down.”



Devotional HIGHLIGHTS

By Anita Retzlaff

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...” Col. 3:15

“The “heart” was not a warm fuzzy valentine that expressed feelings of romantic emotion and love to the other. It was, rather, the seat of the will...the nucleus of reason and determination,” says Robert Suderman referring to the bible passage above. From this reading of scripture the people of Mennonite Church Canada entered into a mega-bible study over several days.

The core of Suderman's message was basic: “the way of Christ's followers is gratitude, gift and grace.” That is what we preach and that is how we live. It is a conscious act of the “heart” (the will) to be a people of peace. To let Christ rule in our hearts is intentional. Peace is a choice.

As a participant in the World Religions Summit in Winnipeg, a precursor to the G8 summit in Toronto this summer, Suderman made a proposal to the leaders of the major world religions gathered. To the 8 Millenium Goals that were adopted by the Summit members Suderman asked that one more be added. This 9th Millenium Goal reflects the desire to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts:

that the religions of the world “condemn religiously motivated terrorism and extremism and commit to stop the teaching and justification of the use of violence between and among our faith communities.”

This is a good start.



“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”

Col. 3:15

MC CANADA Reports

Reclaiming Jesus GLADLY WEAR THE NAME

Elva and Ernie Epp

Here we were at another annual MCCan. Annual Conference in Calgary, Alberta from June 29 to July 3, 2010. Calgary is home country for Ernie, and the world famous Calgary Stampede. Too bad, Ernie was committed to the conference with no time for a few bucking broncos and chuck wagon races. However, the Thurs. night social time for all delegates at the Menno Simons School featured a lot of local Country and Western music and a rather classy Cowboy Poet Doris Daley.

The conference itself was again an inspirational time for the people of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Even though some of the business sessions appeared long, the discerning done at these times is vital for the work of this church denomination for its mission in the world and service to our God through Jesus the Christ. The conference focus this year was Reclaiming Jesus---gladly wear the name. To accent this theme delegates were invited to wear bright tags and bracelets naming the theme. Many did. Colossians 3:15-17 was the primary scripture passage that all were encouraged to memorize and some did. The apostle Paul's message to this community was that ...'you are not the way, it is the words of Jesus that rule you and that you do this eucharistically with grace and gratitude.'

Elva and Ernie's 25 plus pages of notes reflect the many sessions they attended and the discussions participated in. The workshops provided by capable resource persons allowed for a lot of choice. Ernie attended the ones on Sexuality, Residential Schools, Missions in the Phillipines. Elva attended Going Global, Jesus Matters, Family Stories. They were all good, although the one on Sexuality did not address the contentious area of homosexuality. Rather it focussed primarily on the process of dialoguing about such topics. Ernie left somewhat disappointed. Elva enjoyed all of hers.

We are both very pleased that Willard Metzger has been appointed the new General Secretary following the departure of Jack Suderman. Willard holds a doctorate in ministry and has graduated from our seminary in Elkhart. He has been a pastor in Ontario for many years and more recently served as the church liaison person for World Vision. His passion for the work of the

church is very noticeable and his leadership skills are many.

Mennonites of Mennonite Church Canada have been generous and the budget for MCCan. will be met in spite of the economic downfall this country experienced in the past two years. Of course expenditures need to be closely watched, and new programs carefully reviewed. The total giving of all area churches was approx. \$46,000,000 this past year. And our denomination remains strong and viable in a world that urgently needs its voices of peace and reconciliation. We were reminded of the massacre in Rwanda—over 800,000 persons slaughtered while the United Nations stood back and observed. This is why the book Shake Hands with the Devil by Romeo Delaire was written. And, the atrocities of Afghanistan and the turmoil in Palestine are ever before us. How can we not be a PEACE church in a time like this? The Jesus we heard about is for more than salvation. The struggle for peace cannot be ignored. MCCan. put forward a statement on peace that was adopted by the Canadian Council of churches which states, "People of faith must stop teaching and justifying use of violence among us and stop killing each other in armed conflicts." The Right to Protect (RTP) of the United Nations is not the position held by our denomination. Physical force and violence is contrary to the Mennonite understanding of PEACE.

The morning worship and other daily inspirational sessions, along with several Bible studies were well presented. We are truly thankful that our denomination has such gifted and dedicated persons working solely for the mission of the Mennonite church. We were constantly reminded of how important the church, our home church, is to the health of our communities and to society at large. Our main regret is that not more of our younger members and their young families are able to attend annual sessions like this. Even this year we volunteered to attend because the delegate roster from NPMC was not yet filled and the time for early registration had been reached.

A significant resolution presented by the Witness Council of MCCan. was passed. It acknowledged the Mennonite Churches' complicity in the matter of Residential School abuse of First Nations persons who

were forced by law to attend these schools. Almost no discussion of this resolution took place before the vote and an implication left was that Mennonite Church based mission services to First Nation communities were implicated in abuse allegations. Even though the General Secretary Jack Suderman assured the assembly that no incident of abuse had ever been attributed to any Mennonite mission services and/or individuals, but by not being more public about our recognition of the abuses our denomination is complicit with those who abused. However, the next day another resolution was placed before the assembly asking for specific information about the Mennonite Churches' alleged involvement/complicity in the residential abuse allegations and for a declaration that none of the staff participating in mission services in First Nations communities were ever accused of abuse. This resolution, after considerable affirming discussion, was rescinded to be held off until next year's assembly. The moderator assured the assembly that MCCan. staff would carefully review the original resolution and provide more clarification so as to remove the innuendo of abuse by Mennonite Services and Personnel to First Nations communities in Canada.

It is now very evident that the demographic profile of Mennonite Church Canada is changing significantly. Many Laotian and Vietnamese families have entered Mennonite fellowships in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. Native ministries remain active in Alberta.

Three must reads were available at the well stocked book display:

The Naked Anabaptist: by Dr. Stuart Murray an urban church planter in England; Dancing Through the Thistles in Bare Feet: by Rev. Dr. Gary Harder a retired pastor of Toronto Mennonite Church; and Rhythms of Grace: by Rev. Don Friesen, pastor of the Ottawa Mennonite Church.

Next year, we trust, a younger family from NPMC will volunteer as delegate/s to the annual Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada to be held in Ontario.

We thank NPMC for the opportunity and privilege of attending the Annual Session in Calgary this year. We feel that God blessed us and this carefully planned Assembly.

Welcoming the Stranger . . . NOT

By Arthur Paul Boers

Apparently many Toronto churches are not interested in attracting newcomers. New to the area, my wife and I immediately began visiting congregations. It was, alas, a largely dispiriting exercise.

I opened our church explorations by looking on the web. In spite of careful Internet research, more than once we arrived at a church only to find that worship was at a different time than that posted on their website. When I noted to church leaders that their service was at a different time than publicized, they turned the responsibility back on me. "Did you phone to check?" they asked. Yet the purpose of a website is to give accurate, trustworthy information. Besides, phoning is not that reliable: phone messages also are not necessarily updated. They often give wrong information.

At church, there were other barriers. I wondered at one congregation I visited for the first time what I needed in terms of hymnals or order of service. But when I asked an usher, she looked at me without responding. I was left to interpret her silence: "What are you doing here, anyway?" "Who wants to know?" "What, really, is your problem?" I asked again and still got no response. So I stood aside, watched what other congregants picked up and did likewise.

Worship services adeptly remind newcomers that they are outsiders. Almost invariably there is a welcome, especially to "visitors," but announcements are cryptic, often referring to first names only and not explaining who people are. Allusions to denominational agencies and institutions are an acronym alphabet soup.

The worst part is after the service. People warmly greet each other, but often ignore guests. I can recall only two or three times when someone approached and initiated a conversation.

At one point, I actually decided to join a neighbourhood church. I walked there that day with that resolution. After the service, I wove my way through the busy, crowded, noisy foyer. I was

surrounded by handshakes, hugs and laughter. People noted me out of the corner of their eyes, but no one made a move. At the coat rack, I slowly donned my jacket and once more ran the fellowship gauntlet. Again, no conversations were initiated. "I don't need this," I concluded as I walked home.

On one low day, elsewhere, I initiated a conversation with a pastor. I told him that I'd like to talk and gave him my business card and phone number. I never heard from him.

If we were not committed, highly motivated Christians, we might have given up. We know how to look for churches, what we need in church, what a church is supposed to be, what to ask for. It takes a lot of resolution to keep going back week after week to visit and to throw oneself on the—nonexistent—mercy or hospitality of strangers. That is a high threshold to climb. I wonder how less motivated newcomers cope or respond.

It is well established that moving is one of life's most stressful transitions. It's a simple act of Christian compassion, then, to help people through such a change, especially in Canada. Statistics suggest that more than half of Toronto's population was not born in Canada.

If my experience is normal, expect that many people do not feel welcome to attend. What do we expect will happen to people whose Christian commitment is not secure? Or someone who came to church reluctantly? Or one who has never been part of a church? Or one who wants to explore the faith?

The kinds of non-welcome we regularly experienced may actually deter folks from trying once again.

The next time I hear a church complain about declining numbers, I'll have to bite my tongue. Otherwise I might say, "Serves us right."



Arthur Paul Boers is the author of *The Way is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago (InterVarsity)* and holds the R.J. Bernardo Family Chair of Leadership at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto.



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NEW Beginnings - REECE RETZLAFF

The year is off to a great start! We have started Tuesday night Bible studies, and have also had the SMYO Jr High Retreat. We had twelve youth attend the weekend at Shekinah, and several participated in the coffee house/ talent show. We look forward to some exiting upcoming events, such as Mission: Impossible at the church retreat, bowling, mini-golfing, and the mentor/ mentee costume event.

October 16
Corn Maze
 Don't Miss Out On the
Fun

Youth Mystery Camping Trip July 4 - 7
 Above: Jamie Nikel, Carter Dahl, Parker Olfert, Jamie Unruh
 Above Right: A group photo taken at the Crooked Forest

photos by Wendy Harder



Above: Attempting to eat a 40 pound hamburger at the Silver Sword & Chalice Restaurant in Hafford
 Below: Kenna Forrester, Alex Zurevinsky, Lauren Hooge, Jenae Funk, Jeffrey Nikel

photos by Wendy Harder



40lb hamburger!

Youth Announcements

Tuesdays
Bible Study
 Jr. High: 7:00-8:30 pm
 Sr. High: 8:30-10:00

September 26
Mentor/Mentee/Family Wiener Roast
 Diefenbaker Park Noon

October 8
Jr. Youth Mini-golfing

October 16
Joint Youth Corn Maze

October 20
Mentor/Mentee Costume Event

Upcoming Events & IMPORTANT NOTES



October 1-3
Church Retreat
 Shekinah Retreat Centre
 Registration forms under
 mailboxes

September 29
Bryan Moyer Suderman
Concert
 Osler Mennonite Church
 7:30 pm
 Donations accepted

September 26
Youth Mentor/Mentee/
Family Wiener Roast
 Noon
 Diefenbaker Park

October 15-16
Women's Retreat
 Shekinah Retreat Centre
 For Information phone
 Barb 232-4204
 Registration forms under
 mailboxes

September 26
Buncha Girls
 Age 19- 25
 Interested in singing?
 Join us @ NPMC
 7:30 pm

October 23
Equipping Day
 Osler Mennonite Church
 9:30-3:45

