

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Volume 14 Number 22

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EDITORIAL

Where are our churches headed?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

What will the typical Mennonite Church Canada congregation look like in three years?

That's the question on the minds of my fellow congregants at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, as we attempt to identify character and vision as a body of believers. Driven by the need to replace a youth pastor, and for preparations for a 25th anniversary in 2011, the 240-member congregation has been holding what are termed Values Identity and Priorities (VIP) sessions that began with a church retreat in early October.

It is a productive exercise, one I would recommend for any congregation at this particular crossroad. As a newcomer to the scene, I find the process and its outcomes both inspiring and intriguing.

On the plus side, the congregation seems to feel good about itself, not in a complacent, comfortable sort of way, but expressing contentment and appreciation for the spiritual energy and sense of unity as a church family. You might say the congregation has high self-esteem—a healthy dynamic for looking ahead.

On the other hand, as characteristic of driven German/Swiss/Russian Mennonites, there is always room for improvement, for ways to do it better, an inner motivation to advance, to polish and to refurbish. With a good

demographic mix, this has its own built-in constraints.

Three areas seem to emerge as needing special attention in the days ahead: a call to be more welcoming to other cultures, to be more countercultural in faith and practice, and to meet a growing yearning for spiritual growth and formation.

On the welcoming front, one congregant observed that we are “still too mono-cultural,” still too populated with people of European descent. “People with different ethnicity come and stay for awhile and then leave,” he said with some guilt and frustration.

I suspect he is echoing a sentiment that could be heard across the 230 congregations of MC Canada. At a subconscious level, we are still too comfortable with our own kind, still too uneasy with those bringing a different language and cultural orientation. At the growing edge of our denomination, the new ethnic minority congregations are still too much a sub-culture, still having difficulty coming into our cultural mainstream.

It will take some serious intentionality to change the dynamic here. We will have to move from the talk to the walk, doing such things as teaming families together with similar demographics (age of children, similar professions, similar leisure-time activities). More of their leaders will have to be worked into our



congregational and denominational infrastructure, just to name a couple of measures that can make this “integration” happen.

Becoming more countercultural will take a great deal of finessing. While there is the fear of returning to the closed sectarian religious culture of the recent past in many of our communities, we are also smitten with guilt that, in our escape from these rural enclaves with all of their cultural baggage, we have merely put on a new set of clothes that too comfortably adopts the fashions of the dominant culture—with all of its emphasis on individualism, nationalism and ethnocentrism.

Our kids need to excel in sports, in drama, in their studies, in the arts and sciences, in their quest to be good citizens—all of which are worthy goals. But many of them work against our core beliefs as Anabaptist Mennonites in our confession of Jesus as Lord of our lives, in our life as a Bible-centred community and in our commitment to peace and nonviolence in the workplace and in national issues.

Responding to the spiritual longings of our church members is already underway, with a recent emphasis on “spiritual formation,” and a systematic program to train spiritual directors. It is very “Anabaptist” in nature, where we have always voiced a “priesthood of believers” core belief. But with our adoption of a professional “clergy”—like our mainstream Protestant colleagues—we have not always practised it.

This will, of course, over time change the paradigm for many of our pastors, taking them from essentially being church administrators to what Eugene H. Peterson calls the “contemplative pastor.” It will reflect, he says, a kind of preaching that is “a creative act requiring quietness and solitude, concentration and intensity.”

ABOUT THE COVER:

‘A fool sees not the tree that a wise man sees,’ William Blake wrote in Proverbs of Hell. Mennonite storyteller Jack Dueck picks up the theme with his elegy to God’s leafy creation on page 4.

DIGITAL ARTWORK: ‘ALL IN A ROW’ (SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP SERIES, 2007)

BY ROSS W. MUIR FOR MENNOPIX

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Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

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Head Office Staff:

Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising: **Lisa Metzger,** advert@canadianmennonite.org, toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Rachel Bergen, National Correspondent, ca@canadianmennonite.org, 204-885-2565 ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman,** B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org,

604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld,** Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org, 780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau,** Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org, 306-933-4209;

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canadianmennonite.org, 519-579-7258 canadianmennonite.org, 519-579-7258

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[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

Christians and the structure of money

(An excerpt): **DAVID DRIEDGER**

Money: **PAUL LOEWEN**

Franklin, . . . my dear (Pt. 2): **WILL LOEWEN**



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A TALE OF TWO TREES

A tree is not only that stands

"A fool sees not the tree that a wise man sees."

William Blake, Proverbs of Hell

BY JACK DUECK

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

'BLUE BIRCHES NO. 1' (DETAIL)
(SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP SERIES, 2007)

something in the way

“Richard Branson has offered a large prize to anyone who invents a device that will pull greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere. God already invented this device, and we call it a tree. Trees pull greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere through photosynthesis and ‘sequester’ it as carbon in the leaves, stalks and wood,” writes Christopher Shore in the November-December, 2007, issue of *Marketplace*.

Living trees are nature’s lungs. They clean the air, scrub and protect the soil, conserve moisture and offer habitat to countless living things.

Bryce Nelson warns: “People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world which cannot sustain them.” In *Tree Magic: Nature’s Antennas (A Free Anthology About Trees to Nurture the Soul)* we read: “Trees watch over us and provide us with what we need to live on this planet.”

In just one year a large tree converts 12 kilograms of carbon dioxide—18,000 kilometres’ worth of car emissions—into enough oxygen to sustain a family of four over that period.

We should plant for the planet. Some are acting on the urgency. The Waterloo, Ont., 10,000 Tree Program, as well as the international Billion Tree Campaign, spearheaded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai, are heartening examples. While some are going green to reduce emissions, it is crucial that all Earth’s citizens act on this urgency to rejuvenate our damaged lung before it’s too late.

We are the only creature that soils its nest, voraciously devouring fossil fuels while rapaciously felling forests that would counteract the results of the former. Greed has

*While the bird population declines,
the pulp mills growl on.*



us blinded beyond comprehension: For pure horrors, regard what we have done by clear-cutting the Queen Charlotte Islands (see *The Golden Spruce* by John Vaillant), denuding vast expanses in the B.C. heartland and Oregon, and the massive assault on the Brazilian rain forest.

Clear-cutting the boreal forests for paper pulp has decimated the bird population. “More than 300 species nest in the boreal forest—more than two billion individual birds in all . . . This is the most important bird nursery in North America,” Jennifer Baker writes in *Ontario Nature*, 2008.

While the bird population declines, the pulp mills growl on. “God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools,” wrote John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club.

In 1929, on a trip to Canada, Winston Churchill remarked to his son: “Fancy cutting down all those beautiful trees to make pulp for those bloody newspapers, and calling it civilization.”

The Amazon Basin produces roughly 20 percent of the Earth’s oxygen. But fires to clear the rain forest make Brazil a leading contributor to greenhouse gases while decreasing its ability to produce oxygen. While we in North America self-righteously protest against this, we import 50 percent of Brazil’s timber.

A tale of two trees

Two red oak trees render their emblematic stories. Both were already living and giving before Mozart began composing music.

First encountering the red oak during a music school fundraising garden tour, I hear a cello-flute-violin trio under a pink flowering chestnut mellow the June air with Mozart’s “Divertimento.” The setting is framed in a stunning tableau: a pulsing blend of robins, blue birds, mourning doves, finches, nuthatches—all song

suspended; squirrels hang in bug-eyed suspension to the music, the distant woodpecker halts in mid-hammer, the Mozart cadences waft through the garden fragrance while overhead a red-tailed hawk silently coasts the thermal lifts in the azure sky.

In the 19th century, a father purchased a tract of land as a healing retreat for his asthmatic daughter. On his neighbour’s property line stood a magnificent ancient red oak. The owner planned to cut it down. For him, in Blake’s words, “A

hour, creating life sustenance, every day and every season giving, producing, wasting nothing in its habitation, its life throbbing into a total contribution for the surrounding habitat: cooling photosynthesis converting carbon dioxide into oxygen, the Earth’s best known nutrients in fall leaves, and shaded home to a large family of living things. A vibrant magnificent metaphor of life itself.

On a storytelling trip I encounter another ancient red oak. In the latter part of the 20th century a developer planned a

suburb, bulldozed, killing a colony of trees—in Thoreau’s words, “civilizing them off the face of the earth”—then named the streets after the deceased! Somehow one ancient oak was spared. Arriving for a visit I find the owner pushing a reel mower snipping grass beneath the tree’s canopy.

As we rock in hickory rockers on his open porch, the evening sun filtering down through the greenery, he comments: “That oak re-invigorated my life; in the death-grip of despair it has taught me to hope again; early

dawn I draw strength just observing its massive spread opening to the sunrise; in rain storms the tree’s muscular elasticity stirs my faith amidst life’s tempests.”

The trees’ cooling photosynthesis wafts across this porch, slanting the bedroom lace curtains in a kind of peaceful consent. He continues: “In winter, the tree appears gaunt and lifeless, but I enjoy sensing it charge its batteries. And its composted fallen leaves provide the best known nutrients for my award-winning vegetable garden. The tree never allows me to buy commercial fertilizer.”

Becoming pensive, he swallows hard and offers: “A year-and-a-half ago our 11-year-old darling died of leukemia.” Silence and deep breathing. I ask about her age, her name. Out of his wallet,



‘ABOUT TO FALL’ (2007)

tree is only something that stands in the way.” He purchased the farm from the neighbour for the love of the tree and for the fresh air it provided for his oxygen-starved daughter.

Today, the farm is under agreement with a forest conservancy. From a girth measuring 310 centimetres and a canopy stretching more than 40 metres, the oak rules over a large CO₂-absorbing family: a hemlock grove, a hundred varieties of pine, chestnut, butternut, beech, a century-old forsythia, younger oaks, maple, birches and hickory.

Mozart wafts through the floral scents. Leaning into the massive oak I sense its life coursing through its limbs, roots clinging over the curvature of the earth, drinking, drinking litres and litres every

And so a tree surgeon came, amputating it limb from limb, 'civilizing it off the face of the Earth.'

wrapped in a paper sheet, he hands me a picture of Sandra—photo-fissured like fine English bone china—wide-eyed, big-toothed, pig-tailed, smiling unabashed.

“I just could not shake the loss,” he says. “My limbs, my mind, my spirit, all my bones felt like dead wood. Then in an early spring dawn I saw again this tree—in resurrection for perhaps the 300th time—coming to bud, a first robin exulting in song. This porch has become my week-day church.”

Travelling through the area another year, I turn in to the area to re-ignite memories of the “resurrection oak.” Unable to locate the house I check the street name and house number again. The place is unrecognizable; the entire lot—its house, its vegetation, the immovable oak—have been uplifted and another stage set dropped in.

Stunned, immobilized, but finally gathering my intent, I step out to meet the current owner. We sit in the now glassed-in porch, air conditioners humming. I remark on some changes he had made and he is eager to tell me of his doings.

The previous owner had had a stroke and was moved to a nursing home. Purchasing the property at a low offer, he was eager to perform major remodelling. I look over the antiseptic yard, perfect chemically induced lawn, controlled non-native shrubs banked by bark mulch, lawn sliced by a new circular asphalt driveway.

“Yes” he says, “we re-did the entire house. It was really rather old-fashioned. And we built an addition and installed an in-ground pool out back. Would you believe it, they had no air conditioning, not even a window one.”

He shows me through the house, its addition expanding to 483 square metres. We walk through hermetically sealed “cubes” full of manufactured air. Outside, five compressors throb, an oil furnace heating the pool, a 10-year-old child slouched in front of TV cartoons.

Back on the porch I comment on remembering the tree.

“The tree was a nuisance,” he says. “After we installed a large picture window and this glassed-in porch, the tree blocked our whole view of the road. And the grass wouldn’t even grow properly underneath it. In fall, the impossible leaves cost \$75 just to have them hauled to the landfill. All winter I was looking at the ugly bare branches hanging over my front yard like dead wood.”

And so a tree surgeon came, amputating it limb from limb, “civilizing it off the face of the Earth.” The trunk was felled and the massive stump drilled out of the earth. To my remark that red oaks make lovely furniture wood, he adds that they installed three fireplaces, the kind that suck air out of the house and emit minimum heat while maintaining a voracious and insatiable appetite.

“We had enough wood for two winters,” he says.

In a few hours, screaming chainsaws terminated 300 years—2.6 million hours—of nourishing and magnificent being into entropic irretrievability, the life-force embedded in its acorns locked aloft in noxious fumes. I fear he’s dreaming while the world dies screaming.

The solenoids click and compressors

whir again.

His egocentric enthusiasm draws me back. He shows me his enlarged garage, delighting in pointing out “the joke of a mower the previous owner pushed around,” hanging on the wall. He now rides over his re-constituted lawn in a front-loaded mower, “for better balance and for closer mowing,” with a large bagger to collect the cuttings. And he wears earmuffs to deaden the noise.

The garage now has a shelf of poisons carefully targeted to kill weeds and the myriad pests “out there.” I remember now that North Americans pump over 32 million kilograms of chemicals annually onto lawns and gardens.

“Now I’ve got the best lawn in the neighborhood and people frequently comment on it,” he tells me. “In fact, a chemical company even took pictures of my yard for their advertising.”

The automatic sprinkler kicks in, blending with the air conditioners’ whine.

“And now that I’ve got rid of all the bugs and beetles, I don’t have any more bird droppings on my lawn.”

Not a bird song in earshot either. The bug zapper zaps once, then in triple: “Gotcha!” ❄

Photography/digital artwork by Ross W. Muir for mennopix.

/// For discussion

1. How many trees are planted annually in your community? Are they part of a community initiative? Who plants and waters them? How important is it to plant more trees?
2. In what situations would you cut down a tree in your yard? What are the advantages and disadvantages to having lots of trees in your neighbourhood? When might a tree be legitimately “in the way”?
3. The first task for Mennonite pioneer farmers in Ontario was to clear the trees to grow crops. Is the need to grow crops a legitimate reason for cutting down trees today? What about harvesting trees to make wood products or for firewood? Does civilization by definition destroy the Earth, as Jack Dueck suggests?
4. What is the appropriate Christian attitude towards the created world? Do we have a proper respect for trees and other living things? Does our society tend to be overly sentimental about trees and animals? Should our churches be teaching more about our relationship to the created world?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ What's the truth about intelligence and evolution?

I AM ALWAYS confused about adding intelligence to evolution. To me, evolution in its earliest form is like a river; it takes the path of least resistance, and, as a result, there is always the potential for it to build in lies or deceptions, especially in areas of intelligence.

Thus comes in the whole idea of reality: Can true reality exist? My answer is, true reality can only exist if God alone created intelligence, because God is perfect; then, intelligence is true and reality is true. If you believe in evolution without God, then you have to accept the fact that reality probably does not exist.

This is probably the universal question that science has shied away from for centuries and has left our youths hanging in the closet. It's time we face up to this question: Does reality exist?

RAY ZEHR, SHAKESPEARE, ONT.

✉ Arabic Christians, Muslims have different names for Jesus

I APPRECIATED "A primer on Muslim groups and beliefs," Sept. 20, page 6. I especially congratulate you on making clear that "Allah" is the Arabic word for God, which would be used by Christians as well.

I just would like to add a detail. "Isa" is the Arabic name for Jesus, for the Muslims. "Yassu" is the name that you find in Arabic Bibles. It is also the one that is used by Arabic Christians. Arabic Christians would not use the name "Isa" for Jesus.

RIAD KLASSEN, VANCOUVER, B.C.

✉ Compliments for a 'fine bi-weekly'

I WAS TRULY impressed with the "How green is *Canadian Mennonite*?" editorial, Sept. 6, page 2, on two counts.

First, the courage of Angelika Dawson, Abbotsford, B.C., to ask a very pertinent question: "How green is *Canadian Mennonite*?" The access to question those in the upper echelons of the denomination in a sense implies to what extent you actually do go beyond the "green" rhetoric.

The other encouraging aspect of this editorial is the upfront manner—not defensive, but clearly responding to the question. I found this most helpful.

I would also compliment the editor for responding so clearly with appropriate detail. This kind of dialogue bodes well for the entire *Canadian Mennonite* constituency; indeed, it is a great example of community.

This is a trait I have observed throughout my reading of this fine bi-weekly.

GEORGE H EPP, CHILLIWACK, B.C.

/// Corrections

- By switching from the mandatory long-form census to a voluntary survey, the federal government will spend \$30 million more for poorer information, according to Wilfrid Laurier University economics professor David Johnson. Incorrect information was reported in the "Census reforms will hurt Canada's poor, claim economics professor" article, Oct. 4, page 21.

- The artwork accompanying the "Feast commemorates church's work on Manitoba hydro issues" article, Oct. 4, page 23, was incorrectly attributed. It was painted by Rhian Bryn Jolson.

Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.



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✉ Websites help churches 'share the good news'

RE: "THE GOSPEL according to Google," Oct. 4, page 4. Will Braun's article raises a number of good questions to ask about the Internet and church websites. I would have a few of the same questions.

However, I think he is missing out on a critical component when he thinks about church websites: namely, as a tool to engage the community around us with the gospel. He should also be asking, "Does the Internet help us share the good news?"

The Gathering Church didn't build our website with the idea of building internal community with it. We have better ways to go about it than through the Internet, although we obviously use e-mail to

communicate with each other. We use it as a way for people in our community to get acquainted with us as a church, and one way for them to find out about us.

We have visitors to our church almost weekly, and when I ask them how they found us, the Internet is almost always listed. That first contact has ended up being the venue for them to become connected, and ultimately make decisions to follow Christ.

Few of us would enter a church building if it didn't bother posting a sign. Our website is the current sign where people get a sense of who we are before they set foot in our door or engage in one of our programs. It's the reason why a small church in Wymark, Sask., is also interested in getting a website.

JIM LOEPP THIESSEN, KITCHENER, ONT.

FROM OUR LEADERS

What's really worthy of our fretting?

JEFF STECKLEY

I don't think clearly when I'm anxious. I need to be reminded to slow down and breathe deeply. Doing so creates the space wherein I can regain a sense of clarity, so that whatever decisions I make are helpful and life-giving.

Perhaps this nugget of self-awareness is one that we'd do well to attend to as a church. We speak the language of hope, yet too often live our days as anxious and fretting people. Our fretting ranges from concern about the trivial to the most profound: from, "Who is the boss of the church kitchen?" to, "Will our children discover a faith that is vibrant and relevant?" We'd be well-served if we'd first determine what's really worthy of our fretting and let the rest go, as chaff to the wind.

In conversation with constituent congregations, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Executive Council and staff have heard a renewed call for spiritual depth and new ways of being church that are grounded in our identity as an

Anabaptist/Mennonite people. Such foundational concerns are most certainly worthy of our fretting, yet often our anxiety gets away on us.

We are anxious about our children, our youths and young adults; about the declining levels of biblical literacy; about



Like individuals, as a church we don't think clearly when anxious.

getting enough people to fill the pews and to fill the slate of church officers; about declining financial support for the church; about how to welcome newcomers; about how to appease old-timers; about what it means to be a missional church.

Between the lines of our long list of anxieties, the question of who we are as an Anabaptist/Mennonite people remains, and is worthy of our fretting.

Like individuals, as a church we don't think clearly when anxious. We metaphorically, and sometimes literally, point fingers and blame others for our lost

corporate sense of who we are and what matters most. As a church we need to slow down and breathe deeply in order to create the space wherein we will find our way together, aware of, and responsive to, the nudging of God's Spirit.

This formative work is for the whole of God's people. It's about having real conversations across generations about the anxieties that matter and the hopes that are real. It's about rediscovering the Scripture's timely surprises, wisdom and guidance. It is about listening well to the stories of others, so that we might be inspired, compassionate and aware of the places where our own stories connect. It is about choosing a spacious way of pray-

er, attentiveness and reflection. It is about welcoming new voices into our conversations, receiving the truths, challenges and opportunities that they represent.

As we attend to this formative work, both individually and as communities of God's people across the generations, our anxious fretting will truly be about that which matters. There will be clarity, perspective and a way forward as we rediscover our home and our way as God's people.

Jeff Steckley is MC Eastern Canada's congregational ministries minister.

✉ Return to Mennonite Hymnary instead of publishing new hymnal

THE QUESTION WAS asked, “Do we need a new hymnal?” in the Oct. 4 editorial, “Discerning the liturgical core,” page 2.

I realize that musical tastes and styles change, but as the psalmist says, “*I consider the days of old, I remember the years long ago*” (Psalm 77:5). Instead of spending time, energy and resources to publish another hymnal, why don’t we just use *The Mennonite*

Hymnary first published in 1940? I Chronicles 17:27b tells us, “*What is blessed is blessed forever.*”

We don’t need another hymnal. We need more Chenaniahs (I Chronicles 15:22)—worship leaders who understand music and are sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the needs and preferences of all age groups.

An older person once said he stopped going to church because nothing was familiar. What has happened in our churches is that the young people have taken over the worship. They are sincere and

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The wrong question

PHIL WAGLER

The silly season will soon arrive when you will hear, “What do you want for Christmas?” Endlessly creative lists of desires will follow. Others will go all high-horse and not ask for anything, while silently hoping you can read minds. Still others will completely miss the point and wish a bride for Prince William or a Stanley Cup for the Maple Leafs—only one of which seems remotely possible.

But given that Christmas is rooted in the Great Gift-Giver, should we not be asking, “What will you give for Christmas?” This would be, despite all the trappings and absurdities that have become part of the sugar overdose of Yuletide, at least one small step in the right direction.

Many approach the wonder of the church in the same way we have been conditioned to view Christmas. We bring sloppy church-thought to the fore when we say something like, “I want a church that will meet my needs!” We almost stomp our feet when we say this, and there is much worth puking over in this type of toddler-tantrum.

The local church is no drive-thru. A church is the neighbourhood expression of the people of God, saved by a cross of grace, resurrected from the dominion of self, and called out of the world only to be

sent back to it as one body. The church is gathered by the Father to live like Jesus in the world in the power of the Spirit, not some abstract entity for Christian cherry-picking. When we treat the church like consumers, we are participating in heresy.

The abundance of churches in most communities means some Christians, bulging at the seams from being force-fed the lie that they are the centre of the universe and having never wrestled biblically with the nature of the church, look at church buildings in much the same way they view strip malls: “I wonder if that church will make me happier,” or, “I’m sure this one will give me what I want, and probably for a better deal.” The variety of the body of Christ is thus reduced

graciously received. What can I now give and who will I do it with?”

- First, it might actually begin correcting our sloppy church-thought and recover a biblical ecclesiology that sees the church as God’s idea to change the world (Ephesians 3:10) and not his department store for spiritual shopaholics.
- Second, it might give us a greater appreciation for those who serve and lead the church. Rather than see our leaders as holy service providers who need to put out or move on, we might become an army of kingdom agents asking, “How might I serve?” instead of, “What have you done for me lately?” It might also be just what our leaders need to be freed from the tyranny of performance that keeps many shackled and fearful.
- Third, it might actually make us happier. We may discover that joining God’s mission to meet the world’s deepest needs is exceedingly more exhilarating, and unify-



When we treat the church like consumers we are participating in heresy.

to the equivalent of competing catalogues and sales events.

A more biblical, and perhaps even history-altering, approach would be akin to that other Christmas question. Instead of selfishly hoping for a church that will meet my wants and needs, what might change if we would say, “I want to join God in meeting the world’s needs! I have

ing, than having another itch scratched. We may, in fact, discover the joy of the Great Giver himself.

Phil Wagler is a husband, father and pastor looking forward to giving this Christmas, since he’s received everything he needs in Christ. You can reach him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

enthusiastic, but do they really understand music? Their loud and sometimes chaotic style does not minister to the older people. The young people are in their own groove. Sometimes their style leads to a spirit of praise and worship that some may not be comfortable with.

I submit the following benediction from *The Mennonite Hymnary*: “May the grace of Christ our

Saviour and the Father’s boundless love / With the Holy Spirit’s favour, rest upon us from above. Thus may we abide in union with each other and the Lord / And possess, in sweet communion, joys which earth cannot afford. Amen.”

A prophetic word or admonition should not keep us from entering into the joy of the Lord.

WES EPP, CALGARY, ALTA.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Our gifts can disclose avenues of hope

AIDEN ENNS

Every year at this time I feel some anxiety. I’m talking about Christmas and it has to do with shopping. Well, to be exact, my anxiety has to do with “not” shopping.

For almost a decade I’ve been one of the organizers of a little campaign with the delightful name of, get ready for it: Buy Nothing Christmas.

The name is rather unfortunate because people often see it as a Give Nothing Christmas, and they think of us as scrooges. So, for the record, I’m not against giving gifts at Christmas. In fact, this is an essential way to show love, to build community and to honour the core of our tradition.

We affirm that out of love God gave to humankind a one and only child, a divine being, to live and die among us mortals. This impossible mix of human and divine is the crux of the mystery. It discloses the possibility for us to participate in the sacred as well.

In gratitude, we express our love at Christmas by giving gifts. How can I not be in favour of such exchanges? We express our love by giving. And we express our values by what we give.

Unfortunately, in a consumer society we often express consumer values with our gifts. If I give someone a \$100 gift card for

her favourite store, I’m showing her my love and thoughtfulness, which, of course, is significant. But I’m also affirming the centrality of shopping in our lives. We fortify a retail-driven economy that preys upon our penchant for ease and our vulnerability to the whims of style.

Or I could choose an “alternative” gift and buy something promoted by Mennonite Central Committee and Ten Thousand Villages as a “fair trade” gift. Or, in the name of a loved one, I could buy a goat for a poor rural family in some “under-developed” foreign country.



Unfortunately, in a consumer society we often express consumer values with our gifts.

While the merits of such actions are spelled out in brochures and websites, there are downsides here as well: I show my trust in the charity model (where the rich stay in power), or my belief in development (where intervention may bring exploitation or unsustainable western patterns of living).

Of course, things are not so clear cut; there’s ambiguity. In a sense, we are trapped by a powerful system, caught up in the plunder and blunders of the world’s super powers.

But like the Magi who visited the baby

born to Mary and Joseph, we can switch allegiances. We can betray the empire of power. In their case, they disregarded King Herod’s demand to report back on the whereabouts of the Christ child (Matthew 2).

In our case, we may wish to disobey the gods of the market system and make our giving reflect post-consumer-capitalist values. This option, by definition, will not be sexy, glamorous, instant, easy or fun. It will be burdensome and create a disturbance. But it will be meaningful and may disclose further avenues of hope.

Concrete examples of such gifts abound: anything of a do-it-yourself nature (baking, handiwork, knitting, preserves); experiences (meals, retreats, travel, sing-songs); services (babysitting, visits, walks); and heirlooms (family clock, furniture, tools, stoneware).

I can see a day coming when, among Christians in Canada and the United States, we abandon a consumer-capitalist Christmas that blesses overconsumption, and embrace a sacred, liturgical, relational, sustainable celebration of feasting and sharing of talents that, like the Magi, expresses our dissent from an empire of power.

Aiden Enns is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and the editor of Geez magazine. He can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Biro—Naomi Jada (b. Oct. 19, 2010), to Abel and Kate Biro, Calvary (Mennonite), Ayr, Ont.

Dueck—Madden Cruse (b. May 14, 2010), to Josh and Michelle Dueck, Laird Mennonite, Sask.

Flemister—Kieran Maurice Edson (b. Sept. 14), to Mike and Kate Flemister, Calvary (Mennonite), Ayr, Ont.

Hartman—Sierra Claire (b. Aug. 12, 2010), to Lori and Adrian Hartman, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Lyon—Alexis Julia (b. Sept. 1, 2010), to Paul Dyck and Heidi Lyon, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Martin—Reid Calen (b. Oct. 20, 2010), to Phil Martin and Krista Burkhardt, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Redekopp—Kayleigh Marie (b. Sept. 30, 2010), to Andrew and Candice Redekopp, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Silva—Teia Emmanuelle Hnydyuk (b. July 8, 2010), to Andre Silva and Natasha Hnydyuk, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Solomon—Joel Fernando (b. Aug. 6, 2010), to Isaiah and Tammy Solomon, Calvary (Mennonite), Ayr, Ont.

Suderman—Samantha Joy (b. Oct. 19, 2010), to Andrew and Karen Suderman, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., in South Africa.

Weadick—Alaina Lily Jane (b. Oct. 10, 2010), to Patrick and Elizabeth Weadick, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., in Ireland.

Wei—Matias Jian (b. July 25, 2010), to Jim and Heidi Wei, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Baptisms

Tobin Schlegel, Erin Schlegel—East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Oct. 17, 2010.

Ernie Rock, Stella Rock, Jim Ruchotzke, Deanna Redekopp, Randee Funk, Alex Funk, Sarah Braun—Laird Mennonite, Sask., March 21, 2010.

David Isley—Waters Mennonite, Lively, Ont., Sept. 19, 2010.

Marriages

Brubacher/Greco—Janna Brubacher (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.) and Mark Greco, at St. Jacobs Mennonite, Oct. 10, 2010.

Burkholder/Martin—Rachel Burkholder and Simon Martin, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., at Fraser Lake Camp, Bancroft, Ont., Oct. 9, 2010.

Clement/Martin—Chantal Clement and Craig Martin, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont., Oct. 10, 2010.

Dutta/Martin—Tilak Dutta and Tonya Martin (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.), in Port Stanton, Ont., Oct. 2, 2010.

Dyck/Epp-Tiessen—Melissa Dyck and Mark Epp-Tiessen, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., July 17, 2010.

Fast/Shantz—Melanie Fast and David Shantz, at St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 21, 2010.

Gray/Wiebe—Karen Gray and Jason Wiebe, at Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Oct. 2, 2010.

Harder/Schneeberger—Katie Harder (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.) and Klaus Schneeberger, at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, July 24, 2010.

Heidebrecht/Ragettie—Aaron Heidebrecht and Alisha Ragettie, at Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Oct. 1, 2010.

Helbig/Reimer—Louis Helbig and Kristin Reimer (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.), in Cambridge, Ont., June 25, 2010.

Kuepfer/Streicher—Matthew Kuepfer and Carolyn Streicher, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., Oct. 16, 2010.

Mailloux/Pries—Simon Mailloux and Kari Pries (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.), at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Oct. 9, 2010.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.

Pontius' Puddle



MENNONITE WOMEN CANADA

—A place to belong—

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

At this time, in this particular place

BY PATTY OLLIES

As the seasons change I always marvel at the rhythm of this world. Spring awakening becomes summer growth, which turns into fall harvest and then winter slumber. It happens quietly and unseen.

Our lives seem to have a similar type of rhythm: seasons of awakening, growth, harvest and slumber. The common denominator between the seasons of nature and the seasons of our lives is change. These changes in our lives don't often happen so quietly as they do in nature. We usually resist change and feel unsettled at the thought of leaving one thing behind to try something new.

Being both the new Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada president and a member of the Mennonite Women Canada executive, I'm learning a lot about the work/mission that both these groups support through prayer and finances. It's a privilege to be connected to this work and very inspiring as I learn about the people who respond to God's call.

One such person is Kara Carter, a recipient of both the Women of MC Eastern Canada-Conrad Grebel graduate program grant and assistance from the MW Canada Spiritual Growth Assistance Fund as she completes her master of divinity degree at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary.

Recently, I had the privilege of talking with Carter about her "surprising faith journey," which has taken her to places she would never have imagined and has opened doors for her that she didn't know existed.

She never imagined starting university at the same time as her daughter, nor that she'd be sitting in class with young adults she had served during her time as youth leader at Listowel Mennonite Church, Ont., years earlier!

Although Carter had always enjoyed her family, church involvements and people-related work in her optometry career, God began to do something new in her life when she was called to become part-time youth pastor at Poole Mennonite Church, Milverton, Ont., in 2001.

That was "a warm place to minister and to test my gifts," says Carter, who also worked on her bachelor

of arts degree in religious studies at the University of Waterloo, Ont., during that time.

Later, following a season of discernment in 2006, which involved intentional prayer and conversations with mentors/guides regarding her strong sense of call to further ministry, Carter felt led to begin full-time post-graduate studies in congregational ministry in 2007. She hopes to complete those studies this year.

Talking with Carter, her passion and love for what she does become clearly evident, as is her conviction that God has called her to be a student "at this time, at this particular place." Also, she feels very fortunate to have the support of Mennonite women's groups across Canada as she responds to God's call and seeks to be a good steward of the time and finances she has been given for this part of her journey.

Throughout this time the image of an open door has remained in front of Carter, and Isaiah 43:19 has carried her: "See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

As Carter nears the end of her studies, she is once again in a time of discernment, looking and listening to what God has for her. She has grown and changed, and, thankfully, we have been part of that change through our prayers and finances.



Kara Carter, foreground, in Israel/Palestine this spring.

We may all be at different places and experiencing different seasons in our lives; however, we have a God who desires to be present with us through these changing seasons. So, today, I personally will look with new eyes at the tasks that are set before me. I'll look for ways to respond to God's call, instead of just "making decisions." And following Carter's example, I won't be afraid of change or of "doing new things."

I look forward to serving the women who make up the Women of MC Eastern Canada and MW Canada, and will look with you for the open doors that God is wanting to lead us through. ☸



Patty Ollies lives in Milverton, Ont., is a member of Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank, Ont. and the thrift shop coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Above the Underground best kept secret in Abbotsford

STORY AND PHOTO
BY ANGELIKA DAWSON
Mennonite Central Committee
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

For a little clothing store, Above the Underground is making a big impact on the lives of people in Abbotsford. And if Darlene Davy, the store's manager, has her way, many more people will know about it.

"I always say Above the Underground is Abbotsford's best kept secret, but I'd like to change that," she says with a smile.

Above the Underground is a unique Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) program that offers hands-on training and work experience at the second-hand clothing store.

The store runs two separate training programs:

- The 12-week associate program includes both classroom training and the opportunity for participants to put that training into practice in the store. The program is funded by sales from the store. Participants, who must go through an interview process, have the opportunity to learn customer service; retail sales, including the use of a cash register and debit/credit reader; promotions and advertising; merchandising and displays; and robbery and theft prevention skills. They also learn how to write a résumé and look for a job.

- The 13-week Youth Keep Working (YKW) program teaches life and employability skills to unemployed or underemployed teens and young adults, and is funded by the Government of Canada through Youth Skills Link. Participants spend the first six weeks at Above the Underground receiving computer training, a first aid certificate, and training in job search and résumé cover letter writing. They then move on to work in a community project for the next seven weeks, developing their skills while giving back to the community.

A new partnership with the MCC Clothing Etc. thrift shop at the MCC Plaza



Above the Underground associate Pam Thompson, left, and manager Darlene Davy welcome shoppers to their trendy thrift store—the best kept secret in Abbotsford.

in Abbotsford means that YKW participants also spend part of their experience at the thrift shop sorting and pricing items.

"It's a win-win situation," Davy says, adding that it provides the thrift shop with much-needed volunteers and makes it less crowded at Above the Underground's back sorting room.

Pam Thompson has been through the associate program and continues to volunteer in the store because she loves it so much. She found out about the program when she and her husband moved to Abbotsford from Chilliwack.

"I'm a people person," she says. "I love working the cash, answering the phones and interacting with the customers."

She is currently involved with another employment program that finds odd jobs and matches them with employees. She has done landscaping and car-washing through this new program. But she has other dreams. "I'd love to be a greeter at Wal-Mart," she says.

Davy has managed Above the Underground for nearly two years and absolutely loves her job. Having worked as a group home employee for youths and in retail, she says this job combines her two work experiences in a unique way.

"It's a new story every day," she says. "I'm never bored and there's always something new to learn or someone to help."

She says she sometimes feels like a "mom" to some of the participants she meets, helping them find housing or with filing their income tax. She stays connected with previous associates. "It's so much more than a job for me," she says. "I love it."

As for the shop, she wants people to share the secret far and wide. It is not your average thrift shop. While all the clothing is second hand, Davy is very particular about what makes it onto the floor. She looks for current, trendy and fashionable items, and says that if she wouldn't wear it, she doesn't put it out. ❧

Loosing the chains of injustice

New Hamburg team brings Internet access to Kenyan slum

The Gathering Church
NAIROBI, KENYA

Outside the Eastleigh Fellowship Centre in Nairobi there is a pot-holed road lined by tiny shops with tin roofs or no roof at all. Beggars beg, and the smell of burning garbage fills the air.

But inside there is now a modern computer lab with unlimited high-speed Internet access coming soon, thanks to a New Hamburg, Ont., team under the Global Youth Network umbrella, led by retired school teacher Leigh Steckley, a member of The Gathering Church, Kitchener.

The promise is that this lab will be used to teach beginners and advanced students alike, who will graduate with skills that can be marketed both in Kenya and also around the world.

Dwight Baer, also of New Hamburg, was the team member who championed the computer lab, raised the funds and purchased the equipment from a Nairobi

vendor. Baer grew up as a member of Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., but currently spends 10 months of every year as the information technology specialist in a First Nations community in northern Manitoba.

"I was inspired by Isaiah 58," explains Baer, "where we are commanded to loose the chains of injustice . . . and share our food with the hungry. What better way to share our food than to provide employment in a country where almost half of the workforce is unemployed?"

The Eastleigh centre is situated next to a slum with thousands of refugees. The work was launched in the 1960s by the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, although it is now run by the local Kenyan Mennonite church.

The New Hamburg team offered English-as-second-language classes and a sports

program for up to 100 street kids each day during its one-week stay in Nairobi.

Steckley acknowledges that the need is great, and the impact of this one project is "a drop in the proverbial bucket." But since his first contact with the Eastleigh centre in 2002, he has maintained a relationship with the group leadership over the years, providing both encouragement as well as material support. He imagines another project in a few years. ☿

The end of an era

Former 'boat people' refugee retires after quarter-century of service to Edmonton newcomers

BY SUZANNE GROSS
Edmonton Mennonite Centre
for Newcomers
EDMONTON, ALTA.

With the retirement of Thanh Nguyen, the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers celebrated the end of an era on Oct. 7.

Created in 1980 as a joint effort of Edmonton's Mennonite churches and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta, the newcomers centre offered services to help settle Vietnamese refugees known at the time as the "boat people." Among their number was Nguyen, who went on to work for the centre for 26 years.

A man of high standing in Vietnam, Nguyen possessed a strong academic background in public administration, journalism and taxation policy. He served as a chief deputy minister for three years. His integrity eventually landed him in a concentration camp for two years after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. Upon his release, he chose to come to Canada as a refugee, sponsored by his brother, in large part because of his direct experience of the

PHOTO COURTESY OF DWIGHT BAER



Dwight Baer, who grew up at Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., and now works in northern Manitoba as an information technology specialist, spent a week this summer at the Eastleigh Fellowship Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, where he is helping to create a new computer lab.

American policies during the civil war in Vietnam.

When it became clear that the newcomers centre was to become an ongoing project, given the new waves of refugees

coming to Edmonton from other parts of the world, Thanh was hired for his ability to help other newcomers navigate their way between the way of life they came from and the new world in which they

found themselves. Nguyen saw in his work with the centre the possibility to do what he believed in: offer professional services to newcomers while interacting with the Canadian political world, in an effort to promote humane immigration policies and provide the needed funding to assist newcomers.

Under the theme of “History, heart and hope,” Nguyen’s retirement celebration reflected much of what he stood for over the past quarter-century.

Don Baergen of Holyrood Mennonite Church, an original—and still current—staff member, spoke of his memories over the years of work they did together. Randy Gurlok of Citizenship and Immigration Canada recalled with great respect the role Nguyen played in training immigration workers in the area of cultural understanding and sensitivity during the 1980s and ’90s. Members of the centre’s Global Voice Choir performed a Vietnamese folk song, “The Rain on the Leaves,” in both English and Vietnamese. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MWC contributing carbon tax to global projects

STRASBOURG, FRANCE—In recognition of the environmental impact of their global work, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) staff and executive committee members are now imposing a simple surcharge on themselves for each kilometre that they travel by air. The plan went into effect on Oct. 14 when MWC administrator Karen Martin Schiedel sent all staff and executive committee members a form to fill out for each trip, tracking the distance they travel. The proceeds of the tax will go to MWC’s Global Church Sharing Fund, says MWC Deacons Commission secretary Bert Lobe, who developed the plan and worked with Martin Schiedel and MWC development consultant Henry Hildebrand to move it to reality. The plan is expected to generate \$2,500 for the Sharing Fund next year. According to research, the average airline trip to an MWC assembly burns 1.26 tonnes of carbon. “The key is that we’re walking the talk,” said Hildebrand. “We felt that what we’re doing here gets us started. If we need to change something, it’s easily done.”

—Mennonite World Conference

EDMONTON MENNONITE CENTRE FOR NEWCOMERS PHOTO



Jake and Irene Baergen chat with Thanh Nguyen, left, at his retirement party after serving with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers for the past 26 years.

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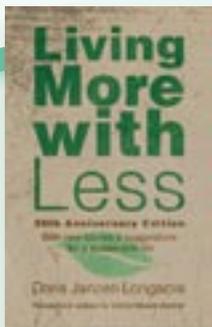
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MEDA PHOTO BY VYACHASLAV OBOZINSKI



More than a hundred passengers from a recent Mennonite Heritage Cruise took time out from exploring historic sites in Ukraine to see a current initiative that is helping local farmers, some of whom till land once owned by Mennonites. In early October, the passengers visited clients of the Ukraine Horticultural Development Project being carried out by Mennonite Economic Development Associates. The five-year \$10-million project, supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), aims to help 5,000 smallholder farmers—including Crimean farmer Roman Pospelovksy, who grows strawberries, cucumbers and tomatoes in his two greenhouses—create successful ventures on former collectivized farms.

Moses was the first blogger

For those of you who may still be getting up to speed with the notion of 'blogging' I thought I would take the time to demonstrate its ancient roots so that we can better understand its long and distinguished history. Indeed the historical arc of blogging has emerged over a 4000 year period culminating in an unlikely corner of internet. So here is a brief history of blogging.



David Driedger

2000 BC – Moses climbs Mt. Sinai to inscribe first blog post by God. Technology cumbersome, comment options are limited.

30 AD – Jesus dabbles in new

technologies, uncomfortable with the permanence of older forms. He tries scribbling in the sand. Post has immediate effect, saves a life. Unfortunately no back-up of the original post was saved.

300 AD – Augustine begins first extended personal blog posts Confessions of lonelyboy16. As a consequence Augustine faces the inevitable misunderstandings inherent to the technology. Some blame him for the all ills of western sexuality others praise him for his progressive self-awareness. Despite length and substance Augustine finds that people only quote small sections: Give me chastity and continence . . . but not yet.

1500 AD – Martin Luther makes typical blog post at his school, posting some

95 theses about the church . . . realizes afterwards that people are actually reading his blog.

2008 AD – *Canadian Mennonite* launched its own blog with contributors offering their incisive, humorous and engaging posts . . . but the world was not ready.

2010 AD – *Canadian Mennonite* reformats blog. Readers can now see the titles and excerpts of multiple blog posts on the main page. This has led to decreased work productivity across the country, as readers spend their day entrenched by the posts. Some have blamed the economic downturn on *Canadian Mennonite's* new blog format, but perhaps it is just the start of the revolution . . .

check us out online at www.canadianmennonite.org

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Formation Council recommends approval of MPN/Third Way merger

Despite expressing feelings of being blindsided by the proposed deal

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

More than a week after meeting with Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) and Third Way Media reps to discuss a proposed merger of the two organizations, Mennonite Church Canada's Formation Council has agreed to recommend to the denomination's General Board that the merger be ratified.

"We think the merger . . . makes good sense, and there is a lot of good will on our part for it," said David Bergen, executive secretary of Christian Formation, in a joint MC Canada/MPN announcement released on Oct. 29.

In the same announcement, MC Canada moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell said he will ask the General Board to respond to the Formation Council recommendation as soon as possible. "The case for merger appears to make sense and appears to be a positive approach with potential synergies," he said, adding, "We value the work of MPN."

The joint announcement was much more upbeat than discussion during a day of frank talks at Hidden Acres Campground on Oct. 19, when the 10-member Formation Council, chaired by Lisa Carr-Pries, associate pastor at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, met with MPN board chair Phil Bontrager, MPN executive director Ron Rempel, and Third Way Media interim director Sheri Hartzler, to discuss the dislocation of staff losing their jobs, a feeling of being blindsided about the decision and grief over the possibility of losing MPN's office in Waterloo, Ont. Also uncertain was the financial viability of going forward.

"If we don't go along with the decision, it makes us [Canadians] look like spoilers, and that doesn't feel good," said Conrad

Grebel University College professor Tom Yoder Neufeld, a member of the Formation Council, reflecting the sentiments of the Canadians who appeared caught in a conundrum of feeling positive about the synergies in producing new media while feeling "out of the loop" in the decision-making process.

"MPN has a history of working and producing bi-nationally, but Third Way doesn't," he further elaborated.

To have the new entity located in Harrisonburg, Va., with a yet-to-be-named chief executive officer and the impending retirement of Rempel, a Canadian, gave council members considerable pause about how much the new media products would reflect Canadian culture and theology.

"It will be far enough removed as to be off our radar," speculated Pauline Steinmann from Saskatchewan.

Responding to their trepidation, Bontrager admitted that the process of shaping a new organization will not only be "clumsy" but also complex. At the same time he assured the council that the MPN board will "reach out intentionally" to make Canada feel ownership, a move he said will have to be "nuanced" to satisfy all stakeholders. He was firm, though, that the present composition of the MPN board—three Canadians and five Americans—will remain in place for the new media entity.

From some of his other work binationally, Campbell Nisbet from Ontario said this

kind of proportion in governance "tends to weaken the contribution of the minority and goes in the 'dominant' direction." He called for an effort to tap the "creativity of Canada" by the new media entity.

"I find that rather inflexible stand [on board composition] a little concerning," said Carr-Pries in processing the proposal with Formation Council members following the MPN/Third Way dialogue.

Vic Thiessen, executive secretary of MC Canada's support services, wanted to know, "Will there be a Canadian hired for the staff in Harrisonburg?"

To which Hartzler responded, "We hadn't thought of that."

Reviewing the financial structures of the merging media organizations, Earl Reimer, who represents MC Canada's General Board on the Formation Council, asked about their physical assets and who is holding title to the real estate.

The empty building at Scottsdale, Pa., "is on the books at an appraised value of \$600,000 [all figures in US dollars]," reported Rempel, but with a slow real estate market and its location in the rural western Pennsylvania community, "we will take almost anything for it!" He said the MPN board has been authorized to accept offers.

Third Way Media has a building in Harrisonburg that house a studio and warehouse with half of its space occupied by staff. It is owned by Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) with a market value of \$1

*'If we don't go along with the decision, it makes us [Canadians] look like spoilers, and that doesn't feel good.'
(Formation Council member Tom Yoder Neufeld)*

million, according to Lowell Hertzler, who said title will pass to the new owner of the merged organization. "It is ideal space for producing and distributing products of the new organization," she said.

In the current fiscal year, MPN expects revenues of about \$3.2 million from the sale of books, curricula and other items, an estimated 17 percent of which is Canadian sales, while Third Way Media expects just over \$532,000 from grants, donations and sales. In 2009, MPN reported a budget shortfall of approximately \$149,000.

Since Third Way Media has been an MMN department for more than 50 years, MMN has pledged \$194,000 a year for the new organization to facilitate the integration, especially during the first five years.

The integration of the two organizations was approved on Sept. 23 by the boards of MPN and MMN, at a meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. The approval is subject to the affirmation of MC Canada, part-owner of MPN, and ratification of the MC U.S.A. Executive Board. ❧

provides opportunities for good lodging and community seven days a week. MC Canada Witness workers Jeff and Tany Warkentin accompany local leaders in this ministry. After years of renting, they are seeking a more permanent and sustainable facility.

The day after the Mapleview auction, church leaders in Burkina Faso recorded a thank-you video during their Bible study that arrived in Canada in time for Mapleview congregants to view it in their new sanctuary on Sept. 12.

At a celebratory dedication service on Sept. 19, MC Eastern Canada executive minister David Martin challenged the congregation to be "ambassadors of change" by doing mission as ambassadors of Christ and carrying on building the kingdom of God.

Congregants are enjoying the new building as it is wheelchair accessible and offers more space for programs and resources for reaching into the community. ❧

With files from Wanda Ropp and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld.

Only the air wasn't for sale

Mapleview Mennonite Church dedicates new building, benefits African congregation

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP, ONT.

Mapleview Mennonite Church, which recently moved into its new building, celebrated a "transition service" on Aug. 22. With pastor Bruce Sawatzky leading, congregants participated in "the Last Supper" commemorating their unity and then followed a processional as the elders carried the communion table to their new building.

A few weeks later, on Sept. 8, a public sale was held in the old building. Auctioneer Gary Jantzi, a member at Mapleview, encouraged the sale of anything and everything in the building. Sawatzky donated some 100 books, bought them back, and took them to the thrift store in New Hamburg. More than \$22,000 was raised through the sale of pews, light fixtures, furniture, heating oil and even an electrical panel. The committee organizing the sale had toyed with the idea of selling the air in the building, but that didn't happen.

On Sept. 12, Rebecca Yoder Neufeld of Mennonite Church Canada Witness received a cheque for the entire amount on behalf of Foyer Evangélique Mennonite de Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso from Brian Jantzi, the building committee chair.

Foyer Evangélique Mennonite is a recent church plant with ministry focused on university students. Many of these

students come from rural areas and this first Mennonite congregation in the capital is a welcome church home for them. In addition, a student residence on site



PHOTO BY PATTY JANTZI

Mapleview Mennonite Church elders Ken Jantzi, left, Nelson Gerber, Murray Gerber, Delmer Jantzi and Brad Brenneman carry the communion table and lead congregants into their new church building on Aug. 22.

Lack of quorum puts budget decisions on hold

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

“Do we want to keep on doing what we are used to doing or do we want to think in new ways?”

With the lack of a quorum and a budget that will possibly be unmet, this question was on the minds of many who gathered for the fall delegate session of Mennonite Church Manitoba at Camp Assiniboia on Oct. 21. Less than 75 percent of the required number of delegates showed up, so the board was unable to get approval for the congregational giving part of the area church's proposed 2011 budget.

Tom Seals, treasurer for MC Manitoba, explained that the board is proposing a zero percent increase in congregational giving for 2011, remaining unchanged from the \$691,779 in the 2010 budget. “Our projection for current year congregational giving is about \$670,000,” he said, “so the budget as presented actually presumes 3 percent more in giving in 2011. This is what the board is asking the congregations to do.”

The board also decided on salary increases that will total about \$11,000 in 2011—a 1 percent cost of living adjustment and increments. “This increase will need to be done by decreasing other expenses or increase self-generated revenue,” said Seals.

Unable to make a decision about the budget, the discussion moved from decision-making to wrestling with questions of quorum and unmet budgets. To date, less than 50 percent of the congregational budget for 2010 has come in. “Last year at this time it was quite a bit higher—at 58 percent,” said Seals. “We still need to receive about \$356,000 before the end of the year.”

“The budget says what we are used to doing,” commented a delegate. “It reflects who we are, but are we locked into what has always been done and therefore assume it must be good? Do we want to keep on doing what we are used to or do we want to think in new ways?”

Delegates affirmed the programs of MC Manitoba, but questions of communication dominated the floor. Congregations want to receive information well in advance of meetings, so that budget planning and issues can be discussed ahead of time, leaders were told.

“Congregations need to see the face and heart of our conference programs,” one delegate reported from his table discussion. “Conference can be abstract and so we need to find more concrete ways to communicate what the conference does.”

“Quorum has been on the margin for five years in a row,” said board chair Hans Werner. “It is disappointing, but not particularly surprising.”

In response to a delegate's question, “Is our quorum system archaic?” Werner acknowledged, “There is a shift going on. . . . We may have to find new ways of being accountable to each other. It is not always

clear how one gets from here to there.”

Delegates called on the board to re-evaluate the present quorum system.

MC Manitoba staffing updates included a report that Aaron Nussbaum, an American citizen who was recently appointed as program director for Camping Ministries, is unable to assume the position because MC Manitoba could not secure a work permit for him.

“We are re-advertising the position,” said Pam Peters-Pries, interim director. “Applications close Nov. 15 and we hope to move quickly with a selection and appointment following that date.”

Board member Erin Morash submitted a report on the search for a new executive director. She reported on the challenges of matching leadership needs with prospective candidates' sense of call, skills, availability and vision. She expressed hope that the interview process could be completed by the first week of November.

Werner reported on the board and Camp Planning Committee discussions regarding autonomy for the camps. The question has been reframed from one of autonomy to a question of overall sustainability, he said, adding, “We feel we are in a very good place in our conversations with the Camp Planning Committee.”



MC Manitoba board members Dave Wiebe, Dan Horne and Justin Zacharias listen as delegates share concerns about the budget and about how the area church can communicate more clearly with its member congregations.

Media lab fosters gifts in communicators of tomorrow

STORY AND PHOTO
BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

The space that used to be used by Canadian Mennonite Bible College (predecessor of Canadian Mennonite University [CMU]) as a kitchen is now being used to cook up video and audio news clips by the communicators of tomorrow. The new media lab was unveiled to members of the Christian media and the public on Oct. 6.

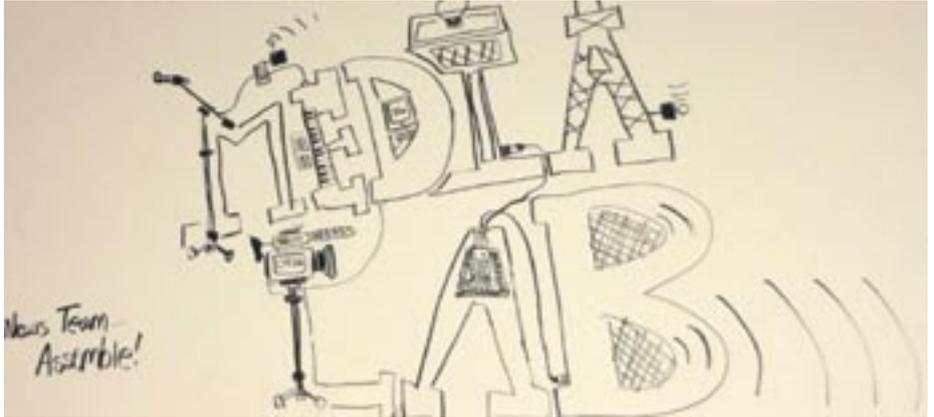
CMU students wanting to pursue careers in print media, radio or television broadcasting, and a whole host of other communications careers, can now get a more technical base to build their education on than they were able to before.

David Balzer, director of the communications and media program, is enthusiastic about the new lab, especially for the students' sake. "The media lab offers the production practice and experience that students will need" when they pursue their practicum or future careers, he said.

Students can use the equipment available to cover events and happenings at CMU, and thus make up an unofficial campus news team.

Two new high-definition video cameras, two professional audio recorders, a wireless microphone system, two 27-inch iMac desktop computers, five Mac minis, tripods, various software and a digital SLR camera that captures both video and images, "will create a greater capacity for storytellers to do storytelling," Balzer said.

Ben Borne, a student at CMU who is taking the media workshop class, was recently able to produce a neatly edited video of clips he recorded at CMU's homecoming weekend using software called Final Cut. With a lot of experience capturing and editing footage already, he said he is



Artwork on the whiteboard in the media lab was created by Evan Balzer, son of David Balzer, director of Canadian Mennonite University's communications and media program.

participating in the class to "keep the interest and fire going."

"I can see it doing much more for people who don't have as much experience with this technology as I do, so they can be more practiced communicators in various fields," Borne said.

The equipment, which cost approximately \$17,000, was funded by CMU's communications and marketing, music

and information technology departments. The departments either donated or leveraged part of their yearly budgets to the lab because they believe in its capacity to aid CMU as a whole in the present and future.

The communications and media program has existed since 2004, with a major available since 2005.

The new lab has helped CMU "come a long way," Borne said. ☼

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PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



*Laureen Harder-Gissing, archivist-librarian at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., shows some 80 members attending the fall meeting of the Ontario Mennonite Historical Society, a copy of a 1748 edition of *Martyrs Mirror*, the first in German to be printed outside of Europe and the largest volume of any kind to be printed in the colonial U.S. It was printed by the Ephrata Cloisters in Pennsylvania and published by the Franconia Mennonite Conference. The large book was owned by Ontario Mennonite pastor Wilfred Schlegel, founding pastor of Nairn Mennonite Church. Thirteen hundred copies were printed, each numbering 1,512 pages. Considering the resources needed to translate, publish and print such a large volume, this was an extraordinary feat for that time and place, says Harder-Gissing, noting that concern by Mennonite leaders over an impending war in the colonial U.S. was a major incentive for the project. This year also marks the 350th anniversary of the first publication of *Martyrs Mirror* in the Netherlands in 1660.*

Conrad Grebel snapshots

PHOTO BY KARL JUHLKE



More than 50 youths from 11 different Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregations participated in the Great Mattress Run hosted by Conrad Grebel University College on Oct. 24. Participants were challenged mentally and physically while enjoying the sites around the University of Waterloo, Ont., campus.

/// Briefly noted

Pastors in B.C. churches do double duty

Three people in Mennonite Church British Columbia congregations are serving part-time while maintaining other positions:

- Kelowna First Mennonite Church has called locals Kevin Barkowsky and Reuben Schmunk to share pastoral duties on an interim basis. Barkowsky is working part-time as a dental technician, while Schmunk is a retired pastor with some commitments to another church. Both speak once a month and perform visitation and other duties.

- Gerald Neufeld began as part-time music coordinator at Emmanuel Mennonite in Abbotsford in September. He continues as pastor of the Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN



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GOD AT WORK IN US

Peace activist strives for integrity in his life and witness

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Jake Buhler is a man with a different pair of glasses. They reflect a steely determination to pursue peace and help others do the same. "Peace is the lens through which we see everything," he says.

With that lens, he notices things that others may not. It colours his whole worldview, helping him see the world with different eyes. By nature a quiet man, Buhler looks for opportunities at every turn and on every level to live out his convictions as a peace activist. "Being a peace witness is all-inclusive, it isn't just one thing," he says.

Through his rural Osler Mennonite congregation, Buhler has been able to initiate a number of peace projects and engage other congregants in the practice of a peace vision:

- With Osler Mennonite, he has taken part in a community resistance to the building of a nuclear reactor in the late 1970s.
- In recent years, the congregation supported a war resister from the U.S. who went public with his discontent about the American military.
- It sponsored a peace concert at which a Hutterite choir from Manitoba told the stories of Hutterites who have suffered for refusing to fight.
- He presented a paper during public hearings in Saskatchewan on whether the province would go nuclear.
- In 2009, the Osler church brought a peace resolution to the floor of the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon.
- Buhler has offered a list of suggestions to help others work for peace, including writing provincial politicians.

In his simple yet convincing way, Buhler points out that his life experiences and early influences have helped him see with this unusual lens, citing such examples as the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, family members and early Anabaptist martyrs.

From 1981-87, Buhler worked in

Thailand as a regional director for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Following that experience, he spent the next 15 years in development work for the Canadian Embassy in Thailand and Vietnam. His experiences there cemented his already firm belief that war is wrong. Looking through his "peace" lens has helped him see some disturbing trends.

"In the last five years, since [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper began, militarism of Canada is increasing," he says, noting, for example, that fire trucks, police cars and government vehicles are sporting stickers proclaiming support for Canada's troops in Afghanistan. "Mennonites struggle with having to drive those," he notes.

He also notices changes in the way Nov. 11 is observed. "The present government has turned Remembrance Day services into active support for militarism," Buhler argues, while claiming that children are

targeted in schools and society in general sees militarism promoted in sports, advertisements, religion and local government. "Militarism has pervaded our everyday life to the point where we don't even notice it," he says. "Canada is becoming like the Americans."

As Buhler offers suggestions to help others live for peace, he stresses the importance of living with integrity. A non-reactionary witness is also important. "Your message has to be more than a protest," he says, in effect cautioning against emotionalism.

Some see his as a bold witness, though, and he is not "the quiet in the land." After he put up a sign on his property stating a position for peace, people expressed admiration for his stand. "I wish I had your courage," they would tell him.

Still, it disturbs him that Mennonites don't do more to resist the current thinking on militarism. "We have a lot of lazy Mennonites," he says, suggesting that large organizations like MCC and MC Canada are backing down from confronting the present trend out of fear of losing funding or constituency support.

Yet the label of activist hardly seems to suit this quiet soul. He is hardworking, persistent and in it for the long haul. He is not angry, but quietly determined to make peace his life's work. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAKE BUHLER



Jake Buhler of Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., stands beside a sign he erected on his land boldly declaring:

OBITUARY

Last ordained aeltester remembered

Henry Dueck

May 1, 1931 – Sept. 11, 2010

BY BARRY BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

The passing of Henry Dueck has left a gap in the greater Mennonite community of Leamington, Ont., where he lived and served for many years. His health began to steadily decline about a year-and-a-half ago and he died of congestive heart failure at 79 years of age.

At his funeral, the Leamington tradition of having other ministers in the area lead the coffin into the sanctuary was a meaningful recognition of the collegiality and support of the community.

Dueck was the last ordained *aeltester* (bishop) of Mennonite Church Canada, having been ordained as *aeltester* when the denomination was still known as the General Conference. His ordination came about rather quickly, as J.C. Neufeld, then *aeltester* at Leamington, passed away suddenly in April 1974. In those days, an *aeltester* presided over baptisms and communion services.

As baptism and communion usually occurred in May or June, an *aeltester* needed to be found in a hurry. A retired *aeltester*, N.N. Driedger, strongly encouraged Dueck to become an ordained *aeltester*. Having been ordained to pastoral ministry in 1956, he decided to take this next step in June 1974.

It is believed that Dueck was the last serving *aeltester* in MC Canada.

Dueck grew up in B.C.'s Fraser Valley, the oldest of five siblings. While studying at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, he met his wife-to-be, Helga, who was a tremendous support to him in his pastoral work. Dueck's pastoral work covered the span of over 50 years, taking him and his family to many different locales, allowing his passion for missions and care for the less fortunate



Dueck

to shine through.

Early on in his ministry, the couple moved to Paraguay to pastor the General Conference Church in Asunción. They remained there for 12 years and returned to

Canada to teach at UMEI Christian High School, Leamington, and also to pastor Leamington United Mennonite Church. It was during this time that he became an *aeltester*.

In 1982, after 13 years in Leamington, the Duecks moved again, this time to Mexico, where he pastored the Blumenau congregation under the auspices of the then Commission on Overseas Mission. There, they developed a deep appreciation for the Low German community.

When they returned to Canada in 1989, Dueck began a three-year volunteer position as a teacher in the Old Colony Mennonite School in Dresden, Ont.

In 1992, the couple moved to Abbotsford, B.C., where he became lead pastor at Eben-Ezer Mennonite.

Dueck officially retired from pastoral ministry in 1996 and the couple moved back to Leamington, where they began a ministry under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, visiting Low German-speaking newcomers in their homes, hospitals and even jails. They continued this ministry up until the time of Dueck's illness.

Dueck is survived by Helga, his wife of 57 years; their five children and spouses; 14 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; and four siblings. ❧

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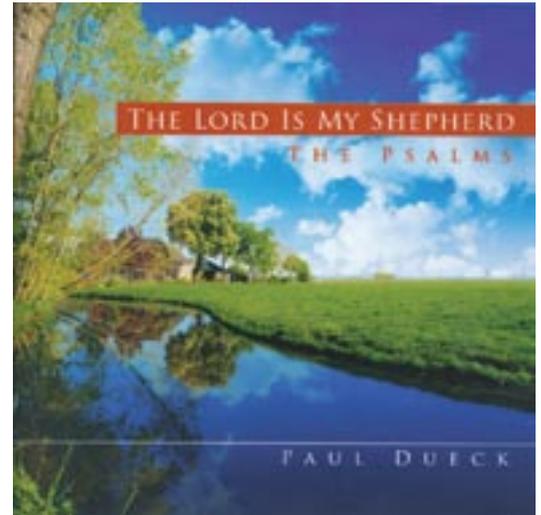
FOCUS ON MUSIC

MUSIC REVIEW

Musician becomes shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd—The Psalms.
By Paul Dueck. Self-produced, 2010.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY



John Bell, a leader in the Iona Community and a major contributor to the Wild Goose Resource Group, often notes that Christians need to leave the safety of their favourite psalms and allow the difficult words and emotions of other texts to minister to and through them.

Paul Dueck takes the idea seriously. Known in Mennonite circles all over the world as a key member of the music team at the 2009 Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay, Dueck has taught at United Mennonite Educational Institute near Leamington, Ont., and

recently became pastor of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship in southwestern Ontario.

Sung clearly in his beautiful tenor voice to the accompaniment of his Paraguayan harp, Dueck sings “Vindicate Me O God” from Psalm 43, and “Save Me, O God” from Psalm 69. As if to not stir listeners up too much, or too quickly, these are the eighth and 11th cuts of 19 on the CD. Others include several settings of Psalm 23—vocal and instrumental—as well as other familiar psalms.

Included as well are tunes from several

English and German hymns coming from Dueck’s Russian Mennonite heritage. The music and words move listeners to think about their relationship with God and God’s world.

CDs are available from Dueck online at PaulDueck.ca or by phone at 519-326-6809. ✎

Dave Rogalsky is Eastern Canada correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.



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FOCUS ON MUSIC

'Healing and hope' from a distance

Healing and Hope for the Nations.

By Heidi Wagler. Self-produced, 2010.

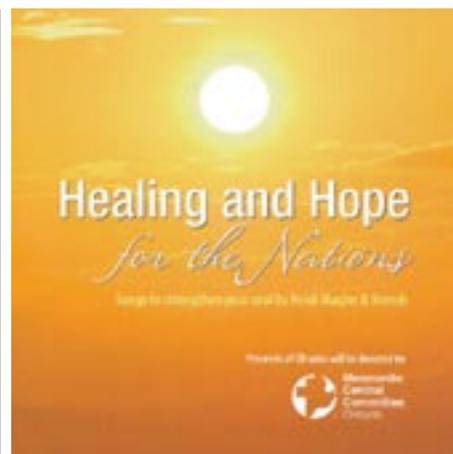
REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Heidi Wagler, a registered nurse, and her husband Brian were all set to travel to Haiti with a medical team in February when the devastating earthquake there threw a wrench into their plans. With the increased need and danger, Brian, who is not a medical professional (but works for Mennonite Savings and Credit Union), was not allowed to travel there because of the emergency.

This made for a difficult situation for Wagler, as her husband had been key to her plans and emotional support. From the ashes of her decision not to travel came the hope of doing something to promote healing and hope in Haiti and other places—from her home in Tavistock.

A visit with Dan Driedger of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, who was bowled over with Wagler's energy and enthusiasm, set an inspirational music project in motion, resulting in the Sept. 26 release of the CD *Healing and Hope for the Nations: Songs to Strengthen Your Soul* by Heidi Wagler and Friends.

The release party at the local Tavistock recreation centre included a pulled pork lunch followed by children's activities, a youth coffee house, several performances and two inspirational speakers: Judy (Metzger) Gerber is a quadriplegic, the result of a car accident in the late 1980s; and Susan Minns, an inspirational Christian humorist, lives with the results of cancer



and multiple sclerosis. Wagler shared that she has struggled with depression.

The 15-song CD was produced at Charlene (Chuckie) Zehr's home studio. It includes instrumentals and various groups of Wagler's family, friends and fellow congregants at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock. The tracks mostly focus on hope and healing expressed in traditional hymns. A hidden blues/gospel gem is "Humble Me," written and sung by Zehr backed by

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FOCUS ON MUSIC

a trio of Linda Holst, Brenda Wagler and Shirley Yantzi.

Although the songs are mostly performed by amateurs, the hope and joy of living life in Christ shines through on song after song, and was visible in the energy with which various groups performed at the release party.

CDs are available by e-mailing Wagler at bhwagler@rogers.com, at Mennonite Savings and Credit Union branches and at MCC Ontario's Kitchener office. All proceeds go to MCC Ontario for relief work around the world. ✎

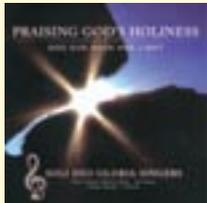
Dave Rogalsky is Eastern Canada correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.

/// Briefly noted

New Soli Deo Gloria CD joyfully glorifies God

Praising God's Holiness: God Our Rock and Light is the latest release by Soli Deo Gloria Singers. Affiliated with the United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI), Leamington, Ont., the choir is led by Paul Dueck, pastor at Windsor Mennonite Fellowship. Recorded live in the UMEI auditorium, what sets this CD apart are settings of world music like "Jabula Jesu" (complete with drumming), "Build on a Rock," and "Santo, Santo"; such pieces come from Dueck's world music background, exhibited at Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay last year. Throughout, the joy of glorifying God shines through the energy of the choir. Dueck has fulfilled the mission of the choir, which is to "provide a vehicle to joyfully glorify God, to touch and nourish the heart through the language of music, and to strengthen the church and its Mennonite choral heritage." The CD is available from Dueck by phone at 519-326-6809 or by e-mail at paulinda@sympatico.ca.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY



/// UpComing

Come join the 'thousand hallelujahs'

The Faith and Life Male Choir of Mennonite Church Manitoba will celebrate its 25th anniversary with "A Thousand Hallelujahs" concert early next year. A special piece has been commissioned for the occasion and the choir is calling for 300 voices to join together for this celebration. The choir invites youths (Grades 10 to 12) and boys (Grades 4 to 9) to join it. The mass male and youth choirs will rehearse on Jan. 21 and 22, while the boys choir will rehearse on Jan. 16, 21 and 22. The anniversary concert will take place at the Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall on Jan. 23 at 3 p.m. Registration deadline for choir members is Dec. 13. For more information, visit mennochurch.mb.ca or call 204-896-1616.

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

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FOCUS ON MUSIC

Music Calendar

British Columbia

Dec. 4, 5: Advent vespers with Abendmusik Choir; (4) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (5) Knox United Church, Vancouver.

Saskatchewan

Dec. 12, 17: RJC choir concerts; (12) at Knox United Church, Saskatoon, 7:30 p.m.; (17) at RJC, 7 p.m.

May 15, 2011: RJC spring concert.

Manitoba

Nov. 26, 27: Southern Manitoba Choral Society Christmas concerts: (26) Altona Berghaler Mennonite Church, (27) Winkler Berghaler Mennonite Church; both concerts start at 7:30 p.m.

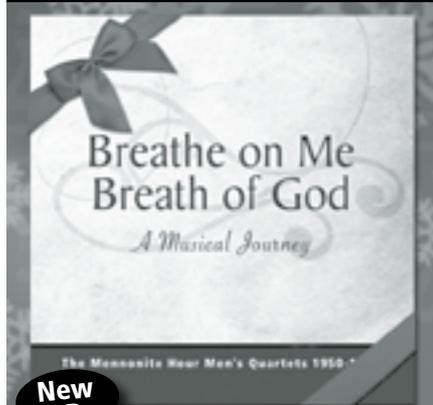
Nov. 27, 28: "Christmas@CMU"; (27) 7 p.m.; (28) 3 p.m. Both concerts at the north campus.

Dec. 5: Mennonite Community Orchestra concert, featuring pianist Becky Reesor, at CMU chapel, at 3 p.m.

Dec. 6: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Dec. 9: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. For more information, call 204-261-9637.

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Dec. 11, 12: Faith and Life Choirs concert; (11) Winnipeg, (12) Winkler.

Dec. 16: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle School Christmas concert, at Immanuel Pentecostal Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. For more information, call 204-885-1032.

Dec. 16, 17: MCI Christmas concerts at Buhler Hall; (16) 7:30 p.m.; (17) 1:30 p.m.

Ontario

Nov. 20: Grand Philharmonic Chamber Choir presents "Music of the North," at First United Church, Waterloo. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

Nov. 21: Menno Singers leads "Songs of Healing and

Hope," a hymn sing, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

Nov. 26: House of Doc Christmas concert at Hamilton Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. For more information or tickets, call 905-632-8268, or e-mail: ennsme@cogeco.ca.

Dec. 3: University of Waterloo Chamber Choir presents "Oil and Water," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 8 p.m.

Dec. 4: University of Waterloo Choir presents "Peace for Our Times," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 4, 5: Pax Christi Chorale presents Bach's "Christmas Oratorio I, VI & Cantata 140," "Wachet Auf"; Carols and Motets with guest conductor

Pax Christi Chorale & Chamber Choir: Stephanie Martin, Artistic Director
Pax Christi Youth Choir: Lynn Janes, Conductor

CHRISTMAS SPLENDOUR II

BACH CHRISTMAS ORATORIO I, VI, &
CANTATA 140 "WACHET AUF," CAROLS & MOTETS

Howard Dyck, guest conductor
Agnes Zsigovics, soprano; Iasmina Pataca, mezzo-soprano;
Cory Knight, tenor; Matthew Zadow, baritone; with orchestra

Saturday, Dec. 4, 2010 - 7:30 pm; Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010 - 3:00 pm

Adult: \$30 Senior: \$25 Student: \$22 Children (under 12): \$5

Grace Church on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd, Toronto, ON.

For more info and to order tickets, visit www.paxchristichorale.org or call (416) 491-8542.

THE CHILDREN'S MESSIAH

presented by Pax Christi Chorale and the Gallery Choir of the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene

Stephanie Martin, Artistic Director

Eve-Lyn de la Haye, soprano; Leigh-Anne Martin, mezzo-soprano
Michael Loewen, tenor; Benjamin Covey, baritone

Saturday, December 11, 2010, 4:00 – 5:00 pm

Designed especially for the younger crowd, we encourage you to bring your children to introduce them to a short performance of some of the highlights from Handel's glorious Messiah. Children admitted free, adults pay what you can at the door.

Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, 477 Manning Avenue, Toronto (at Ulster Ave)

For more information, call (416) 531-7955 or visit www.stmarymagdalene.ca



Howard Dyck at 7:30 (4) and 3 p.m. (5).

Dec. 7: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, Kitchener.

Dec. 11: Second annual *The Children's Messiah* designed for the younger crowd with Pax Christi Chorale and Gallery Choir of the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene; at Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, Toronto, 4-5 p.m.

Dec. 11: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents Handel's *Messiah* with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

Dec. 12: Menno Singers present "Three Choirs at Christmas" with the Menno Youth Singers and InterMennonite Children's Choir, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

Feb. 12, 2011: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents the premiere of John Burge's "Declaration" with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

March 5,6, 2011: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Chiaroscuro: Music for choir and two harps," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. (5), 3 p.m. (6). For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapochamberchoir.ca.

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UpComing

Rhubarb seeking mental illness/health submissions

Rhubarb magazine, a publication of the Mennonite Literary Society, is publishing a special issue on mental illness/health in June 2011. The issue will be guest-edited by Ted Dyck, the editor of *Transition* magazine published by the Saskatchewan chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association. *Rhubarb* is looking for visual art, fiction, poetry and nonfiction (including memoir) by and about people with experiences of mental health/illness issues. Submissions should be sent directly to venns@mts.net by Jan. 30, 2011. Only electronic submissions will be accepted; written material should be in the form of Word documents, while visual images should be sent as tif or jpg files. All published contributors will be paid after the publication is released and will receive two complimentary issues. *Rhubarb* can be found on the web at rhubarbmag.com.

—*Rhubarb*

Faith communities urged to 'write for rights'

On or around Dec. 10, many faith communities will write letters to help improve the lives of people under threat of human rights violations around the world as part of Amnesty International's Write for Rights. This is how it works: A member of the faith community visits amnesty.ca/writeathon to register the community and download information on human rights cases. The organizer then asks the congregation to write letters to the authorities involved. Often participants write the letters following worship, as part of a social time. Once the letters are mailed to their destinations, a designated member notes the number of letters written on the write-a-thon website. The write-a-thon was instrumental in making a difference in the life of former prisoner of conscience Bu Dongwei who spent more than two years in a Chinese re-education through labour camp until his release in 2008, following campaigning by Amnesty International and its supporters.

—Amnesty International

Calendar

Saskatchewan

Dec. 11: Buncha Guys fundraiser for Shekinah Retreat Centre, at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Manitoba

Nov. 25-27: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* community drama at MCI's Buhler Hall; 7:30 p.m. each evening. For tickets, call 204-327-5891.

Nov. 27: Manitoba Mennonite Youth

Organization volleyball tournament in Steinbach. Bus trip offered from Winkler and Winnipeg. For more information, call MC Manitoba Youth Leadership Ministries at 204-896-1616.

Ontario

Until Nov. 28: "Via: Exploring the Way of Christ" each Sunday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Supper and childcare provided. For more

information, or to register, call 519-745-4769.

Nov. 20: Nithview Christmas tea and bake sale, at Nithview Home, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m.; featuring tea room, baking, crafts, silent auction and apple dumplings. Sponsored by the Nithview Auxiliary.

Nov. 20: Annual handicraft sale at Fairview Mennonite Home auditorium, Cambridge. Crafts, decorations, gifts, quilts, woodworking, and much more. Tea room and lunch available. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Nov. 20: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter annual general meeting at Hawkesville Mennonite Church. Potluck supper, 6 p.m.; meeting, 7 p.m.

Nov. 23: Willowgrove annual general

meeting, at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, at 7 p.m. Guest speaker: Colin McCartney, founder of Urban Promise, Toronto.

Nov. 23: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate open house, Kitchener, at 7 p.m.

Nov. 26, 27: 19th annual Spirit of Christmas event at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, (26) 7 to 9 p.m.; (27) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring local talent and Ten Thousand Villages crafts for sale. For more information, call Barb at 519-232-4720.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



Administrative Assistant (Calgary)

Mennonite Foundation of Canada has an opening in its Calgary office for an Administrative Assistant as a maternity leave replacement from December 15, 2010 to December 31, 2011.

This person will be responsible for telephone reception, processing incoming and outgoing mail, setting up appointments, word processing, data entry and various other duties. Experience in a computerized office environment, specifically using MS OFFICE software with proficiency in WORD, PowerPoint and Excel is desired. Applicants should enjoy interacting with the public and possess strong interpersonal and telephone skills.

All MFC support staff are required to be members of a local Anabaptist church.

MFC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested persons should send their resume to:

Mennonite Foundation of Canada
Attn: Gary Sawatzky
220-2946 32nd Street NE
Calgary AB T1Y 6J7
Email: gsawatzky@mennofoundation.ca
Tel: (403) 717-0331 or 1-877-717-0708
Mennofoundation.ca

Artbeat snapshots

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER

*Sam Steiner, left, retired archivist-librarian at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., chats with Barb Draper about *The Mennonites of St. Jacobs and Elmira* (Pandora Press), her just-published book that she introduced with a lecture at the fall meeting of the Ontario Mennonite Historical Society on Oct. 23. In her book, Draper traces the theological and sociological development of the many Mennonite groups from their arrival in Ontario in the early 1800s to their subsequent splinterings. Her 10-year study includes Old Order Mennonites, Markham-Waterloo Mennonites, David Martin Mennonites, Orthodox Mennonites, Conservative Mennonites, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Mennonites and the more recently arrived Old Colony Mennonites from Mexico. Some 80 historical society members attended the meeting and bought her book.*



PHOTO BY RICHARD ALBRECHT



*Hugo and Doreen Neufeld read from their latest book, *Affluenza Interrupted*, at RiverSong, near St. Jacobs, Ont., recently. The book's title refers to their desire to have readers pursuing lives of depth and richness, rather than material wealth. The couple, who moved from the inner-city of Hamilton, Ont., to the suburbs of Calgary, Alta., a few years ago, tell of their pursuit of faithful living amidst an insular material culture there.*