

CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 2, 2012

Volume 16 Number 7

Greening Africa

MCC partner receives
environmental award
from Ethiopian president

pg. 20

inside

The Bible and the Holy Spirit in tension 4

Dust off your Bibles! 9

Knowledge and uncertainty 34

EDITORIAL

Still in need of a village square

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

This is the time of year when *Canadian Mennonite's* 12 board members gather for their annual meeting to look backward and forward to see how the national publication has met the needs of its readers, has ongoing financial viability and is meeting the challenges of a New Media age.

This year's discussions focused on how a traditional print product, which uses the tried and true method of putting words on paper and distributing copies through the mail, can survive in a world of new information-delivery systems that are shifting primarily to electronic venues, mostly the Internet.

While an older generation still feels most comfortable holding the publication in its hands and digesting the content at its leisure, a younger generation has migrated almost entirely to the computer screen, where colour, flashy images and fewer words (try 140 characters on a Tweet), and instant news accounts fill their minds. Many of them have neither the patience for, nor interest in, anything that might demand their attention for more than a span of three to five minutes. Information is instant and passing.

The only thing that holds their attention longer are YouTube videos, such as the 29-minute *Kony 2012*, which recently went viral in a matter of minutes, having

amassed more than 100 million viewers while elevating awareness of Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army in Africa to stratospheric heights. It stirred up worldwide discussion on the Internet before dying down after a week.

So, how does a small publication, with approximately 33,000 readers in a small faith community comprising 230 congregations of Mennonite Church Canada, compete for attention in such a swirling, fast-moving media environment? Do we ditch print and go electronic as fast as we can? Do we beef up our online presence with lots of visual images, photographs and video clips that capture and hold the attention of younger readers, and hope that the older readers will eventually adapt and follow?

On this speeding train, though, there is one constant: The need for our designated community of faith to "come and reason together" around the tenets of our Anabaptist Christian faith.

Let me call it the "village square." Metaphorically, of course. Most of us, by now, have moved out of our rural villages into the big cities. We are no longer provincially ethnic, meaning mostly European by origin, but are multi-ethnic. We have no creed (only a confession), no pope, no centuries-old religious centre to give us boundaries and direction, no



Mecca to which to make pilgrimage. Our origins came out of a radical movement, not an overhaul of rusty religious forms.

We are a people scattered, part of a worldwide communion numbering 1.7 million, loosely held together at best by "seven core convictions." We live by an ancient text, the Bible. Our infrastructure is a series of "partnerships" held in place by our devotion to an invisible head, Jesus Christ, who is not here in body, but in Spirit "dwelling within." We are known for our peacemaking and the transformation of lives.

Because of our voluntary association, as John Roth calls it, we will always be vulnerable in the face of nationalism, militarism, bigotry and greed. That's why we need the village square, like *Canadian Mennonite*, to come together, in whatever communication form, to give voice to our common life together—our joys, our fears, our questions and the news about each other.

Staff change

Graeme Stemp-Morlock of Kitchener, Ont., is our new advertising representative, succeeding Lisa Metzger, who resigned to take a position with



Mennonite Savings and Credit Union. Stemp-Morlock comes to this position with experience as a freelance science writer, photographer, media relations writer and news broadcaster. Along with filling this part-time role, he is a stay-at-home-parent which, in his words, requires "the ability to work well with people of various ages and languages in intense situations while maintaining a sense of humour." He and his wife Laura are the parents of two daughters, aged six and three. He holds a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Waterloo.

ABOUT THE COVER:

By participating in an environmental award-winning program run by the Migibare Senay Children and Family Support Organization, a Mennonite Central Committee partner in Ethiopia, Tiruneh Mitiku has doubled the income he can make off his farm in the country's Amhara region. See story on page 20.

PHOTO: DAN LEONARD, MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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Mission statement: *To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonite Church Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through a regular publication and other media, working with our church partners.*

Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will • Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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contents

The Bible and the Holy Spirit in tension 4

In this issue's theological reflection feature, **JOHN D. REMPEL** asks, 'What do we do when a significant part of the church finds the discernment set forth in the Confession inadequate to the needs of the day and the leading of the Spirit for the day?'

Not talking about violence 'does not work' 14

Abuse statistics in the church mirror those of secular society, according to a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored workshop at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, B.C.



Greening Africa 20

In our cover story, senior writer **WILL BRAUN** reports that a Mennonite Central Committee partner receives an environmental award from the Ethiopian president. See pages 21 and 22 for more stories about aid and development work in Africa.

Eco-mom addresses climate-change naysayers 27

CHRISTINE PENNER POLLE of Red Lake, Ont., went from being a self-described 'climate-change avoider' to a full-time volunteer climate-change campaigner after visiting 350.org online.

Reading Mennonite novels as works of art 30

English and film studies prof **PAUL TIESSEN** wraps up a nine-week series of lectures by Mennonite writers at Conrad Grebel University College.



Viral video doesn't represent Ugandans 33

Kony 2012, an online video sensation that aims to draw attention to warlord Joseph Kony, misses the mark for some of those affected, according to **STEPHEN OWONI**, a Ugandan multi-media producer.

Regular features:

For discussion 7 Readers write 8 Milestones 12

Pontius' Puddle 12 Yellow Pages 32

Calendar 37 Classifieds 38

Still in need of a village square 2

DICK BENNER

Dust off your Bibles! 9

RUDY BAERGEN

Paying tribute 10

MELISSA MILLER

Have a blessed, refreshed summer 11

HAROLD PENNER

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

Should we get rid of the cross?: **SUSIE GUENTHER
LOEWEN (YOUNG VOICES BLOGGER)**

Chaco Mennonites come under fire for
deforestation: **DICK BENNER**

The Bible and Holy Spirit in tension

By John D. Rempel

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



[B]elievers who know the tyranny of sin in the life of ghettos and nations, and are convinced that God's reign can free the world from oppression and war . . . sometimes become so preoccupied with systemic change that they forget that only individuals who have been made whole by Christ can stay the course in bringing wholeness to the world.

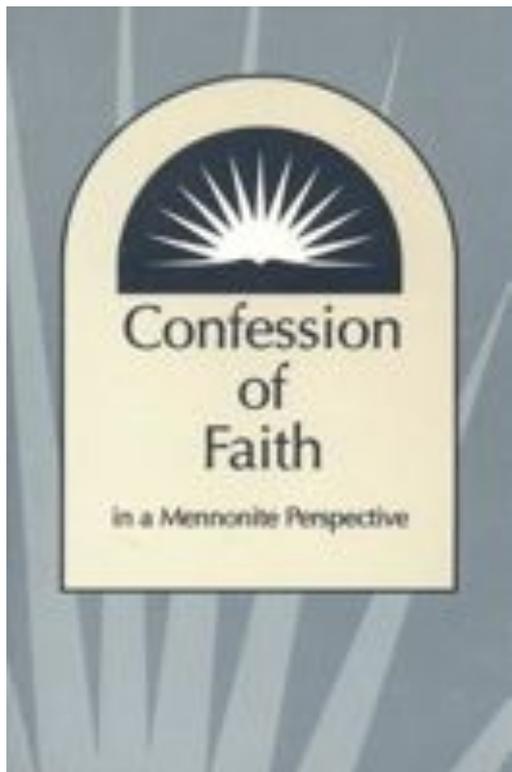
The heart of the Christian life is aligning ourselves with God's love. We squander love and then turn to the Spirit to fill us with it again. Even harder than that, especially as we try to make sense of our church's current struggles, is what to do when we come to the sinking feeling that our problem might be that we understand God's love in different and contrary ways.

"Conservatives" in our church wake up at night worrying that the boundaries set up to keep us faithful might not hold. "Liberals" wake up at night worrying that the boundaries might replace the centre as the basis of faithfulness.

We are slowly and painfully realizing that two different ways of looking at the church and the world have arisen among us. On the one hand, we struggle to pinpoint the source of our disagreements; on the other, we fear naming what most deeply divides us because the breach might be too big to bridge.

Such a fundamental difference of worldviews is the only adequate explanation I can find for the visceral character of the debate that has accompanied changing positions on defining practices of the church: divorce, women in leadership and homosexuality. In mainstream Mennonitism in North America today, homosexuality is the most emotionally laden stand-in issue for a profound set of differences in belief and practice. I commend Mennonite Church Canada for the courage and wisdom it has shown in devising a process—Being a Faithful Church—to unpack five hard questions facing the church and that it has not shrunk from addressing the most volatile of these: homosexuality.

Homosexuality is the scapegoat for much of our confusion, fear and anger about the shaking foundations of our faith. Whether or not the gospel blesses the love of gay people is a vexing issue,



[W]ithout the Confession as a referee, as a document in its own right and as a symbol of the tradition, there is no agreed-upon way of measuring faithfulness.

but it is only one expression of a wider and deeper contest between conflicting sets of assumptions by which we live. No one issue can bear the weight of all our confusion, fear and anger. Only if we find ways of identifying the underlying assumptions of our strife, can we hope for reconciliation.

Here is one attempt to name what is at stake. Let's look at four realities that shape how we see the world.

The tension between the authority of the Bible and the Holy Spirit

The Bible is a written record of God's revelation and our response. The Old Testament describes events like the Hebrew exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Ten Commandments. The New Testament describes events like the coming of Christ and the community that arose in response to him.

We want to live out what Scripture teaches, but doing so always involves applying an old story to a new setting. This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. For example, we read in the gospels that Christ came to redeem Israel. In Acts we read that Christ's redemption also includes the gentiles. Through the Spirit's prodding

the apostolic church realized that there was room in Israel's covenant with God for the gentiles. In his farewell discourses in John 14:11-29, Jesus promises his disciples "another advocate," a presence of God who will teach them how to live a life of love after he has gone.

This means that the Bible can be the final authority for the church only when it is illuminated by the Spirit. But who is to say where the Spirit is leading?

Confessions of faith have been exercises and models of discernment for Mennonites in applying the Bible to the hard questions of the day. When the church accepts the articles of a confession of faith, it is saying that they come as close as possible to describing Christ's way.

Because we always "know in part," grappling with our beliefs and practices continues. This grappling has led groups across the spectrum to question and reject parts of the confession:

- **AS REGARDS** the status of women and men (Article 6), the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* asserts that the rule of man over woman is the result of sin and that in redemption they are both restored to the image of God. The

Confession concludes that God calls leaders from both genders. Some conservatives reject this position.

- **ON THE** practice of communion (Article 12), the Confession states that only those who are baptized are invited to the Lord's Table. Some conservatives and some liberals reject this position.
- **ON THE** question of sexual union (Article 19), the Confession asserts that it belongs only within heterosexual marriage. Some liberals reject this position.

Yet the only issue on which conformity to the Confession is called for by our denomination has to do with the implied rejection of same-sex marriage (Article 19). One of the few departures from the Confession that is disciplined is when a minister presides at a same-gender union. Nothing is done, for example, when members or ministers publicly reject a Trinitarian understanding of God (Article 1), or when members or ministers publicly reject the peace teaching (Article 8 and 22).

What is happening here? Individuals and groups are at odds about the Confession's discernment of where Scripture interpreted by the Spirit leads.

To be sure, no single process of discernment in a single period of time is absolute. But without the Confession as a referee, as a document in its own right and as a symbol of the tradition, there is no agreed-upon way of measuring faithfulness. Yet sincere people disagree about which issues in the Confession adequately express the leading of the Spirit today and which issues are of a church-dividing nature.

The dominant historical position has been that confessions identify those things that unite us and that must unite us to remain faithful. Our present Confession stands in that tradition. It offers a permeable orthodoxy in which historic positions are affirmed, but with respect for a range of interpretation.

For instance, the Confession asserts that Christ died to save us (Article 8), adding that each of the classic ways of making sense of Jesus' death—Christus victor, substitutionary atonement, moral influence—shed the Spirit's light on biblical teaching. Our Confession seeks to set forth the essentials of the gospel as Mennonites have understood it, while making room for diversity of interpretation that remains accountable to the core.

What do we do when a significant part of the church finds the discernment set forth in the Confession inadequate to the needs of the day and the leading of the Spirit for the day? Do we resort to congregational autonomy? If so, are there no positions on which we must be of a common mind to faithfully live out the will of God?

Another approach is to say that it is relationships of trust, respect and patience that are called for to hold our denomination together. These virtues are indispensable. But can the full weight of community be carried by relationships? Aren't we accountable to truths of the sort that are interpreted in the Confession, which we accept at baptism?

More is at stake than the issue itself

We are reluctant to admit that it is not only a particular issue on which we disagree; we fear that the assumptions underlying it might be at stake. Most of us have a haunting gut feeling that more is at stake than the issue itself when

'Conservatives' in our church wake up at night worrying that the boundaries set up to keep us faithful might not hold. 'Liberals' wake up at night worrying that the boundaries might replace the centre as the basis of faithfulness.

we see the passion our disagreements provoke, but we can't put that gut feeling into words.

Take the explosive issue of abortion. Conservatives oppose it with a passion. Part of what drives them is that they're against the taking of human life. But a pro-life position is equally a symbol of a deeper moral imperative: it is a line in the sand drawn in defence of "traditional values" as defined by right-wing Conservative ideology.

Liberals defend abortion—sometimes on-demand—because they want a way for women to get out of desperate circumstances. But they also defend abortion rights because it symbolizes a deeper moral imperative: it is a line drawn in the sand in defence of "individual rights" as defined by left-wing Liberal and New Democratic ideology.

We fear that if we identify the depth of our differences—within families, congregations and church agencies—they would become truly unmanageable.

Sometimes these debates are perpetuated by ongoing reactions by one side of the issue against the other. To illustrate, people on the left decry the abandonment of the peace position by some people on the right. On the surface, the leftists have the authority of the historical Mennonite interpretation of Jesus' teaching on their side.

But some people on the right are also reacting to a pacifist position in which belief is often reduced to ethics. The nonviolence of some Mennonites grows out of scepticism about revealed truth; all that remains for them of religion is its morality.

Because the need for peacemaking initiatives is so urgent, arguments for peace and justice that are not theologically grounded have been shielded from criticism in our denominational culture. This

unwillingness by centrists and leftists to make theological judgments in this realm only fuels the conservative fear that it is ultimately not the peace teaching—but belief in God's self-revelation—that is at stake.

Privileging different parts of the Bible

The third reality grows out of one of the riches of our tradition. Mainstream Mennonites of different theological vantage points have done probing and respectful work on the Bible, both on scholarly and popular levels. Most of us would agree that the preaching of the Old Testament prophets brings us closer to the reign of God than the detailed prescriptions of the law found in Leviticus.

But each school of thought goes on to privilege parts of the Bible in more contentious ways. As regards the New Testament, some claim that the heart of the gospel is found in the ethics of Matthew, Mark and Luke, while others assert that it is found in the spirituality of the writings of Paul and John.

Every approach to the Bible makes use of a hierarchy of truths. Interpretations that see the ordering of society as one of God's greatest gifts privilege passages like Romans 13:1-7 (*"Let every person be subject . . ."*). People who see the radical re-ordering of society as a greater gift privilege passages like Acts 17:1-8 (*" . . . there is another king named Jesus."*).

We need clearer criteria for why we claim that some passages are more central to God's purposes for the church and the creation than others. Otherwise, we will continue to talk past one another.

For example, a convinced conservative can reject the binding authority of Matthew 5:38-48 (*"Do not resist an evildoer . . ."*), yet insist on the authoritative-ness of Paul's condemnation in Romans 1:18-32 (*" . . . men were consumed with*

Because the need for peacemaking initiatives is so urgent, arguments for peace and justice that are not theologically grounded have been shielded from criticism in our denominational culture.

passion for one another”). A convinced liberal can do the opposite.

A starting point for honest discernment would be to admit that we hold different interpretations of the Bible, to lay out how we decide what is authoritative and how we live in response to it.

Mission: Changing individuals or structures?

Finally, there is the question of mission. It is of defining importance because it refuses to let us solve the problems before us simply with words. The mark of the follower of Jesus is “*the obedience of faith*” (Romans 16:26). Being a faithful believer and being the faithful body of Christ grows out of taking a chance on God, taking the risk of living as if the kingdom has come near (Mark 1:15). Everything else is “*noisy gongs and clanging cymbals*” (I Corinthians 13:1).

Risky living is the level playing field on which all contenders for rightly understanding the gospel meet. It does not mean, however, that truth claims are irrelevant. Let’s simplify the two contending visions of mission for the sake of discussion:

- **IS OUR** calling to witness to Christ as the saviour of the world and to build up a church of those who confess him as lord?
- **OR IS** our calling to make common cause with all who put themselves on the line for peace and justice?

Many Christians—and people who staff our church agencies—work hard to transcend that polarity. For a long time one of our predecessor mission boards had the motto: “The whole gospel for a broken world.” Nevertheless, in our agencies, schools and congregations, people tend towards one of the extremes.

On the one hand are believers who know the tyranny of sin in their own lives

and have been set free from it by Christ. They know of no higher calling than witnessing to amazing grace. These people sometimes become so preoccupied with personal conversion that they forget it is only the entry point into God’s purpose for the creation.

On the other hand are believers who know the tyranny of sin in the life of ghettos and nations, and are convinced that God’s reign can free the world from oppression and war. They sometimes become so preoccupied with systemic change that they forget that only individuals who have been made whole by Christ can stay the course in bringing wholeness to the world.

If people across the spectrum can acknowledge that what they are called to—changing structures or individuals—concerns only a part of the gospel, and that their ministry remains vital only if there are stewards of other parts of the gospel, both their ministries become

complementary and mutually affirming.

These emphases become divisive and destructive when each side insists that only its way is faithful. Those who make personal conversion all there is to the gospel, and insist that work for justice is a distraction from the church’s mission, have only half a gospel. Similarly, those who see evangelism as an offence against other truth claims, and have no heart for seeing lost people find themselves in Christ, have only half a gospel. This is where the debate about mission needs to start.

When we risk speaking and praying truthfully and charitably about how we understand the Bible and the Spirit, when we risk unpacking our unspoken, underlying assumptions, when we risk facing the selectivity with which all of us approach the Bible, when we risk a deeper understanding of evangelism and justice in the coming of the kingdom, then we will have found our way back to the path that aligns us with God’s love. ✎

John D. Rempel, Ph.D., takes over the role of director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre at the Toronto School of Theology this fall, following his retirement from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., at the end of the current academic year.

✎ For discussion

1. John Rempel suggests that members in our churches have widely divergent world-views. Do you agree? How would you describe the major polarities in Mennonite congregations? Do the terms “conservative” and “liberal” help or hinder us in describing our points of view?
2. How do our views of the world influence how we approach the Bible? How can we invite the Spirit of God to help us discern Scripture so that we don’t assume that “we” understand better than “them”? How worried should we be if there is a diversity of understanding of how to interpret Scripture? How much of the diversity is due to cultural norms as described in Troy Watson’s column on page 13?
3. Rempel says that, “every approach to the Bible makes use of a hierarchy of truths.” What do you think he means by this? Why is it so difficult to articulate our underlying assumptions? What could we do to be more honest in our discerning of Scripture?
4. Do you agree that our congregations struggle between the polarity of those who believe the important message of the gospel is personal conversion and those who believe it is the work for justice? What are the core beliefs on which we all can agree?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an 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. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. 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. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ 'Regular guys' who went off to war

A FORMER SOLDIER read, and liked, a poem for peace that I'd sent to a veterans organization working hard for peace. He phoned me and we became good friends over time. He'd often invite my wife and me to come visit him, and he liked nothing better than if he could tell us about events of the war he'd been in. At Christmas he and I went to a veterans hospital in

Manitoba to visit and hand out Christmas goodies.

I know that war, no matter how adventurous and how right it may seem to one side or the other, or to both, is horrible, brutish and fiendish.

One day I told my soldier friend, "You didn't have to join the military."

He said, "I had to."

I said, "No, you didn't have to. You could have taken prison or even death."

Then he said, "The honour."

I knew very well what he meant. His country was at war and as soon as he joined up he was a regular guy doing his duty. His parents, church, friends, young ladies and children all looked up to him admiringly. Young men fear being called cowards more than they fear the enemy, especially so when they're still far from the front with all of its agony, gore and death. So, even though he had always been against the war, off to war he went. He was one of the fortunate ones to have survived.

By the way, my friend had fought in Hitler's army, the Wehrmacht. He was a regular guy who fully thought he was just doing his duty. Our boys were regular guys, too.

STAN PENNER, LANDMARK, MAN.

✉ Columnist has unscriptural view of our place in creation

RE: "BY WHAT authority?" column by David Driedger, Feb. 20, page 11.

Is the writer saying that, as Christians, having received the Holy Spirit and "*the mind of Christ*," according to Paul in I Corinthians 2:16, we are now equal with God, we do not have to consider Scripture authoritative, and we live by no authority we did not create?

This writer has an unscriptural view of man's place in God's creation and would do well to study II Timothy 3:16: "*All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness . . .*"

ERNIE REESOR, LISTOWEL, ONT.

✉ Former pastor provides biblical links to 'ashes to ashes' phrase

RE: "INFO SOUGHT on 'ashes to ashes' phrase" letter from Les Friesen, Feb. 20, page 10.

I served as a pastor for nearly 18 years and often used this phrase in funeral services, but never really stopped to investigate just where it originates. But after reading your inquiry I did a bit of research. Here's what I found:

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“Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,” is a poetic phrase originating in the burial service in the *Anglican Book of Common Prayer*. This same phrase also appears in the funeral service resources listed in our Mennonite Minister’s Manual and is frequently used in Mennonite funeral and burial observances.

The phrase, as quoted, doesn’t actually appear in the Bible in that specific form, but it is entirely biblical in source and meaning. The reference to dust comes mostly from Genesis 3:19, which states, “*You are dust, and to dust you shall return*,” noting that we are created out of dust, and at our earthly end our bodies return to this elementary substance.

The reference to ashes comes from Job 30:19: “*I have become more like dust and ashes*”; Genesis 18:27, where Abraham refers to himself as “*I who am but dust and ashes*”; and perhaps Ezekiel 28:18: “*I turned you to ashes on the earth*.”

A similar reference occurs in Sirach 10:9 in the Apocrypha: “*Why is earth and ashes proud?*” This phrase refers to human beings.

I hope I’ve helped answer your question.

DAVE BERGEN, WINNIPEG

Dave Bergen is Mennonite Church Canada’s executive minister of Christian Formation.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Dust off your Bibles!

RUDY BAERGEN

Over the years, the Faith and Life Committee of Mennonite Church Canada has often heard questions about the place of Scripture in our lives:

- “Do our people read the Bible anymore anyway?”
- “Does how we think about an issue depend on how we read Scripture?”
- “Where do we place the Bible with respect to other ‘tools’ of discernment?”

There is a growing unease over Scripture’s apparent loss of importance for individuals and communities. In response, the Faith and Life



Committee proposed that we set aside Assembly 2012 to focus on reading, interpreting and delighting in Scripture. Our dream was to plan an assembly where we would delight in Scripture in a holistic way, and read Scripture with fresh eyes for the context in which we live. Dreaming for this study conference began in the spring of 2010.

Now we are only three months away from the 2012 Vancouver assembly (July 12 to 15), and we are excited to see how it is taking shape. We anticipate

that “Dusting off the Bible for the 21st Century” will be an inspirational experience, bringing together joyful worship, thoughtful presentations by Bible teachers who have spent their lives delighting in Scripture, comedy presentations by Ted Schwartz, and approximately 25 workshops organized under the themes of “Biblical studies,” “Anabaptist perspectives,” “Christian formation,” “Worship,” and “Reading Scripture in the 21st century.”

There will also be worship and prayer

There is a growing unease over Scripture’s apparent loss of importance for individuals and communities.

opportunities, an art exhibit and more. Within this celebration of Scripture we have also set aside several hours to further the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process. We will have an update on the responses we received to the Scripture Discernment and Feedback Tool, and reflect on how we want Scripture to guide us as we continue the BFC process.

For whom is this assembly/study conference? We hope that a broad cross-section of people from across the land and the generations will come: people

of diverse cultures and traditions in our church; lay people and pastors; younger and older; and people with much Bible knowledge and those without. Child care for children to age 10 will be provided for those who register by May 15.

Why should people attend? Our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* declares that “Scripture is the fully reliable and trustworthy Word of God written in human language.” Later it comments, “We commit ourselves to persist and delight in reading, studying and meditating on the Scripture.”

If that is what we believe, we need to act on it!

For many, Scripture continues to play an integral role in daily life and decision-

making. But there are growing indications that, as a Mennonite people, we are becoming less biblically literate and less sure about the value of Scripture in our post-Christendom time. We believe it is critical that we address this reality in our endeavour to be a faithful people of God. And we believe it needs to begin with delighting in, and celebrating, Scripture.

Rudy Baergen is chair of Mennonite Church Canada’s Faith and Life Committee.

✉ Like doctors, churches must 'do no harm'

RE: "OUR HEALING is within us" letter, Feb. 6, page 8.

In Wes Epp's letter we are challenged to have a greater faith-based, a more proactive church-family-based stance on health care. I could not agree more.

When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the fall of 2010, fellow pilgrims offered to drive me to the Winnipeg cancer care centre, a 230-kilometre round-trip, for my daily radiation treatments. What a blessing

to have the comfort of knowing that even when I was under a great deal of stress, there were people who put their faith into action and travelled that unknown road with me.

I would agree with the writer that our churches could—and should—become more involved with the care of all members of our community, regardless of church affiliation. Where we see a need, we must help, just like in the story that Jesus told about the Good Samaritan.

However, we must also be careful to do no harm,

FAMILY TIES

Paying tribute

MELISSA MILLER

When my dad died, I worked with family members to prepare a eulogy. I gave the first draft to my husband, and asked for feedback.

"It's good," he said slowly, and then gently added, "It's a little too good." (I knew immediately what he meant, but waited for his explanation.) "It's important to speak of the whole person, the good and the not-so-good," he offered. "It's important to tell the truth."

This is one of the delicate matters to negotiate when paying tribute: what to say and what not to say. Increasingly, funeral services include a eulogy or collection of family memories. This is often a highlight of the service, particularly as people channel their grief into poignant, heartfelt remarks. Such truth-telling personalizes and adds meaning to the service, and helps mourners move from the dullness of death to



life-giving memories of the one who has passed. Often there are funny stories that bring laughter and lighten the weight of mourning. Significant qualities of the deceased are named. We hear something of the truth about him or her, and in doing so we conjure up a sense of the deceased's living presence.

Still, there are challenges in this task, such as the timing and content of the remarks. How do we pay tribute with respect and love, while including the truth of a person's life? What do we include? What do we leave out? What fits into the eulogy of the service? And what is best said in other times and places?

Deciding who will give the eulogy is one of those challenges. In some families, it's relatively clear, and the speech falls naturally to the eldest child or to an individual who is most able to fulfill the honour, often by extracting stories from others and then creating a composite description. Some families get snagged on assigning the eulogy, maybe because of unfinished business with the deceased, communication difficulties or even by grief that is too heavy for public remi-

Some families get snagged on assigning the eulogy, maybe because of unfinished business with the deceased

niscing. At such times, a pastor or family friend can help.

When I meet with family members to plan a funeral, I encourage them to prepare remarks in the range of five to 10 minutes, and many do so. There are a number of reasons for such a guideline. A funeral service has a number of

elements, such as music, Scripture and a sermon. There is often time at the graveside. Likely a meal and visiting take place afterwards. Out of respect for the mourners, especially those who have difficulty sitting for long periods of time, it's important to plan a service of a reasonable length. Another reason is to reduce redundant comments. While 13 grandchildren may all cherish the memory of Oma's *zwieback* or Grandpa's crokinole skills, it isn't necessary for each of them to say that during the funeral.

Finally, we remember the place of funeral services in the Christian church. A Christian's funeral is a worship service. Remembering one person's life occurs within the larger sphere of proclaiming God's expansive eternity. At such times, our primary focus is on God, on the comfort that we receive from God's gifts of love and grace, and on the promise and hope that we share in Christ's resurrection. Paying tribute to the deceased should not take over the tribute we pay to the God who created us, blesses us

throughout our lives and sustains us at the point of death.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, where she works as a pastor and counsellor. Her family ties include that of daughter, sister, wife, mother and friend.

regardless of our good intentions. Sometimes the religious community has trouble discerning what is true faith and good medicine, and what is pseudo-medicine. The practice of iridology is based on the idea that your iris can be mapped into specific areas, and by looking at a chart an iridologist can tell what ails people and then prescribe a “natural treatment.”

These “natural herbs” will replace all the expensive prescription drugs that your doctor prescribed because your MD has a sinister pact with the “evil money-grabbing pharmacists.”

This call for the churches to bring in iridologists to treat the sick is naïve at best. It is nothing at all

like that Good Samaritan, who said to the innkeeper, “Here is some cash. Treat him well, and if you need more, I will come back and pay you what he owes.” We can—and must—do no less.

ALLAN GIESBRECHT, ALTONA, MAN.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Have a blessed, refreshed summer

HAROLD PENNER

We are nearing the end of another Canadian winter and looking forward to a change of seasons. Some of you may already be making plans for your summer vacation. Some may have plans for renovation projects, while others are planning time to relax by the lake or in the backyard. Maybe your plans include a road trip near or far to visit family or take in the many activities or natural wonders of North America. A rest is good for the soul, a time to refresh and gain new energy to take on the day-to-day events of life.

It just might be that you are considering doing something different this summer. Something even more rejuvenating than a getaway. Something more engaging. Something more . . . generous. If you are one of those looking for ideas for a more others-focused summer, consider some of these options:

• **FROM HOME:** If you enjoy gardening, plant extra this year and bring

the produce to a local food project or soup kitchen. Impact local children by volunteering in a Vacation Bible School program. Volunteer at a youth drop-in centre. Visit a seniors centre and enjoy time with the residents. Spend some time helping at a thrift store or food bank. Offer to do that much-needed painting job in the church.



If you enjoy gardening, plant extra this year and bring the produce to a local food project or soup kitchen.

- **NEARBY:** Bible camps are always on the lookout for cabin leaders, cooks, lifeguards, nurses, or other support positions. There may be a building project or mission agency that could benefit greatly from your labour or skills as a tradesperson.
- **FARTHER AFIELD:** Connect with missionaries you know and offer to assist them on a project or just encourage them and get a better understanding of the ministry they are doing.

Go on your own or encourage others to join you in whatever ministry you decide to get involved in. You will feel good that you had an opportunity to help others and perhaps see someone decide to follow Jesus because you were willing to serve. If you include your children, you will impact them as they see your example and experience the blessing of serving others.

Some of these ideas work only in the summer, but most are possibilities any time of the year. If you have additional ideas, share them with others at church, with your neighbours or co-workers, or share them with other Canadians by writ-

ing a letter to the editor of this magazine.

Whatever you choose to do on your vacation, may you be blessed, refreshed and encouraged to continue living faithful, joyful and generous lives.

Harold Penner is a stewardship consultant at the Winnipeg office of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bergen—Kalina Janae (b. March 2, 2012), to Tim and Coral Bergen, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Cassels—Elysee Mae (b. Feb. 7, 2012), to Ben and Kendyll Cassels, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Cook—Chelsea Helen (b. Feb. 6, 2012), to Colin Cook and Jean Pellegrini-Cook, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Crealock-Marsh—Jasper Jeremiah (b. Feb. 2, 2012), to Jeffrey and Martha Crealock-Marsh, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Estabrooks—Margaret Anne (b. Feb. 23, 2012), to Stephanie (Peters) and Joseph Estabrooks, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Musselman—Elden James (b. March 7, 2012), to Heather (Burkholder) and Pete Musselman, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Stouffville, Ont.

Pannu—Jasmine Hope (b. Jan. 19, 2012), to Karen Schroeder and Bill Pannu, First Mennonite Winnipeg.

Stobbe—Benjamin Paul Wates (b. Aug. 19, 2011), to Joel and Tracy Stobbe, Langley Mennonite, B.C.

Deaths

Bergen—Victor, 62 (b. Sept. 2, 1949; d. March 4, 2012), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Dyck—Mary, 98 (b. June 27, 1913; d. March 6, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Ediger—Mary (nee Enns), 91 (b. May 22, 1920; d. Jan. 4, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Funk—Helen, 92 (b. July 5, 1919; d. Feb. 28, 2012), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Heinrichs—Erica (nee Dueck), 84 (b. April 24, 1927; d. Jan. 30, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Janzen—Erica, 93 (b. Nov. 24, 1917; d. March 11, 2012), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Kuepfer—Elmer, 61 (b. Jan. 12, 1951; d. March 9, 2012), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Martens—Violet (nee Isaak) 89 (b. Dec. 9, 1922; d. Dec. 15, 2011), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Penner—Henry, 86 (b. May 26, 1925; d. Feb. 17, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Peters—Henry, 80 (b. Feb. 19, 1932; d. March 4, 2012), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Semple—Alice, 81 (b. July 6, 1930; d. March 9, 2012), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Shantz—Norman, 92 (d. March 1, 2012), Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Thiessen—Susie, 98 (b. Dec. 4, 1913; d. March 11, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Toews—Anna, 92 (b. Feb. 27, 1920; d. March 3, 2012), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Weber—George, 89 (b. Dec. 25, 1922; d. March 6, 2012), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Wolosezky—Ed, 65 (b. Dec. 23, 1946; d. Jan. 25, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

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.

Pondius' Puddle



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

The trouble with normal

BY TROY WATSON

“You can’t be serious. Pork! Pork is what you eat for breakfast, not fish, not lobster and definitely not sushi! What is this world coming to? Fish for breakfast? This is an outrage! Bacon, ham, sausage, eggs: these are proper breakfast foods. Everybody knows this!”

My sister-in-law was neither intimidated nor dissuaded by my passionate objection to her gourmet breakfast suggestion, but I amped up the Scottish humour and charm, and was eventually granted permission to eat a conventional western breakfast.

I can’t remember if she pointed out the absurdity of a follower of Jesus mockingly condemning the idea of fish for breakfast or if it came to me on my own. The irony, of course, being that the only documented breakfast of Jesus in the gospels recounts him not only eating fish, but him being the one to cook and serve it as well! What would Jesus do for breakfast as a Jew? Fish. Definitely not pork, Troy!

So why do most North American Christians I know, with the exception of my vegetarian friends and sister-in-law, have a strong conviction that bacon, sausage and ham are normal breakfast foods, and fish and lobster are not? Is this a universal timeless truth that is obvious to any reasonable person who actually thinks the matter through carefully and objectively?

Of course not. We have been conditioned to think this way. Philosopher and social scientist Michel Foucault



proposed that we have all been conditioned to accept certain ideas and actions as normal, to the extent that they are taken for granted and seen as natural. He called this process “normalization.” Every culture, subculture and family normalizes its members. Church culture is no exception. For instance, I was raised to sit very still and attentive in church as a child no matter how boring the service was. This was normal at

Every culture, subculture and family normalizes its members. Church culture is no exception.

our church. The “liberal” parents whose children didn’t conform to this norm were judged, as there was obviously something wrong with them and their prayer lives. The first time I visited a Mennonite church in 1998 I was shocked at the amount of noise and disturbance children were permitted to create. It became clear that this was normal for that congregation, but my gut reaction was that this was anything but normal. It was wrong. Especially when I was preaching.

It is common for humans to judge the product of another culture’s normalization process as wrong, bad or even evil, if it is different from our own. I remember the first time I visited a friend’s Pentecostal church when I was 16. At the end of the service everyone began speaking in tongues. I had never experienced anything like this before, and my

immediate response was fear. I judged their behaviour as not only abnormal, but quite possibly demonic. Yet my Pentecostal friends had been raised to believe tongues were a normal part of the Christian life and were suspicious of believers like me who didn’t speak in tongues. I slowly came to realize that what was normal for me was not necessarily normal for others.

At their core, a lot of “worship wars” are cultural-norm conflicts. I have heard this argument repeated by many of my charismatic friends: “It is not natural to just sit there like a bump on a log, without so much as a smile, if you are really worshipping the God you love with your whole being!” I always respond: “True, it is not normal for you and your subculture, but it might be for some people.”

Many other believers have confidently informed me: “It is not natural or proper to be dancing, sipping coffee and waving your arms around in the air like you’re at a rock concert in the house of God!” I always respond: “True, it is not normal for you and your subculture, but it might

be for some people.”

Our views on what is normal and natural are almost always a product of enculturation and normalization, rather than our grasp of universal timeless truth. Awareness that my norm is not the norm—or God-ordained ideal—has had a profound effect on my spiritual maturity, and has increased the peace and unity I experience with others, especially those different than I am. Having cultural norms and ideals are not a problem as long as I remain conscious that other people, cultures, denominations and religions have their norms as well.

I still don’t eat fish for breakfast, but now I see Christ in people who do. ❧

Troy Watson is the spiritual life director of Quest Christian Community, St. Catharines, Ont.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Not talking about violence 'does not work'

Abuse statistics in the church mirror those of secular society

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

LANGLEY, B.C.

Violence in domestic relationships has long-reaching and painful consequences for the entire family, as those who attended a seminar on the topic at Langley Mennonite Fellowship last month learned.

Sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee Abuse Response and Prevention Program and WINGS (Women in Need Gaining Strength) Fellowship Ministries, the "Understanding Abuse in Relationships" workshop drew about 70 counsellors, pastors, students and learning facilitators.

In the opening session, Karen McAndless-Davis spoke on "The woman's journey." McAndless-Davis, author of *When Love Hurts*, said that one in four Canadian women will experience some kind of relationship abuse in her life. By contrast, she pointed out that breast cancer strikes one in nine, but society is much more aware of it. Although people tend to associate abuse with physical bruises, the speaker said that in reality most abuse is verbal, emotional, spiritual, financial or psychological, making it harder for the victim or those around her to recognize.

Because abusive partners can be charming and manipulative, the church community and friends often do not believe an abused woman's accusations, or minimize the seriousness of the problem. And women often don't have the strength or resources to leave the relationship. "It's time to break the silence," said McAndless-Davis.

Roshni Gleitman of WINGS then spoke of the impact of abuse on children of all ages. Children in a home where there is abuse—even if they are not abused themselves—invariably suffer the consequences, said Gleitman. Unfortunately, the lessons

children learn include that violence is normal, a means to get what one wants and a way to solve problems; that it is not safe to have one's own opinion; and that when people hurt others, they can get away with it without consequences.

Even if parents try to keep fighting behind closed doors, children sense the tension but don't always know what to do

with their feelings. "Children need to learn appropriate ways to be angry and express emotions," she said.

"Men who abuse" was the topic of the final session from Magi Cooper, who leads "Beyond Blame" seminars in Nanaimo, B.C., for abusive men. In her seminars, Cooper encourages men to confront the attitudes that perpetuate violence in their lives. "These behaviours harm you and harm your partners," she tells them, and then asks them to declare, "What's your intent? Are you for safety or against it? You cannot be a part of the solution and part of the problem. There is no fence-sitting."

Cooper said the demographic of violence is 100 percent the same in churches as the secular world, so the church community is not immune.

"Violence is always a choice; abusive behaviour is always a choice," she said. "We have to talk about [violence] because not talking about it does not work." ❧



Magi Cooper demonstrates how she works with abusive men to identify destructive emotions and abusive behaviours. Cooper wrote negative words such as "jealousy" and "name calling" on paper, then handed out the words to workshop participants to be symbolically destroyed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AGAPE FELLOWSHIP



Nadege Temens and Amber White dance at an Agape Fellowship social event in London, Ont.

Agape Fellowship on the rebound

London house church experiences growth, growing pains

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

When Brenda Beer-Brissette began attending Agape Fellowship in London, Ont., in 2008, attendance was averaging between nine and 12. She was recovering from a year-long illness, during which time she had reached out to God. God had become very present to her. She was comforted and wanted to give back, to make a difference in someone else's life.

In the course of exploring how she might do this—perhaps teach English as a second language—she met Lynne Williams, pastor at Agape. Following an invitation from Williams, Beer-Brissette began to attend and met people who accepted her and were friendly. She “wasn't

alone,” she says, and the congregation of “vulnerable people, who are learning how to trust again . . . [who] need to be valued, [and learn] that they have something to offer,” became family for her. In fact, she met her husband-to-be there. “Learning how to give and receive,” is how she explains her attraction to the congregation that is growing, and showing some growing pains.

Beer-Brissette's introduction to Agape happened around the time that Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's funding for the congregation ended. Williams, who finds that a significant part of her time is consumed by fundraising, says that Agape doesn't really fit the model of a “mission”

congregation, yet will probably always need assistance.

With most of the congregation on social assistance, Williams is paid for 12 hours of ministry per week, soon to move to 15 hours, and needs to hold down other work. She is thankful to both MC Eastern Canada congregations like East Zorra, near Tavistock, and Avon, in Stratford, which are both part of the same cluster of congregations as Agape, and to Poole Mennonite Church, near Milverton, as well as to Gord Alton, MC Eastern Canada's interim regional minister for southwestern Ontario.

With the help of the congregations, Agape has expanded its programming to include pork with their food cupboard program, and will soon be adding beef. For minimal cost, congregants can buy meat and, together with Sobeys food market, get vegetables and fruit below cost. People pay at the beginning of the month for vegetables, just after social assistance cheques have arrived, and continue to get vegetables when the money runs out.

But “there's always more month than money,” a congregant notes.

Church programs occur at numerous times each week. Beer-Brissette runs a Tuesday tea program and is a participant in the Sunday afternoon worship, fellowship and discussion time, which now averages around 33 people per week. Meeting at Valleyview Mennonite Church, Sunday's program includes a potluck in which all are expected to participate as they can, including set-up and clean-up. This is a cutting edge for the congregation, where the need to learn responsibility to participate, and to honour others' needs, shows up most clearly.

Williams notes that many in the congregation have no church background and she needs to spend time on very basic teaching about Jesus and church practice. She is working with longer-term members of the congregation on leadership training so that the congregants can truly care for each other.

“Other churches bring spirituality of a cognitive level,” she says, noting, though, that “Agape people bring it down to where the rubber hits the road, . . . a spirituality at the place of survival, finding meaning in life beyond anything superficial.” ❧

God had become very present to [Brenda Beer-Brissette]. She was comforted and wanted to give back, to make a difference in someone else's life.

God at work in the Church

Snapshots

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., broke ground on its expansion project that will include space for a new library, archive and classrooms on March 16. Pictured from left to right: Paul Penner, director of operations; Fred Redekop, board member; Susan Taves, board chair; Susan Schultz Huxman, president; Julie Reimer, student; and Lynn Jantzi and Clare Schlegel, members of the board and building committee. Fundraising for the 'Next Chapter' project has exceeded expectations, with only \$1.3 million of the \$8.8-million project expected to be mortgaged.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CHURCH EASTERN CANADA



Brian Bauman, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada mission minister, and his wife Nancy Brubaker, pastor of Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., kneeling left and right, travelled to Myanmar earlier this year at the invitation of Truth Bible College and Seminary to speak at its 13th convocation service in Kalay. This grew into a week of teaching an Anabaptist understanding of the Bible and faith to 60 students and faculty, and preaching during evening services. This would not have happened without the Chin Christian Church, Kitchener, Ont., whose leaders want to be Mennonite and are eager to see their Chin brothers and sisters around the world understand Mennonite theology. There were many holy moments, one of which was foot washing during the convocation. Brubaker provided the only teaching and introduction to this practice beforehand, drawing a parallel between Jesus the teacher serving his disciples, and the teachers serving their graduates. People in the crowd were moved that white, educated, wealthy North Americans would stoop to wash the feet of a Chin.

MENNONITE SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNION PHOTO



The Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) celebrated the grand opening of its newest branch in Mount Forest, Ont., on March 7. Pictured from left to right: Brent Zorgdrager, MSCU chief executive officer; Raymond Tout, mayor of the Township of Wellington North; Bob Janzen, MSCU board member; and Wanda Heibein, Mount Forest branch manager.

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE



When the leadership of Mennonite Women Canada get together, they do their best to enjoy every moment—even if it means posing for a photo. They were in Winnipeg last month during Mennonite Church Canada's spring leadership assembly to discuss their plans for the future. President Liz Koop says that, since their members are getting older and it's harder to draw commitments from younger women, who are busy with jobs and family, 'it means shifting who we are and looking at how we connect with women.' MW Canada will celebrate its 60th anniversary at the MC Canada assembly in Vancouver in July with the theme, 'Sowing seeds for a new season.' Pictured from left to right: Liz Koop, MW Canada president; Ev Buhr, Alberta Women in Mission president; Lois Mierau, secretary-treasurer; Naomi Unger, sitting in for Saskatchewan Women in Mission president Myrna Sawatzky; Pattie Ollies, Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada coordinator; and Waltrude Gortzen, B.C. Women's Ministry representative.



Presenter Betty Pries helps pastor-congregation relations committee members to learn their role as facilitators in the pastor-congregation relationship, rather than taking charge of it, at a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada seminar in early March.

Who supervises the church pastor?

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Over and over again the topic of pastoral supervision came up at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's training event for pastor-congregation relations committees, held at Waterloo North Mennonite Church on March 3.

Generally, the work of these committees consists of attending to the relationship between a pastor, other staff, individual congregational members and the congregation at large. They also often care for the pastor in terms of professional and personal growth, and make sure that the pastor and his/her family's needs are cared for.

But often they also take part in—or are in charge of—pastoral reviews, job descriptions, memos of understanding and all the financial aspects of the pastor-

congregation relationship.

This is where tensions in the relationship can arise. Will pastors be open about felt weaknesses or difficult relationships, either with other staff or congregational members, if the group with whom they are sharing is also responsible for the upcoming pastoral review and congregational affirmation? Can the committee be entangled in issues of salary, benefits and job descriptions without coming to the pastor's defence in a pastor-member conflict?

Betty Pries of Associates Resourcing the Church described her favoured model of pastor-congregation relations as one in which the pastor is responsible to the pastor-congregation relations committee, which is in turn responsible to the church

council; issues of salary, job description and memos of understanding would be done by ad hoc groups on which members of the committee play a role.

In this way, she said that supervision can take place, but the committee is less liable to be in a conflict of interest, and it can keep the pastor's needs and issues confidential. The committee is able to help the pastor and congregation to be in good relationship, but should not take charge of that relationship by advocating for either pastor or congregation.

But Pries realizes that not all congregations are large enough to develop a separate pastor-congregation relations committee. She told the 30 gathered individuals from around a dozen congregations that many congregations make the support/supervision balance work with or without an official committee, although she favours it. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Elmira region men charged with cattle fraud

"I'm a sinner in need of the grace of God," was how Fred Redekop, pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., prefaced his sharing in church on March 11. What he had to share was that two men from the congregation—Merle Shantz and Howard Bauman—had been jointly charged with one count of fraud over \$5,000, four counts of theft over \$5,000 and 22 counts of false pretences over \$5,000 in connection with what the Ontario Provincial Police allege was the fraudulent purchase of \$2.2 million worth of cattle by Central Ontario Cattle Ltd. of Elmira. Both men are scheduled to appear in a Kitchener, Ont., court on April 10 to answer to the charges. Redekop and an elder from the congregation had visited with the men and their families the previous day to walk along side them in this difficult time. Redekop foresees this as a long and grievous path for the families and the congregation.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

The committee is able to help the pastor and congregation to be in good relationship, but should not take charge of that relationship by advocating for either pastor or congregation.



Kessler Douglas managed to order a good meal from the wacky Chez Valaqua menu during this year's Junior High Snow Camp, but got stuck eating it with a spatula.

SNOW CAMP REFLECTION

Watch out for the Chez Valaqua Menu

BY TARYN HALUZA-DELAY

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Snow camp at Camp Valaqua is something I look forward to every year. It's meeting youth from elsewhere. It's games in the snow. It's camp songs, Mission Impossible, fun, fellowship.

What's not to love? The sessions are interesting. They are more interactive than I am used to, and geared for teenagers and our age group, rather than for adults. Also, they are very thought-provoking. The sessions really made me think about what kind of person I want to be in the future.

Then there are the activities. Mission Impossible is a given; here's a tip: do a few ninja rolls and sometimes the snipers will let you go. So are Diamond Smugglers and snow games, but often there are some more unique activities.

This year we did something called the Chez Valaqua Menu. Telling you exactly what it is would ruin it if you don't already know, but let's just say I had no idea what I had ordered!

I'm glad I've had the opportunity to go to snow camp a few times. Even with this

year's snow camp just finished for me, I already can't wait until next year! ❧

Taryn Haluza-Delay attends First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, and is a Grade 9 student. She attended Junior High Snow Camp from Feb. 17 to 19. ❧

Learning about worship music types

BY ELLEN SHENK

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
OTTAWA

Worship music should integrate all types—contemporary and traditional—Christine Longhurst told Ottawa Mennonite Church in one of four sessions, “Singing the Lord’s song in a strange land: Congregational singing and worship in our culture,” the weekend of Jan. 21-22.

Her talks were part of OMC’s annual “Days of Worship and Reflection” series. She said that of the three components of music—melody, harmony and rhythm—melody was at first pre-eminent as in the *Ausbund*, the first book of Anabaptist hymns. When harmony became a part of Mennonite hymnody in the 19th century, four-part harmony was essential to Mennonite singing. Rhythm is now particularly important, especially for youths and young adults.

Longhurst noted that music previously grew out of a community and served to unify. Today, people select one type of music and a community grows up around the music. People identify themselves by the type of music they prefer and some church services feature only one type of music.

The goal of worship, she elaborated, is the intersection of the community (a horizontal interaction) with the divine (a vertical interaction); this intersection forms a cross. Worship planning should consider the voice in the song—God speaking, humans speaking to God, or humans speaking to each other—although many songs have no such voice.

Longhurst is currently a sessional instructor at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. ❧

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

COVER STORY

Greening Africa

MCC partner receives environmental award from Ethiopian president

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

At a February ceremony in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Migibare Senay Children and Family Support Organization received a first place “green award” from President Girma Wolde-Giorgis. The organization’s work is “a model of sustainable land management,” according to a release put out by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which has partnered with Migibare Senay over the course of the four-year project.

Dan Leonard, who serves as MCC country representative for Ethiopia, along with his wife Karin Kliewer, is excited about the award-winning project. “It turns the popular narrative that one must choose between the economy and the environment on its

head,” he said via e-mail. “This project shows that environmental management and restoration is vital to sustainable economic growth. . . . You couldn’t have one without the other here.”

According to the MCC release, the project has rehabilitated 1,160 hectares of degraded land belonging to 645 households. Wheat and barley yields have doubled. The project included soil and water conservation measures, such as earthen dikes, wood-and-stone check dams, and the planting of fast-growing trees in gullies prone to erosion. Local participants received in-kind payments of livestock for their work on dams and forestation initiatives.

Although the project took place in a region not affected by the food crisis of 2011, Leonard said the area is generally “vulnerable to failed rainy seasons and unpredictable natural hazards.”

Ongoing projects of this nature help address drought before it happens by preparing people economically to better withstand failed rains when they occur.

Such projects also help people address effects of climate change, said Leonard. “We often think of climate change as warming, whereas the bigger issue is climate variability and the unpredictability of rainfall.”

People are most vulnerable to these weather extremes when they have no economic cushion to see them through difficult times. In-kind payments provided by the Migibare Senay project, as well as increased productivity and health of local lands, help provide such a cushion.

The Ethiopian organization was chosen to receive the award by a committee that included the president, elected officials, artists, academics and journalists, as well as business, community and youth representatives. MCC funded the project with funds from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. ☼

MCC PHOTO BY DAN LEONARD



By participating in the award-winning program run by the Migibare Senay Children and Family Support Organization, a Mennonite Central Committee partner in Ethiopia, Tiruneh Mitiku has doubled the income he can make off his farm in the country’s Amhara region.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What aid work looks like in Africa

BY AL FRIESEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The invitation arrived last September: “Would you like to accompany the Canadian Foodgrains Bank on a media study tour of Ethiopia?”

It sounded like an eye-opening opportunity to see an organization follow through on its mandate to combat global hunger. Our trip was planned so that we would get a chance to see what aid work looks like, meet aid workers in the field and hear from recipients themselves.

We met Bakelach Basa in the village of Dana. The mother of six children was a participant in a goat-lending program administered by Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church Development, an evangelical Ethiopian church organization supported by the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.

Program participants receive a female goat and then return its first-born to the program. In the five years since Basa received her goat, she has established a herd of five goats and a pregnant heifer. She has been able to enrol her children in school, and is now saving money to purchase a sheet-metal roof for her home.

Local aid workers who administer the program told us that since launching the goat-lending campaign five years ago, the number of goats involved has climbed to well over 300.

Farming God’s Way was an immediate attention grabber, and seemed a perfect fit to deal with the climate and environmental challenges faced by Ethiopian farmers. The practice, which primarily involves zero tillage cultivation, is also becoming more widespread in Tanzania and Kenya.

Joseph, who hosted us and is also a pastor in the local Kale Heywet church,

proudly showed us his test plot of harvested maize, which was about to be planted with beans. The initial yield was more than twice the usual results of area fields. It was a visible reminder that, although the technology and land base are dramatically different, farmers in all areas of the world can be connected with a common interest of yield improvement and care of God’s creation.

We met Desta Dadarca while touring a food-for-work relief project administered by the Terepezza Development Association, which is the relief and development department of the Wolayata Kale Heywet Church, a partner of World Relief Canada. The project became necessary due to a three-month gap in expected rainfall; at the time of our visit it was assisting 23 villages with 300 tonnes of maize, with each participant receiving 75 kilograms of maize per month.

Dadarca, a 35-year-old farmer, was one of those successful applicants. He and his wife have six children. When the rains fall, his primary crops include maize, sweet potatoes and a plant called *inset* (“false banana”). His goal is to save enough from the proceeds of his half-hectare plot to purchase a share in an ox, in order to provide milk for his children.

Our “beacon of hope” moment occurred when Dadarca spoke with inspiration about his commitment to the church, complete with

a song. When asked about his children, he replied, “Thanks be to God, they are healthy.”

Although the Foodgrains Bank partners primarily with rural development and agricultural initiatives, its work with Food for the Hungry Ethiopia in Ziway is worthy of recognition. Project manager Samson Kacha told us how the Orphan and Vulnerable Children Project is active in five communities. It supports 1,500 orphans by providing education, food, tuition and social support.

We were “smitten” by Mohammed and Daniel, brothers in an orphan-headed household, who shyly showed us their neat homework assignments and talked about their desire to attain marks high enough to qualify for university education. ☺

Al Friesen and Tara Funke of Golden West Radio participated in a media study tour of Ethiopia in early February. Friesen represents Mennonite Church Manitoba on the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board.



Two Ethiopian men work on a river-diversion project that uses a gravity-fed system to irrigate their crops and that permits more than one growing season per year.



Toyia Sekento, six, holds a goat that her family is raising. Her family received the goat because her father is part of a self-help group in Kenya that is supported by Mennonite Central Committee. The goats are an incentive for the formation of 60 self-help groups among the Maasai people that each work together to do community projects.

African goat project demonstrates group power

STORY AND PHOTO BY MATTHEW KISTLER

Mennonite Central Committee

NAJILE, KENYA

A goat project among Kenya's Maasai people is giving birth to more than baby goats. It is powering to life a cooperative group ethic that is helping 2,000 Maasai families cope with cultural change and ecological challenges.

The traditionally pastoralist Maasai have struggled for years to redefine themselves in light of reduced grazing land, pressure to abandon their nomadic way of life and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. The Maasai warrior able to fend off lions menacing his herd, long the centre-piece of Kenyan cultural pride, is a fading icon.

The Kenyan government has been encouraging the tribe to take up crop agriculture. In 2008, it granted farmland in the

Osupuko highlands outside of Nairobi to 200 Maasai families. Most knew little about farming. Worse, they moved onto the land during a three-year drought, which made farming impossible and killed almost 80 percent of the community's livestock, its major asset.

The Kajiado Goat Restocking Project, funded by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, is helping them to replenish their livestock, learn to farm and live in a community.

Living communally raises problems the Maasai didn't have to face when their lifestyle was nomadic. The goats, provided to project participants, are an incentive to encourage working together for the benefit of their communities.

MCC partner organizations, the Maasai Food Security and Development Program and Maasai Integrated Development Initiatives, began the goat project by training more than 60 groups in agriculture, livestock rearing, water harvesting, hay baling and income generation.

Before group members could receive the goats, the partners required them to plan and implement their own activities, such as repairing community roads or caring for group farms. After the projects were complete, each member was eligible to receive up to five goats.

The group helps to pay for the goats using a graduated fee system. By the end of the restocking project, group leaders will assume procurement responsibilities, independent of outside help.

One of the first groups to become eligible for goats was Osupuko Matonyok (a Maasai phrase meaning "let's work hard") Organization, which began as a Foodgrains Bank food-for-work group in 2009 in the midst of the drought. The 120 families who live in the Osupuko highlands continued to work together after the food-for-work effort ended.

Having already tilled one another's land and built community pit latrines, each member now has received two female goats, many of which have since produced kids. The Maasai value goats because they reproduce quickly, are easily sold, handle drought much better than do cattle and provide milk for the families involved.

Beyond celebrating their new goats, community members are seeing other benefits of the group effort. Through the training provided by MCC's partners, members learned skills to grow crops and then helped each other on their farms, which increased the production of maize.

Throughout the region other groups are also acting. Reuben Pareyio, restocking project manager for the Maasai Food Security and Development Program, is seeing many groups implement similar projects. "In the community now, some people who are not in the groups have seen these self-help groups and they have been motivated," he says. "Group members also have seen that there is power in the group, a lot of strength, so when many people come together many things can be done." ❧

Exercising faith, love, hope in all areas of life

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor
WINNIPEG

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Jesus’ words from Matthew 16 have had many varying interpretations throughout the ages, Robert Benne, Ph.D., said in his lectures at the annual “Proclaiming the Unique Claims of Christ” series at Canadian Mennonite University last month.

Benne, the Jordan-Trexler professor emeritus of religion and director of the Center for Religion and Society at Roanoke College, Salem, Va., challenged those in attendance not to think that this means to deny oneself everything, but that this radical call isn’t just meant for radical contexts. “Very early on in the church’s life, [a person would] leave the world, become a hermit, deny themselves everything and live in prayer and contemplation,” he said.

Another interpretation leads people to be radically obedient by becoming priests, monks or nuns, and taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as ways of denying themselves and taking up their cross.

In most Protestant groups, this call

means leaving everything and pursuing missions and following the great command, Benne said. “There’s always been that radical response to Jesus’ challenge,” he said.

On the other hand, Benne believes that

‘The political sector is increasingly important and is being overtaken by secularists, resulting in a loss of religious freedom.’

(Robert Benne)

the radical call of Jesus is in the heart of every lay person who is living in the world. The doctrine of vocation applies to everyone and in many ways doesn’t relax any of the radicalness of Jesus’ call. “It just puts it into a different context,” Benne said.

Most Christians take the worldly route of obedience, Benne said. This includes exercising faith, love and hope in marriage and family life, work, public or political life, voluntary associations and church.

“We don’t have to wander around

looking for places to exercise our obedience,” Benne said. “They are often given to us in these places of responsibility that God sustains in the world”

Although these places of responsibility can increase Christians’ love for God, faith in God and hope in God, they are also practical virtues in the human spheres in which they are found. “These virtues, as they’re worked and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, transform these ordinary places of responsibility into Christian callings for devout, disciplined Christians,” Benne said.

Faith, love and hope also translate to political life, Benne said. Christians are all over the map politically, he acknowl-

edged: Some believe that politics and religion should not be intertwined and others draw a straight line from their faith to their political leaning, both of which he said are unhealthy.

Benne believes, however, that there is a healthy process to achieve critical engagement between religion and politics. This process includes using the church’s biblical tradition as a guide for ethical questions in politics, and Christian social doctrine to engage with issues and create public policy.

But this is becoming more and more difficult. “The political sector is increasingly important and is being overtaken by secularists, resulting in a loss of religious freedom,” Benne said.

He cited the example of Catholic schools in the United States being required under new healthcare legislation to provide contraception, sterilization and abortion service in their healthcare coverage, against their religious beliefs.

Benne urged Christians to support public policies that are anti-abortion, provide a better social safety net for the poor and disabled, and ensure religious freedom locally and globally. ❧



Robert Benne, Ph.D., right, chats with a member of the audience after his lecture at Canadian Mennonite University’s ‘Proclaiming the Unique Claims of Christ’ series.

Healing the spiritual wounds of war

Psychotherapist calls on the church to minister to armed forces veterans

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Carolyn Holderread Heggen, a psychotherapist who specializes in trauma healing, called on Mennonites to provide healing communities for the spiritual wounds of war. Specifically, she challenged listeners to bring healing to veterans and their families.

Precisely because Mennonites have traditionally been opposed to war, they have a credibility that helps veterans feel safe in dealing with their battle experiences, Heggen told her audiences at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary earlier this year as the school's "peace and justice guest." "If we do not think we have something to offer, then we need to rethink our whole concept of what God incarnate in our world means."

Heggen noted that currently there is greater recognition of the damage that war does to combatants. A variety of medical professions are now saying what Mennonites have known for a long time: "You can't kill another human being without damaging the person you ask to do that. Soldiers are also victims of our national addiction to war and to violence. We have not been honest about the price we

ask of soldiers and everyone who loves them to fight our wars."

In one session, Heggen addressed the myths North America has about war and the truth behind those myths. She noted, for example, that three times as many veterans of the Vietnam War have taken their own lives than were killed in combat.

"We don't cross paths with many veterans," Heggen admitted about most Mennonites. "We need to figure out ways to get to know veterans. Then the first thing we have to do is to be more honest about our own brokenness. That transparency can help vets to feel this is a group on a journey."

In her concluding presentation, Heggen said, "I have this strong conviction—and it's a growing conviction—that we, as Mennonites, have something very, very significant to be saying about the spiritual wounds of war. I think God is wanting to do something exciting through us."

Heggen clarified that she wasn't talking about healing veterans so they can go back into combat. Instead, she urged the church



Carolyn Holderread Heggen, a psychotherapist who focuses on trauma healing, challenges the seminary community—and Mennonite congregations—to be places of healing for veterans of combat and their families, at a day-long workshop at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

to build "spaces of love, compassion and grace where we can listen to stories of vets, and weep with them and say, 'Yes, what you did was terrible. It was in profound and clear violation of God's intentions for humanity. And the rest of the story is that there is a way out, and we will commit ourselves to walk with you on that journey out.'"

Heggen warned, though, that Mennonites have to be honest and vigilant about the "spiritual battles we will be facing. My theology has never been so challenged as when I am listening to vets and their stories."

However, she is optimistic that Mennonites have the theology and history to address the needs of healing for veterans, needs that are growing beyond any seen previously. "I know it is possible to not back down one inch on our peace-and-justice and anti-war position as a church, and also to open our hearts to veterans and to their wounds."

Heggen is author of *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches* (Herald Press, 1993); she holds a Ph.D. in counselling psychology from the University of New Mexico. ❧



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Call to heal the memory of mission

By **LYNDA HOLLINGER-JANZEN**
Mennonite Church Canada/
Mennonite Mission Network
CHICAGO, ILL.

According to Hippolyto Tshimanga, the memory of Mennonite mission work needs healing.

Tshimanga, Mennonite Church Canada's mission partnership facilitator for Africa, was one of more than 60 administrators and scholars who gathered in Chicago for the annual Council of International Anabaptist Ministries.

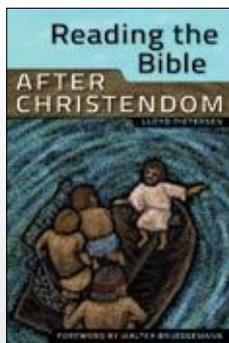
Both Tshimanga and Nelson Okanya, president of Eastern Mennonite Missions, were born in Africa. Both leaders took a compassionate and forgiving stance towards mission workers of the past, urging council participants to remember that early missionaries had never heard of global citizenship and should not be held to today's standards of awareness.

"I wouldn't be here today without those missionaries," Okanya said. "Mission has been good for my people."

Tshimanga issued a plea that resonated deeply with many of those in attendance and continued to be a topic of mealtime conversations and impromptu groups in the halls. "We need to heal the memory of missions," he said. "It is a disease among North American Mennonites. The reality is that in Asia and Africa people have moved on, but in North America we live with the guilt of memory."

Later, Tshimanga elaborated on his statement by saying that the healing would begin by remembering the whole picture of what mission has been, the good with the negative aspects. An unbiased look at mission must go hand-in-hand with deep study of biblical mission, he said. "We must stop blindly repeating the criticism of anthropologists who accuse missionaries of destroying culture." ❧

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by Lloyd Pietersen

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'Wash the spears'

Peacebuilding school event offers truth and reconciliation through story and song

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor
WINNIPEG

The Canadian School of Peacebuilding has been training peacebuilders for three years now, but on March 15 it tried something different by sharing a taste of the school with the community.

School co-directors Wendy Kroeker and Valerie Smith organized "Story and Song," an event featuring the storytelling of Piet Miering, a former instructor at the annual summer school, and singer-songwriter Cara Luft.

Miering, who is an ordained Dutch Reformed minister in South Africa, professor emeritus of theology and missiology at the University of Pretoria, and a representative of the Dutch Reformed denomination on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, discussed the importance of truth to the process of reconciliation.

In order to do this, he drew on two Zulu words meaning "to restore peace and reconcile the dead before returning to the life of the village," and, "the washing of the spears, the aggression must be washed away."

"If ever there was a time to wash the spears, it is now," Miering said of the apartheid system of racial segregation implemented by the National Party of South Africa from 1948-94 that curtailed the rights of non-white citizens and favoured Afrikaans minority rule. "[The commission] is a painful, wonderful process," he told the gathering at Canadian Mennonite University, as more than 25,000 victims of apartheid were invited to share their stories of human rights violations.

He said that one of the most painful parts of the process was when a woman told a very sad story of losing her 14-year-old son when he went to the nearby store to pick up some food for dinner. She waited for two hours and he didn't come back, so she went out looking for him. After two days,

there was still no word. Two days later, this single mother saw a news broadcast of her son tied at the ankles to the back of a truck that was dragging him and another boy through the city.

She was later taken to see her son. She was overwhelmed, thinking that her son had miraculously survived, but she was taken to the mortuary to attend to her son's body. She had to wash the blood from a deep head wound and prepare his body for

the funeral. Desmond Tutu, commission chair, was unable to continue the meeting after hearing her story, Miering said.

When Miering approached the grieving mother after she told her story, he asked her, "Was it worth your while to travel here to talk about this?"

"Oh yes, it was good," Miering recalled her saying. "I told my story and people listened. Maybe after all these years I will sleep through the night without nightmares."

To the future peacebuilders in attendance, he concluded, "We have a role to play. We have to build bridges between communities. But be warned, it is a hard way."

Cara Luft, a former member of the Wailin' Jennys, performed before and after Miering's storytelling session. ❧



Singer-songwriter Cara Luft, a former member of the Wailin' Jennys, performs at the Canadian School of Peacebuilding's 'Story and Song' event last month.

GOD AT WORK IN US

INTERVIEW

Eco-mom addresses climate-change naysayers

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Christine Penner Polle used to turn off the radio when global warming was discussed. Now the former nurse, writer and self-described “climate-change avoider” volunteers full-time as a climate-change campaigner in the north-western Ontario town of Red Lake. She and her family maintain ties to Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.



Polle

Canadian Mennonite: How were you converted?

Christine Penner Polle: I found out about 350.org and the site clearly outlined that a maximum of 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is needed for human civilization to continue. At that time it was around 389.

The issue seemed so big, but 350.org explained it in such a way that I could get a handle on it. I helped organize a day of

action here in Red Lake. Beyond that, I didn't know what I could do except write, because that's what I was doing at the time. That's when I decided, much to my teenage daughters' surprise, to start blogging (at 350orbust.wordpress.com).

CM: Information about climate change abounds already. Why another blog?

Polle: When I started, there didn't seem to be a lot of mothers or parents standing up and saying this is going to be really bad for our kids. It really was something I had to do. Through blogging I've met a whole network of people.

CM: You blogged about the Heartland Institute, a prominent U.S. think tank that does not share your views. How did you feel when their lawyer sent you a threatening letter?

Polle: It was a little alarming.

CM: Has anything come of it?

Polle: No.

CM: Besides blogging, what else do you do?

Polle: I am the regional coordinator for Citizens Climate Lobby Canada. I'm involved in the “Transition Town” group in our community (part of an international movement to transition away from unsustainable levels of energy consumption). I've become involved in a local food group (which is part of the transitioning), and I'm working on a “Creation in Peril” event in Winnipeg on May 2.

CM: What have you and your family done to reduce your emissions?

Polle: I don't want to pretend that we are model citizens, but we have solar panels on our roof. We also have an electric scooter that we use in summer if we're not walking or riding a bike.

I didn't fly for a year, but then I realized this is a whole system problem and we have to change it at that level. Whether or not I fly is just not going to make that much difference.

CM: Why are you involved?

Polle: Really, it's being a mom that is my major motivation. I would like to see a habitable planet for my children and my future grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

CM: You are the daughter-in-law of a respected Mennonite theology professor and the wife of a respected physician. Do you feel that people respect what you do?

Polle: Well, I have certainly met with criticism, so I wouldn't say that everyone respects what I do.

CM: You have blog posts like “Is climate change God's will?” What's your message to climate nay-sayers?

Polle: I think that the biblical message is very clear that we are to be stewards of God's creation, and there's this great cartoon that says, “What if climate change is a big hoax and we created a better world for nothing?”

CM: How many parts per million are we at now?

Polle: 393. ☼



Cartoon by Joel Pett. To view more of his work, visit kentucky.com/joel-pett-cartoon.

A man of seasoned passion

New Native Ministry director brings conviction and pastoral touch

STORY AND PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Steve Heinrichs is hesitant to voice his dream; he doesn't want to sound naive. But the new director of Native Ministry for Mennonite Church Canada envisions white Mennonites, like himself, inviting aboriginal people into their living rooms on a regular basis right across the country. He would love to see every congregation develop a "living relationship" with aboriginals in their area.

"That's the dream, that's the prayer," he says, "that people would know the history of the place that they're living in and grapple with what that might mean for faithful discipleship in that context."

Heinrichs began his new position last August, taking over from Edith and Neil von Gunten, who retired after 40 years of ministry in aboriginal communities.

While the rather dated term "Native Ministry" suggests white people going to aboriginal communities to do church work, the program is primarily about building bridges of understanding and respect between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, or, to use Heinrichs' terms, between indigenous people and settlers. Heinrichs says MC Canada is exploring a new name for the program.

The call to this sort of work came relatively

recently for Heinrichs, who is 35. Growing up in Vancouver, he didn't have contact with aboriginal people. In his teens and into his 20s he came to see the gospel as oriented towards the margins of society, but didn't link this to aboriginal issues until his seminary instructors at Regent College, Vancouver, issued the call to "engage indigenous realities." Heinrichs grew in his sense that, if the church is to truly be the church, it "must be among the poor," and in the Canadian context this would bring it into close contact with indigenous people.

Then, part way into his studies, he and his wife, who had chosen to adopt a child, ended up welcoming a baby girl from the Sto:lo Nation into their family. Heinrichs felt that in order to be a good parent—and to be "faithful to her presence"—he needed to "know about her people." In her presence he heard a simple call: "This is a story you don't know, but need to know."

The heart of Heinrichs' work now is to extend this call to the rest of MC Canada: Discover the story of those indigenous people nearest them, and be faithful to their presence.

For Heinrichs, the path of discovery started at the local library after adopting their daughter six years ago and led eventually to men's breakfasts in northern B.C. Following his studies, Heinrichs explored pastoral ministry with MC B.C. He sought a placement that would allow him to "rub shoulders with indigenous peoples." That landed him and his family in Granisle, a village located 325 kilometres west of Prince George, and just down the road from Tachet, a community of the Lake Babine Nation. Heinrichs and his wife spent three years there, adopting another aboriginal girl and giving birth to a boy during that time.

Although the church he pastored was based in the non-aboriginal community, Heinrichs got to know most of the 130



Steve Heinrichs is the new director of Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry program, replacing Edith and Neill von Gunten, who retired last summer.

people on the first nation. He began to learn from them about the place and its history.

Men's breakfasts in the aboriginal community were particularly formative for him. Despite the deep struggles faced by many of the men, Heinrichs recalls "such a sense of life." He says the "lack of pretence" and the "willingness to cry and to pray together," that he experienced with

those men highlights a richness he has encountered in many indigenous contexts.

It is this sort of exchange, rooted in respect and understanding, that Heinrichs seeks to facilitate in his work. He does not pretend it is easy to learn indigenous stories—it will be disturbing and challenging—but he knows the "deep joy" that can result. He also sees it as a gospel

imperative, saying, "The gospel says you actually can't be church unless those dividing walls come down."

While Heinrichs speaks with conviction, he delivers his message not with a pointed finger but an easy smile and a gentle pastoral touch. Although he says he feels "sheepish" about his relative lack of experience, his passion is clearly a seasoned passion. ❧

MC Canada Native Ministry includes:

- **RELATIONSHIPS:** Networking and collaborating with aboriginal Mennonite churches, Mennonite area churches, Mennonite Central Committee, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the Manitoba Partnership Circles that connect southern Mennonite churches with northern communities.
- **RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS:** Fostering church engagement with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- **QUARTERLY MINI-MAGAZINE:** *Intotemak*.
- **FORTHCOMING BOOK:** *Dialogue on Creation and Land Justice*, with essays by indigenous and non-indigenous thinkers, including Tomson Highway, Ched Meyers, Sallie McFague, Waziyatawin and Chief Lawrence Hart. Due out in 2013.
- **CHURCH RESOURCES:** Director Steve Heinrichs, who is based in Winnipeg, welcomes questions and invitations from congregations.
- **CONTACT:** E-mail sheinrichs@mennonitechurch.ca or call toll-free 1-866-888-6785.

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ARTBEAT

Reading Mennonite novels as works of art

By DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
WATERLOO, ONT.

Although sailing troubled waters over the past 50 years, Mennonite novelists have taught Mennonite readers how to approach their texts with boldness and humility as “we learn more about ourselves through their works of art,” Paul Tiessen said last month in wrapping up a nine-week series of lectures by Mennonite writers at Conrad Grebel University College.

Tiessen, professor emeritus of English and film studies at nearby Wilfrid Laurier University, attempted to analyze the “structural relationships between individual identity and that of the Mennonite communities about which they write,” by looking at three different groups of readers: those who were against the themes presented, those who were in favour, and the marketers anxious to “maximize the stories” for the greatest impact.

Using Rudy Wiebe’s first and most famous novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (1962), and Miriam Toews’ later novels, *A Complicated Kindness* (2004) and *Irma Voth* (2011), Tiessen chronicled the reactions in the Mennonite Brethren community to Wiebe’s novel and showed how the protagonist Irma Voth in Toews’ novel came to a redemptive stance about her struggles in an Old Colony Mennonite community in Mexico.

At the outset of his talk, Tiessen credited Miriam Maust, who, 35 years ago, told him it was “time to bring Mennonite literature into the Mennonite consciousness, so as to not allow theologians and historians to dominate our thinking,” but he also, with some emotion, credited his wife, Hildi Froese Tiessen, the creator and moderator of the writers series, with bringing Mennonite writers to the forefront.

The first group—those “against”: primarily Mennonite Brethren and many “non-

PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE



Paul Tiessen, English and film studies prof at Wilfrid Laurier University.

readers”—were significantly traumatized with Wiebe’s telling of the story of a small Mennonite community in Coaldale, Alta. Although Wiebe was praised for his courage by the “English literary iconoclasts” in exposing the foibles of this strict, religiously controlled community, his own people were “deeply troubled,” according to Tiessen, who said it caused a “firestorm, deep trauma, a ruckus,” both in his home community and, indeed, in the entire Mennonite Brethren religious establishment.

It was something for which the young 28-year-old writer was not prepared, Tiessen said, resulting in his termination as editor of the denomination’s national publication, the *MB Herald*, and condemnation from pulpits and leaders who referred to it as “filth that plasters our young people with shame.”

On the other hand, several like-minded young people like Jack Dueck, revelling in the newfound relationship between “power and language,” aided and abetted Wiebe’s efforts by writing a column, “As I see it,” under the pen name of Petronius. And John Rempel, now teaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., was so gripped with Wiebe’s narrative

as a high school senior in Ontario, that he told his friends that finally “someone was audacious enough to confront the storyline we all grew up with.”

Finally, Tiessen said that marketers for the publishers could hardly contain their glee in commercializing a story and an iconoclastic novelist they described as a “young theologian who writes of prejudice and bigotry erupting to destroy the people of a small Canadian community.”

With this kind of “circus advertisement,” he asked if it was any wonder that the book was such a threat to Mennonites in a small prairie community. It became a cautionary tale and a “trouble spot” to the religious community when their story became a commodity and they were propositioned and eroticized to sell books.

Despite these “ragged, vehement and free-for-all forces that fed the firestorm,” Tiessen concluded that the story needed to be written to “tell us something about ourselves,” however painful it was for both the subjects and the readers.

Miriam Toews, coming along decades later and also writing about her Mennonite home community of Steinbach, Man., realized, Tiessen said, that she would “have to rid herself of her anger and the rigid moral codes with which she grew up.” While recognizing the “excruciatingly powerful forces of unforgiving fundamentalism that is unmoved by empathy and goodwill,” he said she processed all this in *A Complicated Kindness* through humour.

Quoting Margaret Loewen Reimer in an August 2004 *Canadian Mennonite* book review, Tiessen referenced a *Globe and Mail* interviewer who opened her piece with, “Who knew Mennonites could be so funny? It’s one thing to expect the followers of Menno Simons to produce heavyweight, serious writers such as Rudy Wiebe. But then there’s Miriam Toews.”

Through both Wiebe and Toews, Tiessen concluded, Mennonites have been taught to read these texts “with commitment and grace, recognizing both the limits and infinite horizons of a work of art—always something provisional, not absolute. . . . These are stories with multiple identities that stay in conversation with each other, whether alone or in community, responding and being responsible for each other.” ❧

FILM REVIEW

A great year for spiritual films

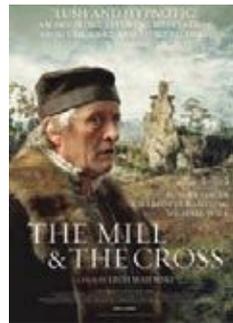
The Tree of Life.

Directed by Terrence Malick. Starring Sean Penn, Brad Pitt and Jessica Chastain.

The Mill and the Cross.

Directed by Lech Majewski. Starring Rutger Hauer and Charlotte Rampling.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN



My four favourite films of 2011 all had Christian themes, something that has certainly never happened before. Two of them—*Of Gods and Men* and *The Way*—were reviewed in *Canadian Mennonite* last year.

The other two, which are the subject of this review, will not appeal to audiences expecting a plot-driven narrative, action or even dialogue, all of which are kept to a minimum in *The Tree of Life* and *The Mill and the Cross*. But for audiences interested in exploring what film as inspiring poetic art is capable of, these films are not to be missed.

The Tree of Life uniquely combines theology, science and the meaning of human existence into a stunning visual and music-filled poem. The “story” is about Jack, a late middle-aged architect played by Sean Penn as an adult and by Hunter McCracken as a child. Looking out of his office window, Jack sees only cold and lifeless greed in the grandeur of the 21st century’s finest architectural achievements. Searching for something more—the wonder and meaning of life?—Jack reflects back on his days of growing up in small-town Texas with a father (Brad Pitt), who is both loving and tyrannical—a God of compassion and punishment?—and a mother who is gentle and forgiving.

The younger Jack is in those confusing years of adolescence when he both hates and adores his father, when he is jealous of his brothers, and capable of both cruelty and kindness towards them, when the world is full of wonder and endless questions but also of confusion and despair. I suspect there are many of us who can relate to this. In poetic form,

The Tree of Life captures this period of life magnificently.

The previous paragraph makes *The Tree of Life* sound like a drama about family life, but it is much more than that. This agonizingly slow-moving but gorgeous film manages to cover the entire history of life on earth, from the beginning—creation—of the universe to the day when we all meet again on some distant shore. And it does so from an apparently Christian viewpoint. It is a film about overcoming our natural tendencies and making grace central, about seeing life as responding to the needs of people around us, rather than to our own, about what it means to be human.

The Tree of Life has a number of references to the Book of Job, suggesting that it is asking why the world is such a confusing place, a place where the wonder and beauty of life are always forced to lie beside suffering, pain and tragedy, and receiving the answer that God’s beautiful and meaningful creation is beyond our ability to fully comprehend.

The Mill and the Cross is another gorgeous slow-moving film. It is based on a famous 1564 painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder called “The Way to Calvary,” in which we find Jesus carrying the cross in the midst of a procession to Golgotha.

Taking us back to the days when Bruegel created his masterpiece, the film depicts Bruegel (played by Rutger Hauer) explaining to his patron (played by Michael York) exactly why he painted it the way he did. “Can you really capture one moment in time?” the patron asks. Bruegel believes he can.

But to fully appreciate that captured

moment, we need to be introduced to the characters taking part in it, which is what this film attempts to do. Along the way, we discover that the story of Jesus and the cross are now set in 16th-century Flanders. The soldiers leading Jesus to Golgotha are Spanish and represent the Christian orthodoxy that is persecuting the heretics of Flemish Protestantism. Is *The Mill and the Cross* perhaps suggesting that if Jesus came to us in 2012 some defenders of Christian orthodoxy might be the first to want him crucified?

High atop a mountain of rock overlooking the procession stands the windmill. God, we discover, is the miller, and the film regularly shows us God’s reactions to the proceedings. We also discover why the figure of Jesus is lost in the centre of the painting, with everyone’s attention focused elsewhere.

The Mill and the Cross is like watching a painting come alive, with digital technology allowing the painting itself to serve as the background, often blended with real locations in an attempt to replicate the painting’s landscapes.

Both films are rated PG. *The Mill and the Cross* does contain some disturbing violence as well as a nude scene. ❧

Vic Thiessen is Mennonite Church Canada’s chief administrative officer and Canadian Mennonite’s regular film reviewer.

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young voices

Viral video doesn't represent Ugandans

Kony 2012, which aims to draw attention to warlord Joseph Kony, misses the mark for some of those affected

BY AMANDA THORSTEINSSON

Special to Young Voices

The first time Ugandan Stephen Owoni saw Invisible Children's online video, *Kony 2012*, he figured it was just another western advocacy video about Africa. He is used to seeing his country represented through the eyes of outsiders.

But it "blew my mind, and I couldn't believe it," he says after learning that the video—which aims to "make famous" a Ugandan warlord and bring him to justice—had captured the attention of millions of people around the world.

Invisible Children is an American advocacy organization originally founded in 2004 to raise awareness among North American youth and bring an end to the civil war in northern Uganda being waged by Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Its latest advocacy video, *Kony 2012*, with 112 million views over the course of six days in March, makes it the most viral online video in history.

However, many Ugandans are reacting critically.

"The truth is," says Owoni, "Kony did these things way back. This video is too late. It was needed 15 years back. People need to understand history before they begin speaking."

Kony and the LRA have not been in

northern Uganda since 2006, a point which the video does not draw out. Kony's army is now in remote areas of countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, southern Sudan and the Central African Republic. Experts are unclear as to the current size and strength of the army, but the LRA is now believed to number only around 200.

One of the strongest images in the video is that of "night commuters"—children walking each night from their home village into towns "protected" by the Ugandan army to avoid being abducted and forced to become child soldiers or sex slaves.

In reality, the "night commuters" pictured are now grown up. "It's misleading," says Owoni, a 26-year-old multimedia producer originally from northern Uganda who now lives in the capital of Kampala. "In Uganda, it's not about that anymore. People need resettlement and rehabilitation. [Invisible Children] are using people's misery to advance a cause. It's like rubbing salt in a wound."

Invisible Children posted a rebuttal to such criticisms on its website: "In our quest to garner wide public support of nuanced policy, Invisible Children has sought to explain the conflict in an easily

PHOTO BY ROSS W. MUIR



'Night commuters' trek into Gulu, a town in northern Uganda, for protection from the Lord's Resistance Army in 2004.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHEN OWONI



Stephen Owoni, left, with his brothers Daniel Omara and Ben Ogwal, visits a memorial in 2010 for 40 people killed by the Lord's Resistance Army on his grandmother's compound.

'Every day, even 10 years later, there are parents who long to hug their kid. They still long for the day their kid will come home.'

(Stephen Owoni)

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID OTIM



David Otim is the manager for Mennonite Central Committee's Ugandan programs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHEN OWONI



Stephen Owoni is multimedia producer originally from the northern Ugandan town of Lira.

understandable format. The film is a first entry point to this conflict for many, and the organization provides several ways for our supporters to go deeper in learning about the make-up of the LRA and the history of the conflict.”

But many Ugandans feel like the video doesn't make their voices and stories heard. “Ask any Northerner, and the first thing they say they want is dialogue,” says Owoni. “Every day, even 10 years later, there are parents who long to hug their kid. They still long for the day their kid will come home.”

If people want to help Northern Uganda, “they should support family reconciliation and rehabilitation, not open up wounds of trauma,” he says.

David Otim, 31, is the manager for Mennonite Central Committee's Ugandan programs. In 2003, the LRA attacked his home region of Teso while he was at university in Kampala. The LRA based its operations out of his family's home for three weeks, and later burned it to the ground.

“A few days after its release,” says Otim,

“someone took the *Kony 2012* video to screen for the people of northern Uganda in Lira Town. The organizers wanted to give more people—whom the movie is about—a chance to watch. On seeing the movie, the viewers [mostly youths] got very angry at what they were watching. One youth was heard shouting, ‘Why do you make Kony famous? He is already behind us. They are just making money using our misery.’”

Although he is not comfortable with the overall message of *Kony 2012*, Owoni doesn't believe the video is beyond redemption. “There are pros and cons,” he says. “I love the opening statements: that human beings are worthy of peace, and everybody can play a role.”

Nevertheless, the overall effect of *Kony 2012* for Owoni boils down to another western attempt to frame the African story “as a story of AIDS and war. Yeah, those things are there, but it's not the whole thing. The image of Uganda is tainted. I love my country. It breaks my heart that all I ever see on CNN and foreign news are these bad things.” ❧

VIEWPOINT

Knowledge and uncertainty

BY KIRSTEN HAMM

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



One Sunday morning I was sitting in the pew trying to pay attention and think critically about the sermon I was listening to, and my mind started to wander. As the sermon moved to the topic of interpreting a parable in Mark 2, I caught myself thinking that I knew this already, that I understood the parable and the interpretation, and could learn nothing new about it. As soon as this thought entered my mind, I knew it was wrong, not just theologically but literally as well. And yet if I thought I knew nothing, that would

not be right either.

There is a tension that is created when you know enough to know that you hardly know anything at all. In a weird way, I enjoy this paradoxical living. But I do not envy those who preach, those who have the courage to speak into a microphone and say something about this paradox while living and breathing it at the same time. Preachers often have to walk the line between knowing and being uncertain.

We, the people of God, have been given a wonderful book that is 100

percent ours, and yet it was not written for us in the 21st century. We have the joy and the challenge of interpreting something that was written for a people who lived thousands of years ago. Some truths are transcendent; they are timeless and there is nothing context can do to change that. But where do we draw those lines? And who are we to say that we know where to draw them?

The Naked Now by Richard Rohr describes God as both “the solid foundation we build upon and the utter abyss we find ourselves lost in.” The poet Minnie Louise Haskins wrote, “Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.” Darkness being safer than light, an abyss that is our foundation, and we wonder that the disciples had trouble understanding what Jesus was saying!

I spent a summer as an intern at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, B.C., where I learned many things. I learned that if you have five or 10 people preaching on the same text, you will have five or 10 completely different sermons.

I learned that you can pick apart a passage word for word, but you have to be ready to see that in the next gospel, or in another translation of the Bible, the same logic might not apply. I learned that the best you can do on any given day is your best, and that your best will look different every day.

Congregations are like people; they live and breathe and grow together. I believe

it is the job of the leaders of our churches to understand this and be able to go to Scripture on behalf of their congregants and present their findings, whatever they might be.

That is the best they can do. I can preach a sermon that I think is full of wisdom and profound truth, and someone might think it makes no sense. I can preach a sermon that I threw together in an hour or two, and have someone tell me it was exactly what they needed to hear. All preachers can do is their best for their congregation and hope and pray that they have done something—said something—that will awaken the Spirit within.

Preachers are at God’s mercy, maybe even more so than the rest of us everyday laypeople. Preachers have to understand grace, and this tension between knowledge and uncertainty, because they have to live in it.

As people of God, we know that we have something good, that we have something to say. And yet we know that there is so much we will never be able to understand.

As a young person trying to find my place in the church, this is a tricky thing to come to terms with, but I think the first step is realizing that there will never be a neat and tidy resolution. The ends do not meet, they are frayed and uneven, but that is where God meets us. God fills the spaces of uncertainty that he has created, and invites us to meet him there. All we can do is our best. ☸

The image shows a screenshot of the Canadian Mennonite website. The header features the title "CANADIAN MENNONITE" in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background. To the right of the title are several navigation links: "About", "Contact", "Submissions", "Subscriptions", "Editorial/Ad Calendar", and "Donate". Below these links is a search bar with a "Search" button. A secondary navigation bar contains links for "Articles", "Blogs", "Classifieds", "Yellow Pages", "Church Events Calendar", and "Past Issues". Below the website header, there is a white box with a dark blue border containing the text: "Canadian Mennonite is now on Facebook" in a large, bold, black font, followed by "Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite" in a smaller black font, with a small Facebook logo icon to the left of the text.

Jesus is the peace that matters

Peace-it-Together brings youths together from across Canada

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor
WINNIPEG

"Find us empty and wandering, we the lost and the least. Find us in the wilderness and fill us with your feast." (From "Fill us with your Feast" by Phil Campbell-Enns.)



PITers break up into small groups to discuss the worship session.

When Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, to jump from a ledge and to worship him, it was a temptation for Jesus to have control in a chaotic situation.

People face similar temptations every day. This was the lesson taught at Peace-it-Together (PIT), a youth conference that took place at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg, from March 9 to 11, that included presentations by CMU faculty members Kenton Lobe, an international development studies instructor; Justin Neufeld, a lecturer in philosophy; and Irma Fast Dueck, an assistant professor of practical theology, who spoke on the theme, "Jesus, the peace that matters."

Lobe took a hard look at the time Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting in Matthew 4. "The wilderness is a place to encounter all that is not our frenzied daily living," he said. "Fasting was, and is, a way of becoming centred around God."

But 40 days without food in the desert must have been unbearable. Enter the devil when Jesus is at his weakest, to tempt him to break his fast.

According to Lobe, Christians these days need a little perspective on food. "Sometimes I wonder if we need to take a collective walk in the wilderness to think of bread as more than food," he said. "It's a crisis of place that we don't know what we're eating or where it's from."

Sometimes people even have an inability to give thanks for the food on their plates. Meanwhile, there are food riots from Haiti to Egypt and the Philippines, and there is acute hunger in East and West Africa.

Neufeld focused on the second temptation, in which Jesus was tempted to jump off a cliff. He drew on stories of

Achilles, who was "almost god-like," and John McCain, a former U.S. presidential candidate and a former prisoner of war in Vietnam, to show the difference between pride and arrogance and integrity and goodness.

"We are called to prove our integrity and goodness, and to save others from turning to the wolves in the world," he said, pointing to McCain's example when he refused to abandon his colleagues in the prison when he had the opportunity to do so.

Finally, Fast Dueck focused on the third temptation to be a ruler of all of the kingdoms. She talked about how people often feel tempted to have control in chaotic situations, but, in this case, Jesus said no to control, knowing God had control of the situation. "In Jesus, God descends to remind us again of his humanity, that he suffers like you and I, and that he's tempted like you and I," Fast Dueck said.

Emily Hamm, 16, who attends Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, said PIT was an opportunity to learn "how temptation affects the way we live our lives and how much of what we do is controlled by material possessions."

Naomi Epp, 16, from Hamilton Mennonite Church, Ont., said she felt encouraged being at PIT, knowing "we are learning how to work together to make peace." She also related to the idea that "technology can take us away from following God. It can be so addicting and can take you away from your faith."

PIT also featured choir performances; *Gadfly*, a drama by Theatre of the Beat; a variety night featuring CMU students performing musical acts, comedies and a dance; and workshops. ❧

Calendar

British Columbia

April 27-29: Junior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

May 5: MC B.C. Women's Inspirational Day at Bethel Mennonite Church, Langley.

Alberta

May 5: Camp Valaqua work day. Help the camp get ready for the summer. For more information, call 403-637-2510.

May 9-12: Theological studies at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary. Speaker: Perry Yoder, professor emeritus of Old Testament studies at AMBS. For more information, contact Tim Wiebe-Neufeld at 780-436-3431 or twimmmmer@aol.com.

May 26-27: Mennonite Women Alberta spring retreat at Sunny Side Retreat Centre, Sylvan Lake, from noon till noon. Speaker: Lee Klaassen. Theme: "Balancing our lives." For more information, call Ev Buhr, First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, at 780-436-3431.

Saskatchewan

April 17: MC Saskatchewan pastors gathering at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

April 24: RJC/CMU choir concert at Osler Mennonite, at 7 p.m.

April 28: Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

May 16: RJC choir spring concert, at 7:30 p.m.

May 22-25: MC Saskatchewan continuing education course at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

May 26: RJC fundraising golf tournament, at Valley Regional Park.

Manitoba

April 21: MCI, Gretna, fundraising supper, "God's kingdom: Here and abroad," 6 p.m.

April 29: Eden Foundation fundraising concert, "Harmony for Hope," with the Eastman Male Choir and the Winkler Community Male Choir, at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at

7:30 p.m.

May 1: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising banquet, at the Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m.

Ontario

April 10: MSCU 48th annual general meeting, "Stories of Peace," at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7. Featuring 2011 Peace in Action Essay Award recipient, Rebekah Winter, along with stories from PeaceWorks and Healing Streams.

April 14: MC Eastern Canada youth Bible quizzing; at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock.

April 16: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale promotion dinner at Bingeman's, Kitchener, 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker: Phil Enns, returned MCC worker, Indonesia. For tickets call 519-745-8458.

April 20: Menno Youth Singers present a concert and coffeehouse at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 7 p.m.

April 20: Meat canner fundraising ham dinner at Hamilton Mennonite Church, from 5 to 7 p.m. Vegetarian alternative available. Entertainment by Hope Rising. For tickets, call 905-528-3607 or e-mail hmc@cogeco.net.

April 21: Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Spring Enrichment Day, at Zurich Mennonite Church, from 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Theme: "God's extravagant grace." Speaker: Janine Schultz. To register, call Florence Jantzi at 519-669-4356 by April 10.

April 21: Mennonite Coalition of Refugee Support is celebrating 25 years of service to refugee claimants in Waterloo Region with a fundraising banquet, at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 6 p.m. For more information, call 519-571-1912 or visit www.mcrs.ca/25years.

April 27-28: Engaged workshop (affiliated with the Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter), at Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank. For more information, or to register,

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contact Denise Bender at 519-656-2005. Advance registration is required.
April 27-28: MC Eastern Canada

annual church gathering; Leamington.
May 5: Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp hosts its 17th annual road

hockey tournament. Puck drops at 7:30 a.m. Teams of four to six players are welcome. For more information, call Jeff at 519-272-2261 or e-mail roadhockey@gmail.com.

May 5: Shalom Counselling Services annual fundraising breakfast, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 8:30 a.m. Speaker: Michael Wilson, mental health advocate, and former MP and federal finance minister. Topic: "Mental illness: The cost of doing nothing."

May 5,6: Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their annual spring concert, "Peace in our Time"; (5) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 8 p.m.; (6) at UMEI in Leamington, at 3 p.m. Tickets are available in advance from choir members, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, or UMEI by calling 519-326-7448.

May 6: Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir presents its 45th-anniversary concert, "United in Song," at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more information, e-mail imcc.conductor@rogers.com

May 6: Pax Christi Chorale's 25th anniversary gala concert featuring Elgar's *The Kingdom*, at Koerner Hall, Toronto; pre-concert chat at 2 p.m.,

concert at 3 p.m. With the Youth Choir, full orchestra and soloists. For tickets, visit paxchristichorale.org/tickets.

May 7: Spring seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

May 12: "Spring Fling" with Menno Youth Singers, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 8 p.m.

United States

May 7-June 15: Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., hosts its Summer Peacebuilding Institute, specializing in intensive short-term courses for training or master's-level credit in humanitarian action, development, restorative justice, psychosocial trauma and organizational leadership. For more information, or to register, visit emu.edu/spi or call 540-432-4295.

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.

UpComing

CMU study tour offers view of life 'deep down on the edge'

What does Christianity look like 'deep down on the edge' of today's contemporary society? How are innovative ministries reaching out to people in modern society? On this summer's Deep Down on the Edge Study Tour across the United Kingdom, led by Irma Fast Dueck, professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite University, participants will be given the chance to explore these questions while discovering the fierce physical landscape of the isle of Iona, visiting urban ministries in Glasgow and London, and attending the 37-year-old Christian arts festival in Cheltenham, England. The study tour runs from Aug. 24 to Sept. 8, and is open to undergraduate students, graduate students, and auditing participants. The study tour begins at the Greenbelt Christian Arts Festival in Cheltenham, which hosts a rich program of music, visual and performing arts, comedy and discussions on spirituality. The tour will end on the Isle of Iona, Scotland, where students will be given an opportunity to explore Celtic Christianity, a faith hammered out on the margins of Britain and Europe and on the edges of Christendom. For tour information, e-mail Fast Dueck at ifdueck@cmu.ca.

—Canadian Mennonite University

Gather 'Round curriculum co-sponsors major children's conference

The Gather 'Round curriculum project is co-sponsoring an innovative conference on "Children, youth and a new kind of Christianity," to take place in Washington, D.C., from May 7 to 10. Dave Csinos, the founder of the conference, believes that new movements within Christianity have much to offer young people, but too often lack the resources they need to develop innovative ministries with them. He issued a call to those who are searching for a new kind of Christianity, inviting them to come together and generate new ideas and practices for new generations. Topics discussed will include: cultivating young public theologians; teaching young people about violence in the Bible and the world; faith development in interfaith contexts; sexuality and youth ministry; educating young people about social justice; innovative ideas for ministry; and teaching peace to children. Keynote presentations will be by Brian McLaren, John Westerhoff, Ivy Beckwith and Almeda Wright. For more information about the conference, or to register, visit children-youth.com.

—MennoMedia

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

 **CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:

Development Associate | FT

Accounting Assistant | FT

Enrolment Counsellor | FT

Enrolment Counsellor | 12 wks
September 10 to November 30

Outtown Program Manager | FT

More information:

<http://www.cmu.ca/employment.html>

Call 204.487.3300 or Email hrdirector@cmu.ca



Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba is seeking to fill the position of **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**. This full-time, salaried position provides overall leadership to the work of MCC in Manitoba, and bears responsibility for upholding and implementing vision, purpose and values of MCC as set by the MCC Manitoba Board of Directors. A detailed job description is available at <http://mcc.org/serve>.

Application deadline is Monday, April 30. Please send Resume and Cover Letter to Ilda da Silva Storie at ildadasilvastorie@mennonitecc.ca.

MCC is a relief, service and peace agency of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.



Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks an admissions counselor either half-time or full-time to recruit students and build relationships with church leaders and alumni. This person will travel, maintain prospect database and ensure regular communication with prospects.

Qualifications include bachelor's degree (graduate degree preferred), background in theological education, strong communication skills and affinity for the Anabaptist faith.

Send letter, resume and references by April 16 to Bob Rosa, director of enrollment, brosa@ambs.edu; 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517. Full job description available at www.ambs.edu/employment.

Employment Opportunities:

Bethany College is seeking passionate, innovative and enthusiastic people to join our team. We welcome applications for the following positions: » **Donor Relations Field Representative**

» **Athletics Director**

» **Ministry Arts Director**

For information on these employment opportunities

or to respond, please visit: www.bethany.sk.ca

or contact: Human Resources, Bethany College

Box 160 Hepburn SK S0K 1Z0

Phone: 1.866.772.2175 email: info@bethany.sk.ca



Bethany College, an evangelical Anabaptist college, is a biblical learning community with an emphasis on active, informed discipleship. Our mission is to "nurture disciples, and train leaders to serve." We seek to create a community of learning in which instruction, modeling, and mutual accountability can result in transformed lives both intellectually and spiritually.



Communitas
SUPPORTIVE CARE SOCIETY

ACCOUNTANT

Accountant needed for a full-time, 40 hour/week position working as a member of the accounting team providing day-to-day management and oversight to all accounting and payroll related aspects of the organization at the Communitas office in Abbotsford. All applicants must have prior accounting experience in the non-profit sector and an accounting designation (e.g. CMA, CGA, CA). Position starts September 2012. Applicants must submit an application on our website at www.CommunitasCare.com. In addition, resumes can be sent to:

Layne Bieber,
HR Recruitment & Retention Coordinator,
Email: hr@CommunitasCare.com or Fax: 604.850.2634

Communitas is a non-profit, faith-based social services agency. We provide various resources to persons living and dealing with mental, physical and/or emotional disabilities. We are advocates on behalf of those we serve.



Mennonite Church
Eastern
Canada

Eglise
Mennonite
de l'Est
du Canada

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES & EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT - MATERNITY LEAVE

MCEC invites applications for a three-quarter time position (28 hours/week) with attractive benefits, beginning May 16, 2012 for a one-year maternity leave. The applicant will be committed to realizing MCEC's mission of extending the peace of Jesus Christ: making disciples, growing congregations, forming leaders.

Working with the Administrative Team, this person will provide administrative support to the Congregational Ministries Minister and supplemental support to the Executive Minister.

The ideal candidate will:

- Demonstrate ability to work in a team setting
- Demonstrate ability to lead project-specific volunteer teams
- Be creative and resourceful
- Have excellent communication and organizational skills
- Possess strong relational skills, being sensitive to MCEC's cultural and theological diversity
- Be proficient working in the Microsoft Office suite of programs
- Hold membership in, and be accountable to, an MCEC congregation
- Facility in the French language an asset

APPLICATIONS (with resume and references), inquiries or nominations by April 15 to:

David T. Martin, Executive Minister
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Phone: 519-650-3806 ext. 113 or 1-800-206-9356
E-mail: dmartin@mcec.ca • Job description: www.mcec.ca

Travel

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Coming to the city nearest you

BY CAROL PENNER

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you.
Jesus comes to the gate, to the synagogue, to houses prepared for wedding parties,
to the pools where people wait to be healed, to the temple where lambs are sold,
to gardens, beautiful in the moonlight. He comes to the governor's palace.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you,
to new subdivisions and trailer parks, to penthouses and basement apartments,
to the factory, the hospital and the Cineplex, to the big-box outlet centre and to churches,
with the same old same old message, unchanged from the beginning of time.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you, with his good news and
Hope erupts! Joy springs forth! The very stones cry out,
"Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"
The crowds jostle and push, they can't get close enough!
People running alongside flinging down their coats before him!
Jesus, the parade marshal, waving, smiling, the paparazzi elbow for room,
looking for that perfect picture for the headline, "The man who would be king!"

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you, and gets the red carpet treatment.
Children waving real palm branches from the florist,
silk palm branches from Wal-mart, palms made from green construction paper.
Hosannas ringing in churches, chapels, cathedrals, in monasteries, basilicas and tent-meetings.
King Jesus, honoured in a thousand hymns in Canada, Cameroon, Calcutta and Canberra.
We love this great big powerful "capital K" King Jesus
coming in glory and splendour and majesty and awe and power and might.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you.
Kingly, he takes a towel and washes feet.
With majesty, he serves bread and wine.
With honour, he prays all night.
With power, he puts on chains.
Jesus, king of all creation, appears in state,
in the eyes of the prisoner, the AIDS orphan, the crack addict,
asking for one cup of cold water,
one coat shared with someone who has none,
one heart, yours,
and a second mile.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem, the city nearest you.
Can you see him?