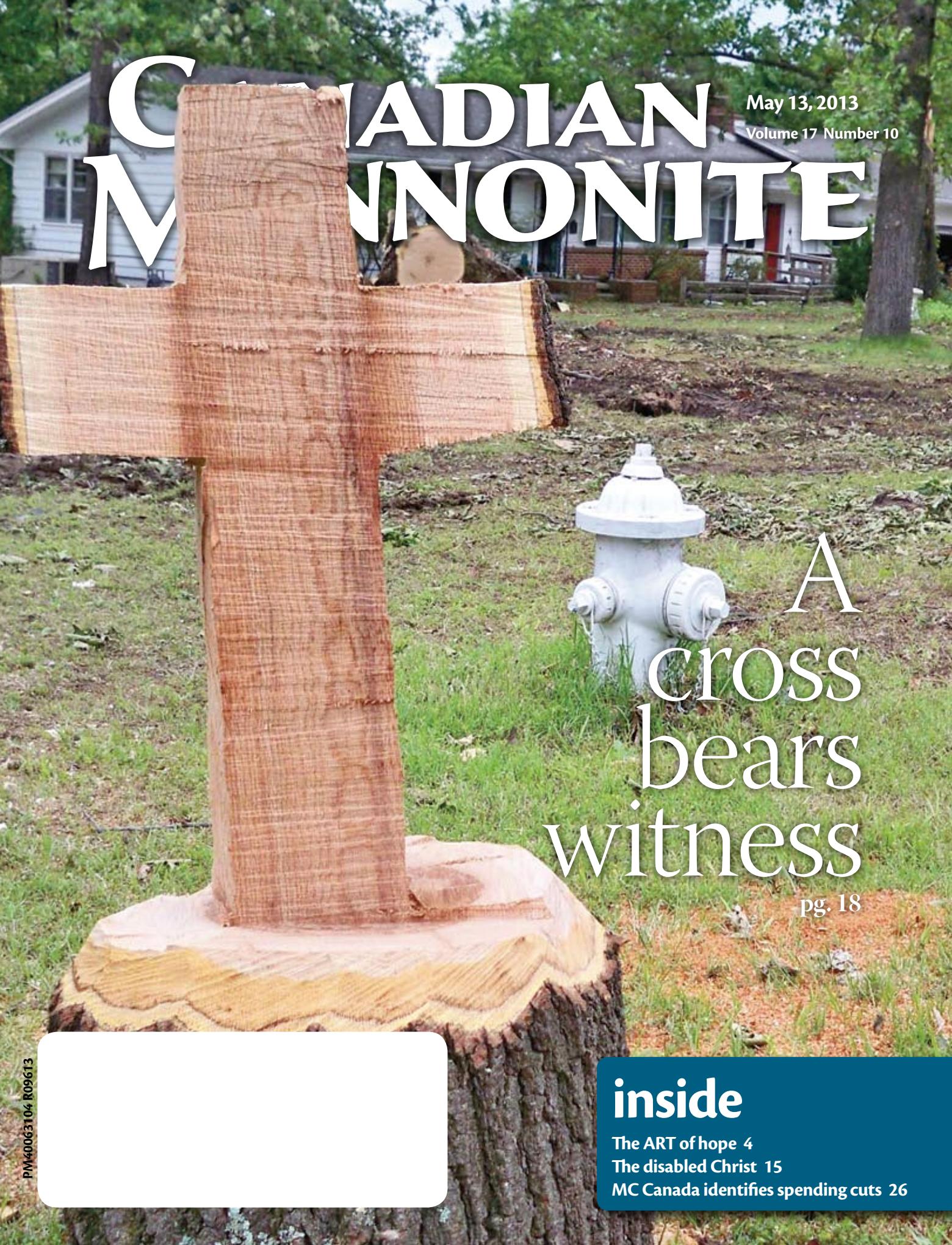


# CANADIAN Mennonite

May 13, 2013

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## EDITORIAL

# Sabbath

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

I turned off the radio en route to my destination at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Guelph, Ont. A shooting in Toronto, a bombing in Boston, political chicanery in Ottawa—all were short-circuiting my gradual descent into solace. The noise was drowning my need for silence, a yearning for an uncluttered world.

This was the beginning of an inward spiritual journey graciously provided for me by the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board, a month-long sabbath intended to restore my inner self, replenish my diminishing energy drained by deadlines, my dwindling resolve to help unify a diverse community of faith struggling with its identity, transitioning from the enduring model of the old “print” media to a new untested “electronic” one, keeping the generations on the same page.

The wind-down took awhile. The tools of my craft refused to be quieted. The cell phone vibrated in its holster. The MacBook beckoned me through force of habit. Paco Bell, my ringtone, shattered the silence of the main lobby. This was, after all, a silent retreat, but at first the silence was intimidating, deafening and unwelcome. After some wrestling with the quietness, my spirits opened the door to this golden solitude.

I talked to myself in this first journal entry of free verse: “Gradually my world is changing, / Slowly transformed by sheer determination / Not to let the

dissonant clutter of a habitual state of mind / Contaminate the ushering in of a peaceful harmony.”

As the week wore on, I seemed to be transported into a world where strangers communicated not with words, but with smiles, frowns or just blank stares; where a new intimacy with nature through hikes in the woods, fields and over streams connected me to the orchestral splendour of the bird-songs, the darting of the squirrels, the scuffing of the groundhog, the whistling of the winds in the tall pines, the bursting of spring in the bud and first flowers of the Loyola House garden.

A walk in the labyrinth before lunch gave me new perspective on time and mortality. The cosmos, 13 billion years old, the crunchy green grass growing in soil 4.5 billion years old, makes me just a speck in the scheme of things, my search for meaning perhaps only a meandering journey. Does the God of this vast creation view my efforts as enriching or robbing, value added or toll taken? Have I created a legacy or just a memoir?

Quiet moments of contemplation took me to the depths of my inner self, where demons denied are confronted and chastened, making room for angels to fill with blessing and peace, scattering the curse that holds faith hostage, replacing with serenity the anxiety that too often prevails in human exchanges.

The inspiration of writers outside my

parochial purview gave me new vision, fresh perspective on the need for sabbath on an ongoing basis, something one of my own board members, Tim Reimer, reinforced with his call for *ora et labora* (prayer and work) in his welcome back. With new eyes, I see the need to offset my embedded work ethic with a new spiritual discipline already named in Leviticus 25:3-7, where sabbath was commanded not only for the Israelites, but for the land, the labourers and the animals.

Observant Jews, writes Barbara Brown Taylor in *An Altar in the World*, light two candles every Shabbat—the first announcing “made in God’s image, you too shall rest,” the second announcing “made in God’s image, you too are free,” remembering, of course, the exodus from Egypt after being delivered from Pharaoh’s bondage.

“By interrupting our economically sanctioned social order every week,” writes Taylor, “Sabbath suspends our subtle and not so subtle ways of dominating one another on a regular basis. Because our work is so often how we both rank and rule over one another, resting from it gives us a rest from our own pecking orders as well.”

This silent retreat also brought home to me the need to incorporate solitude and poetry for the rest of the journey, that time of life that Richard Rohr describes in *Falling Upward* as “the second half,” engaging in “writing the commentary on the text” created in the first half of life. “Life has stimulated us enough, and now we have to process and integrate it, however unconsciously. Silence and poetry start being our more natural voice and our more beautiful ear on stage.”

Amen.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**This cross was carved out of a downed tree in the first weeks of clean-up after a tornado struck Joplin, Mo., on May 22, 2011. At a celebration to commemorate two year's of rebuilding efforts, Kevin King, executive director of Mennonite Disaster Service, said of the carving, 'It is now weathered and cracked from the drying sun, proclaiming the injury of the past.' See Cover Story on page 18.**

PHOTO: MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

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**GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD FEATURE**

# The ART of hope

*Ending poverty almost by accident*

BY DEREK COOK

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



*Perhaps the way to think about poverty differently is to not think about poverty at all. Perhaps, instead of thinking about the poor, we need to think about every one of us.*

**T**he poor will be with you always.” That is the message that seems to have been so frequently taken away from the gospel when we talk about poverty. That’s not a very encouraging message to someone who has been tasked with coming up with a way to end it.

But it’s true, the poor have seemingly been with us always. And, despite the fact that we have been “fighting” poverty in Canada for decades, the problem seems to just be getting worse, not better. In 1987, the House of Commons voted to end child poverty by the year 2000, yet the number of children living in poverty is larger now than it was even then. So what are we to do?

Albert Einstein said that the definition of insanity is to continue to do the same thing and expect a different result. Perhaps the way to begin is to think about poverty in a very different way. Perhaps the way to think about poverty differently is to not think about poverty at all. Perhaps, instead of thinking about the poor, we need to think about every one of us.

Is it possible that the same things that produce material poverty in some are the things that are producing a mental, physical and spiritual poverty that affects us all? Let me explore this idea and discuss the three pillars that we at the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative have come to believe are important to a society without poverty: Abundance, Resilience and Trust.

## **Abundance**

*“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matthew 6:26).*

PHOTOS BY ROSS W. MUIR



I think we're all familiar with this verse; so familiar, perhaps, that we might not recognize how radical and contradictory it is to most of our current social, economic and political systems. Let me begin by challenging you to consider how utterly contradictory this statement is to some fundamental beliefs that inform our world.

- **THERE'S ONLY** so much to go around

Our economy operates on a notion that we probably all understand at some level: Our resources are scarce, yet our wants and needs unlimited. But Matthew turns this entire idea on its head. What we hear Jesus saying is exactly the opposite: Our wants and needs are, in fact, quite limited, and our resources unlimited.

Unlimited resources? Yes, if we truly believe that God provides for creation and everything ultimately comes from God. If we accept this radical notion, it leads us to a couple of other conclusions.

- **RETAIL THERAPY**

Unlimited resources, okay, but "limited wants and needs?" In our consumer

culture, "shopping" has become a cultural, almost "moral" good. We hear daily the concerns about "consumer confidence," and our social and economic health are based on our ability and desire to consume. The market also preaches the doctrine that our consumer choices are always right, as they drive the economy. We engage in "retail therapy" and "recreational shopping."

Our ability to "find the best price" is elevated to almost heroic status, without regard to how or where our products are produced, or to their impact on our society or environment, while those who can't consume get left behind. Our need to maintain our status as consumers leaves us working long hours, at the expense of family and community, and keep us hopelessly in debt. But what Jesus says clearly here is that our value as people is not tied in any way to our success as consumers. How then should we value ourselves, and, more importantly, others?

- **I DID** it myself

Lastly, our society prizes

*(Continued on page 6)*



*The market also preaches the doctrine that our consumer choices are always right, as they drive the economy.*

**(Continued from page 5)**

independence. The self-made man is held up as the ideal. Self-reliance is touted as a worthy goal, and is reflected in much of our public policies.

But what we hear in this text is that nobody has done it by themselves, as all things ultimately come from God. In the end, we own nothing, being mere stewards of the gifts we have been trusted with, as people deeply reliant on God and each other. And it is in these gifts each of us hold that we find abundance and the confidence to assert that we have, in fact, been provided for and that there is enough for all.

### Resilience

But what does this have to do with poverty? If, in fact, we are not independent, but humbly dependent on God and each other, then we exist in community, and it is in community that we discover resilience, a resilience that protects and sustains us. Poverty exists where this resilience is absent.

- **WHAT IS** poverty?

To answer this question, we must reflect on who is poor. Throughout the Bible, the poor are referred to almost synonymously with the widow, the alien, the afflicted and the fatherless. What does it mean to be widowed, alien or fatherless? In biblical societies, it meant to be outside of the structures of society, it meant to be excluded from power and from the structures that sustained people.

If we think about Calgary—where I live—today, we find that things are not that dissimilar. Who makes up the ranks of the poor in Calgary? They include recent immigrants and temporary foreign workers, indigenous people, lone-parent families, people with disabilities or without families. In short, those who are outside of and excluded from our own structures of power and support.

- **WHAT ARE** we called to do?

The nature of poverty can also be discerned by what we are called to do about it.

*"Thus says the Lord of hosts: Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the*



*It might be easy to show charity to a person with a disability who has been rendered unable to work, but how about the addicted?*

*widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor" (Zechariah 7: 9-10).*

But what do these things mean? In order to understand this, we need to think about where poverty comes from. In my work with the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative, we focus on four sources of vulnerability: personal vulnerability (including our assets, choices and chance); life stages (dependence); disruptive events (disability, economic shock, migration); and systems (economic systems, discrimination, values).

- **MERCY**

The starting point of mercy is to recognize that we all share these vulnerabilities. We are called to forgive precisely because we are in need of forgiveness, and we are called to show mercy because we all could easily find ourselves in a situation of poverty because we are all vulnerable. Often it is just by chance, or grace, that our decisions have not had

life-altering effects.

- **COMPASSION**

The starting point of compassion is to recognize that we are all created by God, and God lives within each of us. Hence, Jesus' admonition, *"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me"* (Matthew 25:40).

Our society is very good at dividing us into categories. We talk about the poor as though they are a separate species. Once we label people, it is easy to see them as something other than us, and once we do that we can easily assign blame and deny them rights. It is easy to see the question of poverty as a competition between the poor and the non-poor, between us and them.

Even among the poor we have distinguished between the deserving and the undeserving. It might be easy to show charity to a person with a disability who has been rendered unable to work, but how about the addicted?

Charity is important, but the challenge with charity is that it reinforces the power relationships we have with others. It gives me the power to choose who is deserving and undeserving of my charity. However, God makes no such distinctions. We are created equally by God, are equally loved, and are equally in need of his grace. This understanding moves us beyond an us-and-them debate and towards our third admonition: to execute justice.

- **JUSTICE**

The Oxford Dictionary defines "just" as "constituted by law or by equity, grounded on right, lawful, rightful." Here are concepts of equity, fairness and also legal structure. In the Old Testament we see such structures embedded in Jewish law, a good example being the practice of Jubilee. How does this apply to the present day?

First, we have international law that provides such structure. Canada is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which states that people have a right to adequate income, housing, employment and other basic needs. This is important

because, when we talk about rights, we move beyond charity, beyond distinctions, beyond the deserving and the undeserving, and we recognize that we are all equal.

But beyond our obligations under international law, I think we are challenged to think about our own social, economic and political structures and systems. How do our choices as consumers affect the rights of others? What is the impact of our obsession with lower taxes on the most vulnerable? How are we actively including vulnerable people in our workplaces or in our churches? Are we sharing power and decision-making with those who are being affected by our decisions?

Only when we start to answer these questions do we begin to address the challenge of including the excluded: the alien, the widow, the fatherless and afflicted. When we have mercy, compassion and structures of justice, we come to realize a resilience that is present for everyone. This is the foundation of community and it is in community that we experience this resilience.

### **Trust**

This radical inclusion requires one further element: Trust. Communities cannot exist without this fundamental building block. Trust has two aspects:

#### • TRUST IN each other

We need to trust each other in so many ways. We must trust each other and our systems to be there to support us when needed. But we need a deeper level of trust as well.

When we share resources, we do so trusting that the people we are sharing them with actually know what is best for them, and we give them the power to act accordingly. And at an even deeper level, when we come to share power and include new voices in our decisions, we place our trust radically in the hands of others.

We ultimately become vulnerable in order to be resilient. Doing so moves us beyond distinctions of us and them, poor and non-poor, and recognizes us all as neighbours, citizens and children

of God.

#### • TRUST IN God

But we have one final element of trust. And this, as people of faith, is our trust in God, which brings us back to our beginning principle of abundance.

To return to our opening text in

*[W]e have one final element of trust. And this, as people of faith, is our trust in God, which brings us back to our beginning principle of abundance.*

Matthew, Jesus admonishes us: “[D]o not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or, ‘What shall we drink?’ ‘What shall we wear?’ For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.”

If we believe that all things come from God and that God provides for us, if we show mercy and compassion, if we build a just society with equitable structures that recognize our dignity and rights, and if we place our trust radically in God and each other, does this not begin to resemble the kingdom of God?

In our poverty reduction work, we are

building on our faith in: Abundance (that we have been provided for and there is enough for all); Resilience (that we can build a strong community through both our individual actions as well as just and equitable structures and systems); and Trust (that we have the capacity to trust and share power with each other as

citizens of equal dignity and worth).

If we focus first on these three things, the rest just may be added unto us. If we build a city where we wisely use the abundance we have been given, where our relationships in community are strong and our systems are just, and if we trust each other enough to include everyone in our lives and decisions, we will have built a city that works for every one of us. And we might just have done something about poverty, too. Almost by accident. ≈

Derek Cook is executive director of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative and a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary.

### For discussion

1. How big is the problem of poverty in your community? What local initiatives have tried to reduce poverty? Have they been successful? What circumstances lead to high levels of poverty? Do you have a sense of hope that the problems of poverty can be overcome?
2. Derek Cook suggests that our current social, economic and political systems value consumerism and independence, and operate on the assumption that resources are limited. Do you agree? Are these values polar opposites to Jesus' description of God's kingdom? Is this how the church is called to be countercultural?
3. In what ways do our social structures and laws take advantage of vulnerable people? Do you agree with Cook that charity “reinforces the power relationships we have with others”? What social structures or laws would you change to make our Canadian society more just?
4. Why is trust necessary for a community to flourish? Does a trusting community naturally share its resources with all members of the community? How can we work at building strong communities that empower everyone to be resilient?

—BY BARB DRAPER

## 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.*

 **Where does the problem lie:  
With the people or the path?**

**RE: "SEX RESERVED** for heterosexual marriage partners" letter, April 1, page 10.

I am responding to Ernie Reesor, who wrote that sex is reserved for heterosexual partners within a marriage relationship. And he says that when people fail, as they inevitably do, this is where confession and repentance come in.

My question is this: If people try to follow a certain path and inevitably fail, is it not appropriate to wonder whether the problem is with the people or the path? It isn't obvious, is it, that it is definitely one or the other?

**DAVID WIEBE, WINNIPEG**

*David Wiebe is a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg.*

 **With God there is no 'stupid time'**

**RE: "LOVE YOUR** office administrator," April 1, page 22.

Having spent many years working within Mennonite organizations as a fellow office administrator, I felt called to share my opinion about the comment made by one of the administrators interviewed. When asked what she most dislikes about her job, she replied, "My dislike is going through the sanctuary and sharpening pencils, arranging hymnals, making sure every pew has the right number of hymnals.... It's stupid time."

I am the first to admit that the pleasure I find in

handling these tasks of orderliness is greater than it is for most. It is a personality trait that not everyone possesses or appreciates. However, I am surprised when others do not work at finding joy and fulfilment in every assignment they are entrusted to carry out. That the sentence, "It's stupid time," was used saddens me, knowing that such a duty is viewed this way.

But I was also moved to an uncomfortable disappointment that the writer chose to include those three words in the article. Surely, the quote could have ended without them. I am most fearful that this otherwise worthy article has brought offence to all others who take on such jobs with attentiveness and a sense of pride. I would never have considered these little things to be deemed unworthy or mindless. It takes a keen eye of thoroughness and diligence. It also takes a humble servant to find meaning in all of his or her varied duties.

So, to everyone who arranges hymnals and sharpens pencils, or completes any other less noticed, underappreciated chore, I applaud you and thank you for all that you do with all your heart, soul and mind!

**LAURIE YANTZI , NEW HAMBURG, ONT.**

 **Church needs to 'balance'  
Palestinian, Israeli interests**

**RE: "NO BUSINESS** trying to be 'balanced,' March 18, page 13.

This column has given me cause for concern. While I fully agree that the situation in Palestine is dire, and that deep and honest changes need to occur, it is my conviction that the Mennonite church is doing more harm than good.

There is sincere peace work happening on both sides of the wall. There are believers in Jesus the Messiah who are Jewish Israeli citizens, and they have done a great deal of work connecting with Palestinian Christians—and vice versa. But the article asked us to choose the side of our "Christian brothers and sisters." Let me echo that plea and remind you all that those brothers and sisters aren't only Arab.

There are believing Jews, too. If you don't believe me, please consider initiatives like Musalaha, or even the book *Meet Me at the Olive Tree* by Julia Fisher. Messianic Jews are sharing with Arab Christians, and it is making a difference. It is sowing the seeds of real peace. Reconciliation is happening, but we aren't a part of it.

It grieved me to be treated with suspicion by Messianic Jews during my time in Israel because I am a Mennonite from Canada. Canadian Mennonites have gone as far as refusing to pray with these brothers and sisters out of solidarity with Palestinian "friends."

We make the wedge deeper.

My friend Usama in Bethlehem calls the Israelis his “friends in waiting.” He has been abducted and beaten by them. He suffers with the checkpoints. He chooses love. He does not call the Israelis “uncaring of God and human rights,” as Ray Friesen suggests in his column. Tell me, which is the peace witness? Tell me, what is “on the side of God”?

Our intervention stands in the way of peace because, instead of breaking down barriers, we reinforce the barriers which already exist. Many Palestinians want to be Israeli citizens. Surprising?

We have to believe that peace and reconciliation are possible, even if we dislike one of the parties involved. So long as our witness is adversarial, we make the work of organizations like Wi'am more difficult by stirring tensions and creating further animosity.

So long as our witness is adversarial, we have no authority to declare “God’s side.” God is not on a side. In his eyes, every Hamas militant, every Israeli Defence Force soldier, every Palestinian mother and every Israeli son is absolutely and entirely precious.

**CHAD DOELL, RABBIT LAKE, SASK.**

*Chad Doell is pastor of the Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Churches.*

### ✉ Homosexuality... ‘a reflection of the natural world’

**RE: LET’S TALK** about it,” Feb. 4 page 34.

Black and white, that seems to be the theme in this article. Thank God, our world continues to evolve. I believe it pleases God when two women or two men show their love and affection for one another, and choose to commit themselves to one another in the same as any heterosexual union.

Hopefully, our relationship with God is as intimate and committed as many homosexual relationships. I believe homosexuality is not a choice, but is definitely a reflection of the natural world. I’m sure we’ll all agree our natural world is quite complex and there are many unanswered questions.

**JOHN GASCHO, WARMAN, SASK.**

### ✉ Christians need both Scripture and the Spirit

**RE: “THE AGE** of Spirit,” April 1, page 17.

I appreciated Troy Watson’s encouragement to grow as people attuned to and led by the Holy Spirit. If we Christians neglect its crucial role in our lives, we cut ourselves off from Christ’s gift to the church. We

absolutely must be people of the Spirit!

However, by implicitly separating Scripture from the Holy Spirit, what Watson has given us is a dangerously false choice.

There are a number of things that I found ironic about his argument:

- **FIRST,** HE uses Bible passages to support his admonition to de-emphasize the Bible. It strikes me that he would not know about God’s plan in sending the Spirit—or the salvation of Jesus, or a great number of other things—if it were not for the very Scriptures he downplays.

- **SECOND,** IN a time when the Mennonite church is ailing and widespread biblical illiteracy is often noted, we have leaders encouraging us to turn away from the Bible in a search for renewal. In my view, this takes us further down the path of decline, not health.

- **THIRD,** WATSON’s language about the “Age of Belief” and the “Age of Spirit” is the language of Dispensationalism, which is a view that has led to some quite erratic and dangerous out-workings. Not that he wants to take us there, but movements that have emphasized the Spirit and disregarded biblical discernment have been attempted before, and they did not fare well.

We need not separate Scripture and Spirit, and emphasizing one in isolation from the other will do us no good. After all, if we believe the Bible is inspired, then the Spirit is behind the text, and it could not transform us without the Spirit’s work.

So let us be people of the Spirit, inflamed by God’s empowering presence within us, and let us also be people of the Bible, shaped and formed by God’s salvation narrative, and submitted to its teaching! We desperately need to be both!

**CRAIG THIESSEN, VANCOUVER**

### ✉ Hard to separate the Spirit from Scripture

**RE: “THE ‘AGE of ‘Spirit,’”** April 1, page 17.

I thank Troy Watson for sharing his quest and perspectives. He has offered our Sunday School class thoughts for discussion and, yes, debate.

I suspect that Harvey Cox’s church history (*The Future of Faith*) is misleading. During Cox’s “Age of Faith,” the “focus on following the way of Jesus” was, in fact, the result of “believing certain things,” namely, that Jesus had been raised from death and ascended to heaven. Their experience of Pentecost helped them to act out their new convictions.

*(Continued on page 10)*

**(Continued from page 9)**

Despite Watson's care of word choice, I cannot separate as distinctly the role of Scripture from the role of the Holy Spirit, nor God's self-giving to humanity during Jesus' death on the cross, his resurrection and the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for all of these crucial events. The apostles highlighted them all. Can we give priority to

any one of them?

At one point, Jesus scolded the religious teachers, telling them that the Scriptures spoke of him, but they didn't recognize it. Later, he taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit will honour him and help them to remember and do what he taught them.

Historically, Christians have believed that the only reliable documentations of the triune God's

## OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Holding on to hope and judgment

PHIL WAGLER

**N**ova Scotia teen Rehtaeh Parsons recently committed suicide after humiliating pictures of her alleged rape and shame flooded social media. While the powers-that-be considered what to do, in a cyber version of frontier justice a loose network of computer hackers known as Anonymous claimed to have discovered the alleged culprits and threatened to go public if the authorities didn't act. When human beings see wrong, we hope for justice. In fact, what hope is there if evil won't be judged?

Christians live with the unique tension of hope and judgment. Hope is tethered to God like a rope running from one end of history to the other. It runs through city centres, side roads, gated communities and ghettos. It is sure and strong no matter which way the wind is blowing or how tenuous our steps appear. Hope runs from God towards a future where God will restore all things, judge and dispense with evil, and bring all things together under the lordship of Christ.

Those who follow Jesus have the unique responsibility to put hands and heart on this great hope right now, for



we live in a culture that knows things are irreparably damaged and yet hate when our sandy foundations show signs of erosion. In the realm of hope and judgment this is all littered with great ironies.

On the one hand, we don't talk about heaven and mock those whose hope is placed there because we believe we already have it all or will somehow conjure it up. Meanwhile, we are the most insured society in history, unable to purchase even the smallest gadget without protection against its potential defects. We just can't let go of the myth of progress, insuring the "heaven" we have bought or created, and are willing to buy insurance on our debt to prove it!

On the other hand, we pooh-pooh talk

*We have made things worth protecting, and God and people worth disposing of.*

of hell, or ultimate judgment, because that smells medieval, but we love a host of apocalyptic movies, feverishly protest wrong and form online associations to catch the bad guys. We have made things worth protecting, and God and people worth disposing of. We abhor the reality of evil, but love when it entertains us. Is it any wonder we are confused?

What has happened? We have dropped the rope of hope, forgotten the lessons of history, rejected God's future, and have become less than human—pretty little zombies—and this hopelessness leads to two massively disturbing questions posed by theologian N.T. Wright that all people, including Christians, must be asked:

- [A]re you going to worship the creator God and discover thereby what it means to become fully and gloriously human, reflecting his powerful, healing, transformative love into the world?
- Or are you going to worship the world as it is, boosting your corruptible humanness by gaining power or pleasure from forces within the world, but merely contributing thereby to your own dehumanization and the further corruption of the world itself?

To worship as a glorious human in this way is to grab hold of a hope that has invaded human history in Jesus Christ and will one day be fully realized. Each radical, obedient expression of the king-

dom of heaven tugs God's future closer and opens a window into what will one day be when all crying and pain—and jaw-dropping evil—is put away.

*Phil Wagler (phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca) is a prisoner of hope (Zechariah 9:12) in Surrey, B.C., and the author of Kingdom Culture.*

interaction with humanity are recorded in Scripture. This becomes the “gold standard” against which all other utterances, actions or documentations, past and present, are to be tested. It is in Scripture that the character and role of the Holy Spirit are defined, and it is there that we receive criteria by which to identify the Spirit’s presence (I John 3:24f; Matthew 5:17-20 and 7:15-16; John 16:13-14; and Galatians 5:16,22).

Any claims of “being led by the Spirit” must be held suspect unless they demonstrate honour to God; conform to the character, actions and teachings of Jesus; and receive the confirmed support of other godly people. “Spiritual gifts” or insights are never used for the recipient’s glory.

IVAN UNGER, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

## NEW ORDER VOICE

# A tale of two speakers

AIDEN ENNS

**T**wo church leaders came to my city last month: one was big, the other small. They both said things I found inspiring. But in the end, which one would I like to follow? I want to listen to the one who is big, but follow the one who is small.

Willard Metzger, executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, came to our church and gave a sermon. As I sat down to listen to his message, I regretted I didn’t bring a pencil, for I wanted to jot down all the things with which I disagreed so I could grill him in the discussion period following the service.

At first, he was very smooth. He knew that our congregation was progressive and social-justice-oriented, so he acknowledged and welcomed a diversity of congregations. That was good public relations.

Then he became human. I saw he was reading from a ruffled manuscript. Only a half-dozen pages, but they made a stack an inch high. Did he drop them in a puddle? Was his work space messy like mine? As he spoke about the shepherd seeking the black sheep, holding the gate open wide for those who are different, I was listening.

Soon came the passion. I was caught off guard, I didn’t have a chance to object. I got excited about his message, even

proud to be on his team. “He’s actually not as bad as I thought,” I thought. “Shucks, how am I going to grill him in the study hour?”

Mark Van Steenwyk, the leader of a house church in Minneapolis, Minn., came to Winnipeg to lead some sessions on Christian discipleship for people involved in an inner-city house-church ministry: Little Flowers, a project within MC Manitoba. I had met him once at a convention, but knew him better as a contributor to a website called [jesus-radicals.com](http://jesus-radicals.com). He’s the co-host of The Iconocast radio program that interviews politically active figures such as Cornel

locals.

Mark’s church is called the Mennonite Worker, named after the Catholic Worker Movement that started in the 1930s. Its mission statement says the church is “committed to following Jesus’ way of simplicity (seeking a sustainable life with a healthy relationship to possessions), hospitality (inviting friends and strangers to share life together), prayer (being rooted in life-giving spiritual rhythms), peace (breaking our addiction to power as we get in the way of violence and injustice), and resistance (naming and challenging oppression wherever we find it as we seek to embody an alternative).” Moreover, this is what it is doing.

One leader, Willard, talked about the need for Mennonites to downscale. The other leader, Mark, was already practising voluntary poverty. I wanted to listen to one, but follow the other.

*As he spoke about... holding the gate open wide for those who are different, I was listening.*



West, Mary Jo Leddy and John Dear.

Mark and I cooked a meal together, pizzas on flattened pita shells. He fried the onions and mushrooms, I prepared the sauce and cheese. This was a bonding time for me and him, and the local brew helped with the chuckles. I would have been embarrassed to make a simple meal like this with Willard; he was fancy, we were down to earth. He carried middle-class ostentation; Mark exuded lower-class solidarity, staying with billets in a poor neighbourhood, taking the bus around town, singing karaoke with the

I conclude that the majority of MC Canada members must want a leader like Willard, one who can offer strong words and affirmation for good intentions. I want more. I want to follow many small leaders, probably younger and maybe naïve, to show us how to forsake wealth, pursue peace and practise radical hospitality in the name of Jesus.

*Aiden Enns is co-editor of Geez magazine. He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and can be reached at [aiden@geezmagazine.org](mailto:aiden@geezmagazine.org).*

## ✉ Don't reduce Canadian Mennonite to sermons, success stories

**RE: APRIL 1 issue.**

With some concern I read the last *Canadian Mennonite*. If I understood correctly from the editorial ("Whose voice are we?" page 2), there is a tendency of certain groups of individuals to assert pressure or try indirectly to control the publication of certain contributions to the paper. I will hold you up in my prayers.

I think our periodical would lose much of its purpose if the content would be reduced to only sermons, success stories about conference and missionary work, admonitions and model life stories. As important as they may be for the growth of our faith, they would be more effective if presented from the pulpit.

I value the thought-provoking introductory editorials and the variety of topics in each issue. I am interested to find out what Mennonites in the world are experiencing, like the information about the church in Ethiopia.

I find the series about positive biblical critique very helpful, especially the well-researched and honest articles by Troy Watson about how to read, interpret and apply the Scripture meaningfully to our life in the postmodern shift.

Among others, I find the refreshing articles by Will Braun about present-day issues in politics and the environment, modest living and sharing, very challenging.

I sometimes contemplate on contributions from readers. I respect them, but enjoy the freedom to disagree with their opinions, and otherwise feel confirmed and strengthened in my faith if others have

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# Where should donations go?

JANETTE THIESSEN

**I**t seems that money is a large part of my job. Every aspect of my work involves money in some way or another. My job as Mennonite Church B.C.'s office administrator is, obviously enough, administration: of the property/liability insurance plan, the user group insurance plan for MC B.C., the provincial benefits plan, incoming e-mails for the office; administrative support for the new church plant, and assisting the various committees within the area church and all the congregations in various ways.

This is just my position and doesn't take into account all the work Garry Janzen, executive minister; Dan Loewen, our communications staff member; or Lynn Loewen, our administrative assistant, do for MC B.C.

Knowing how important the administration behind the scenes is to MC B.C., it concerns me that people are not



motivated to donate to general budgets. Donors like their money to go for something tangible: water projects, feeding/clothing/sheltering orphans, sending a child to school, health kits, goats or pigs. You get the picture.

Perhaps most donors don't realize that without administration even these projects would not be able to proceed. Behind every fundraising effort are myriad staff members making it happen.

It is extremely important that donors give to all these aforementioned projects, but then to also remember to give towards the general budget of the organization, so that the administration needs are taken care of.

For MC B.C., our executive minister and I have almost more work than we can handle. When a large portion of our time needs to be concerned with making sure there's enough money in the bank for ministry costs as well as administrative costs, it takes time away from our ability to assist the ministries within our

area church. I would venture to say this scenario is repeated in each of our area churches and MC Canada, as well as most other charities in Canada.

I also feel it's my responsibility to watch the purse strings and, therefore, caution our committees not to spend unnecessarily, even if the budget says they have a certain amount of money. Knowing full well that we have a negative budget, and with giving patterns indicating we won't even meet that, causes a great deal of concern.

Unfortunately, administration isn't very exciting or glamorous and, it doesn't seem like donations to the general budget would be valuable. To the contrary, ask any missionary or mission worker out in the field how important the people back home taking care of the administrative details are to them.

With this said, I am very thankful for every person who has donated to MC B.C., whether it's for a specific project or for the general budget. For myself, being aware of the needs of administrative support, I usually designate my donations to general budget when donating to a charity. I encourage all of you to consider the administration behind the scenes as you make donations in future.

come to the same conclusions as I have.  
**HELMUT LEMKE, BURNABY, B.C.**

## **✉ Reader 'grateful' for current direction of magazine**

I WANT TO express my appreciation for *Canadian Mennonite*.

Over a period of several years I have found it to be a magazine that is informative, challenging and spiritually enriching. There are a variety of topics in each issue that I find interesting and stimulating.

Do I always agree with the writer? Of course not! How boring that would be if everyone thought as I do! None of us would have anything to talk about. However, the fact that I disagree means that I must think about my faith, my beliefs and those of the writer.

The questions at the end of each lead article are thought-provoking and worthy of discussion. I also value the Young Voices opinions. What a breath of fresh air to read ideas from committed young people! It gives me hope for the future of the church.

Dick Benner has played a significant role in steering the magazine in a direction that is of value and importance to us all, and for that I am truly grateful.

**BARBARA COOK, WATERLOO, ONT.**

## **✉ We need to live 'from the inside out'**

IT WAS A March blizzard in Nebraska when I looked for a motel to ride out the storm. On the motel registration, I indicated that I was "representing the Mennonite church." The clerk looked at the form, looked at my face and said, "Where is your beard if you are Mennonite?"

Travelling in parts of Canada and the U.S. one gets the impression from the tourist brochures and billboards that all Mennonite transportation is by horse and buggy, and that this defines "Mennonite."

The dean of a Baptist seminary in South Dakota was preaching in a Mennonite church that was conducting a pastoral search. According to the dean, the question he faced most often from his friends was, "Where are your bib overalls?"

All three items deal with external images that focus on a small part of life and thus miss the meaning of what makes a real Mennonite/Anabaptist. In *The Naked Anabaptist*, author Stuart Murray, who is not a Mennonite, tries to get beyond the superficial images to discover the heart and core of the Anabaptist.

Images are often helpful to assist us in understanding an otherwise difficult subject. But images are not without risk. They may limit us to one or two basics

while excluding one or more others which are equally or more important.

Images invariably focus on one dimension of a subject; thus, the image of a beard overlooks the real person. The popular tourist image of the Amish demonstrates this reality, especially in the case of the West Nickel Mines, Pa., disaster; news media, with their focus on beards and buggies, were totally confused by the reality of the Amish power to forgive.

Whenever we settle for images, we are at risk of putting individuals in a box or of putting the focus on externals. Both are less than helpful when it comes to understanding, because images have the power to control our minds, our thinking and our relationships.

The challenge is to live beyond images, labels and stereotypes, to get to the heart attitude and commitment. The Amish are about more than beards and buggies, conservative Mennonites are about more than bib overalls, and, hopefully, evangelicals are about more than cheap grace.

Beyond popular images and labels, the Jesus of the gospels calls all of us to a life of discipleship, a life that is lived from the inside out.

**BERNIE LOEPPKY, WINKLER, MAN.**

## **✉ Canadian Council of Churches welcomes Office of Religious Freedom**

(*The following letter was originally sent to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.*)

**CONGRATULATIONS ON THE** establishment of the Office of Religious Freedom and the appointment of Andrew Bennett as ambassador.

The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) welcomes and looks forward to cooperating with the Office of Religious Freedom in its stated mandate to protect and advocate on behalf of religious minorities under threat, opposing religious hatred and intolerance, and promoting pluralism abroad.

We represent 25 member churches from Anglican, Eastern and Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Free Church, Historic Protestant, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christian traditions. Together, these churches work for greater unity and a more faithful and just Canada. (*Mennonite Church Canada is a CCC member.*)

The CCC has been promoting and exercising freedom of religion and conscience for nearly 70 years now. The CCC works closely with representative bodies of other faith communities in Canada. This includes cooperation through the Canadian Interfaith Conversation, whose charter vision is to be

**(Continued on page 14)**

**(Continued from page 13)**

an advocate for religion in a pluralistic society and in Canadian public life, promoting harmony and spiritual insight among religions and religious communities in Canada, strengthening our society's moral foundations, and working for greater realization of the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion for the sake of the common good and an engaged citizenship.

We believe that our depth, breadth and expertise make us a very important component of future consultations and announcements regarding the Office of Religious Freedom.

Please be assured of our continued prayers as you work for the common good and justice for all in Canada.

**THE REV. DR. KAREN HAMILTON, TORONTO**

*Karen Hamilton is general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches.*

**✉ St. Francis of Assisi was a Mennonite**

**RE: "MENNONITES RESPOND** to election of Pope Francis," April 15, page 17.

I want to tell you about our amazing encounter with St. Francis of Assisi in our home just a few days ago.

Our theatrically creative son, who happens to have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and is intellectually challenged, has absorbed as much as possible about the new Pope Francis. He now understands a lot about the life of Priest Jorge and other Jesuits, with their devotion to Jesus through a life of poverty, chastity and service. We were not too surprised when Pope Francis, Priest Jorge and St. Francis all became part of our son's growing cast of characters for the many plays presented in our family room. We have discouraged the role of Jesus, though.

The other night we were blessed by an amazing production about the life of Priest Jorge before he became Pope Francis. Priest Jorge was the pastor of an imaginary Catholic/Mennonite Church. I almost fell off my chair.

The play was truly inspirational and was more about St. Francis than the other two characters. It recognized that St. Francis, many years ago, exemplified Christian/Mennonite ideals: "For it is in giving that we receive." And I thought Menno Simons wrote, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me show love," but this was also written by St. Francis.

My prayer for our church, and all churches, is that the teachings and life of St. Francis become more relevant in our lives. After all, as the saint has said, "We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost

their way."

**PETER A. DUECK, VANCOUVER**

**✉ Service and evangelism go hand-in-hand**

I WAS A guest at the annual general meeting of Mennonite Church Alberta held earlier this year in Calgary.

I'm trying to familiarize myself with what is going on in the Mennonite church after 45 years of absence. Many things have changed during this time, mostly for the better, in my opinion.

I noticed one issue that still seems to get people going: whether service or evangelism is the best way to witness to our surrounding world. This has been a divisive issue among Mennonites for a long time. I never could understand why. Aren't they closely intertwined?

A great example of this, inadvertently, unfolded before our eyes at the meeting. A person from MC Canada gave a report of the past year, finishing with what sounded like a kind of criticism that Mennonites are becoming known for good service and weak evangelism.

About an hour later, a person from an Edmonton church gave his report. He said a high point in the year was establishing a relationship with a group of immigrants from South Sudan who were searching for some kind of fellowship with others in Edmonton. They were going to approach either the United Church or the Mennonites. They decided to approach the Mennonites first because some of them had had positive experiences at the Mennonite Centre for Refugees in Edmonton, a community-service agency focusing on helping newcomers acclimate to Canadian life. The result of this engagement was that there is now a thriving Sudanese Mennonite church in Edmonton.

It seems a fine example of how intimately service and evangelism are tied together.

**RICHARD PENNER, CALGARY**

**✉ Clarification**

Re: "Building bridges through 'double understanding,'" April 1, page 4: When Mennonites first settled in Manitoba, they were given two parcels of land known as the East Reserve and the West Reserve on which to settle. While these lands are part of a larger area that falls under the jurisdiction of Treaty No. 1, these "reserves" were not first nation communities per se, although indigenous people did live in the area. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets any misunderstanding that may have been caused.

## VIEWPOINT

# The disabled Christ in an able society

BY DEBORAH-RUTH FERBER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

We live in an idealistic society. We live in an era of beauty, athleticism and popularity that markets products that will make us more desirable to others and will get us ahead in our professions. Our society thrives on productivity and always being at the peak of health.

This constructed society that we call Canadian culture has little time for being sick, much less for being permanently disabled. As a result, the gifts of our differently abled brothers and sisters are often overlooked, even within church settings, because we are not properly prepared to truly be inclusive to people of all ability levels.

In my studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, I have been exploring theology in light of our brothers and sisters who are differently abled than I am. My studies have led me to converse with many Mennonite pastors, leaders and congregants on how disability awareness shapes who they are and how they see God. From these conversations, I have begun to see God in different ways, and to see my role as a future pastor not only as one who brings the Word of God to people, but also as one who seeks to include all regardless of their perceived abilities.

From childhood, my image of God has been one of a strong, powerful and wise creator. These attributes are reflected in virtually every hymn, children's chorus and praise song that I know. The church



never taught me to see Jesus as weak, much less disabled.

A large part of our theological understanding has been consciously or unconsciously shaped by those who teach us. Just as feminist theologians lament the fact that traditional Christianity seems very patriarchal because, for many decades,

key research was done by white middle-aged men, so too, disability theologians lament the fact that the Bible seems very "ableistic" because there are not many

*The church never taught me to see Jesus as weak, much less disabled.*

people with disabilities who contribute to theological scholarship. Therefore, in many cases it is not so much an intentional construction of a powerful God, but rather because those who are abled often have a difficult time bringing the topic of disabilities into their purview of theological reflection.

However, the Bible does talk about the disfigured Christ quite a bit, showing us that people with disabilities can often reflect Christ to us in very unique ways. In Isaiah 53, we read that the Suffering Servant (Christ) was wounded and so disfigured that people hardly recognized him. The gospel accounts also explain in some detail the physical suffering Jesus underwent, including the fact that he was too weak to carry his own cross.

When Jesus was offering the bread and the cup to his disciples at the Last Supper,

he used the phrase "my body broken for you," a phrase that takes on a new dimension in light of a theology of disability.

And Jesus often spoke about how the kingdom of God belongs to "the least of these," those not deemed strong, powerful or mighty within the community, and those who were not likely to achieve high levels of status or acclaim.

These scriptural references all remind me of Zechariah's instruction for seeking true Shalom: "*Not by might, and not by power, but by spirit alone*," shall we all live in peace (Zechariah 4:6).

My seminary experience has taught me that so often people construct barriers between themselves and others. In theological language, this is referred to as "constructing the other." This primarily takes place when people use language to distance themselves from someone who is perceived as different, like "the disabled" or "the mentally ill."

But in order to truly foster community growth, it is important to see the person first and the disability as a precious gift that enhances who that person is. Yes,

they may be broken, wounded or bruised, but we all have pieces within ourselves that have been damaged in some way. This does not make us flawed, but rather helps us to find our true humanity.

God is calling us to see all of God's children as peacemakers who serve others, and from whom we can learn important lessons, regardless of their ability, status or prestige. Each time the word "disabled" becomes "abled," we are intentionally claiming for ourselves a desire to work towards true Shalom within our own lives and within our churches. §§

*Deborah-Ruth Ferber is a peace studies and theology student at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Upon graduation this summer, she will be joining the L'Arche Daybreak community in Richmond Hill, Ont.*

## WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

# Sorry, sad or glad . . . it's better together

BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN  
Mennonite Women Canada

**W**rite about things that make you glad, sad or sorry," advised a Facebook friend recently, after I asked for writing ideas for this page. But, truth be told, I was really wondering how to start on something that was already swirling around in my mind and weighing down on me.

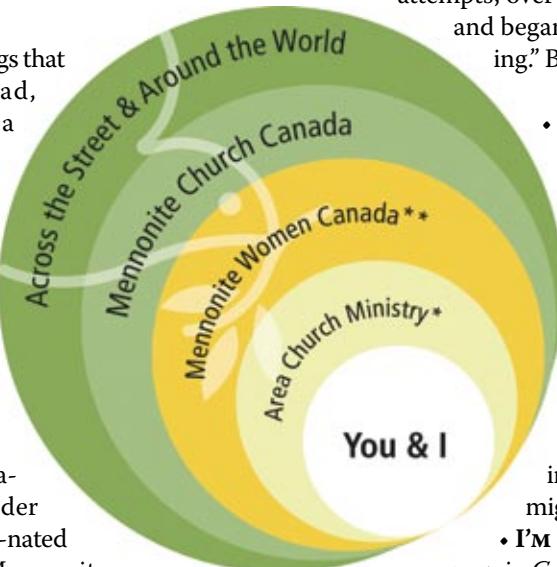
My topic involved relationships within the wider church body, which originated during discussions at Mennonite Women Canada executive meetings in March. But I had no idea how to present it until this

*I'm glad . . . that this 'belonging' has provided me with endless hours of fun and many new friends with whom to laugh and serve the Lord together.*

tip posted on my Facebook wall offered an interesting framework. Here's the outcome:

- **I'M SORRY**, as are many other MW Canada women, that Women in Mission got to a place in British Columbia (2007) and in Manitoba (2009) that resulted with the ending of their ministries.
- **I'M SAD** that, after 68 years of B.C. Women in Mission and four years into the new MC B.C. Women's Ministry, our B.C. committee still regularly gets asked, "Why do we send funds to MW Canada?" "Where in the bigger scheme of things do we even fit in?" "What is the value in having a church-based women's group?" "Why do we even bother?"

In this age of electronic and social media, when women have an abundance of opportunities for higher education, better jobs and bigger careers, it's so old fashioned, isn't it?



And, yes, there was a time in my mid-20s when I felt the same way. Participating in a woman's group was never part of my plans and I couldn't see why I should get involved. Additionally, not being Canadian-born, and still speaking with an accent today, making new friends was scary and intimidating. So it took several attempts, over several years, before I joined a group and began to understand the value of "belonging." But now:

- **I'M GLAD**—no, make that happy and grateful—that this "belonging" has provided me with endless hours of fun and many new friends with whom to laugh and serve the Lord together. I will be forever grateful to the Christian sisters of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, who didn't give up on me. In turn, I don't want to give up on inviting others into this circle of blessing no matter where my home church might be.
- **I'M GLAD**, too, that MW Canada has this page in *Canadian Mennonite* where we can continue to address these questions and look for answers together, as the new graphic, approved by MW Canada executive members, illustrates. Together, we can do so much more in God's vineyard, and isn't that what it's really all about?

If you agree, why not give your local women's group a try, or, if there isn't one in your area, consider starting a new group yourself? Then look for ways to connect to the larger church body that is across the street and around the world. That would make a whole lot of women glad!

For more information about MW Canada's ministries, check out these links:

- **FACEBOOK:** [mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2009](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2009)
- **BLOG:** [mennowomencanada.blogspot.ca](http://mennowomencanada.blogspot.ca)
- **WEBSITE:** [mennonitechurch.ca/mwc](http://mennonitechurch.ca/mwc) ≈



Waltrude Gortzen is the MC B.C. Women's Ministry representative to MW Canada, and a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

## ■ Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Fredlund**—Corey Ivan (b. March 31, 2013), to Yvonne (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Keith Fredlund, in Watrous, Sask.

**Loewen**—Felicity June (b. Feb. 20, 2013), to William and Ana Loewen, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary.

**Petkau Kulik**—Esme Monet (b. March 14, 2013), to Tamara Petkau and Joel Kulik, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Vikse**—Aubree Renae (b. April 5, 2013), to Dusty and Jessica (Becker) Vikse, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

**White**—Daniel Scott (b. Feb. 9, 2013), to Ryan and Kimberley White, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary.

### Baptisms

**McKenna Flores, Joanna Schmidt, Jackie Louis, Henry (Hank) Dorn**—Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

### Marriages

**Durksen/Enns**—Brent Durksen and Kari Enns (Calgary Inter-Mennonite), at Camp Kindle, Alta., March 30, 2013.

**Enns/Rempel**—Aaron Enns (St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.) and Ashley Rempel, at St. Catharines United Mennonite, April 13, 2013.

### Deaths

**Dueck**—Henry H., 91 (b. Nov. 17, 1921; d. Feb. 10, 2013), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Enns**—Anne (nee Schellenberg), 90 (b. Oct. 7, 1922; d. March 16, 2013), Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Friesen**—A. Ervin, 78 (b. Sept. 1, 1934; d. Jan. 13, 2013), Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

**Friesen**—Esther (nee Kinzel), 93 (b. Dec. 21, 1919; d. Jan. 11, 2013), Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

**Gingerich**—Mary Alice (nee Bender), 91 (b. Dec. 8, 1921; d. April 5, 2013), Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

**Herbert**—Andrew Timothy, 59 (b. Feb. 4, 1954; d. April 5, 2013), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

**Klassen**—Henry, 78 (b. Sept. 27, 1934; d. April 10, 2013), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

**Krause**—Sara (nee Klassen), 84 (b. Aug. 15, 1928; d. Feb. 14, 2013), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Konrath**—Sarah, 92 (b. Aug. 31, 1920; d. Jan. 24, 2013), Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

**McNally**—Donnie (Donelda) (nee Workman), 85 (b. June 21, 1927; d. April 23, 2013), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

**Penner**—Paul, 49 (b. April 25, 1963; d. March 201, 2013), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Peters**—Lillian Mary (nee Penner), 60 (b. July 18, 1952; d. March 16, 2013), Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Rempel**—Henry, 87 (b. May 18, 1925; d. April 12, 2013), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Snider**—Eileen (nee Snyder) 93, (b. July 29, 1919; d. April 20, 2013), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

**Stleckle**—William Lewis, 78 (b. Oct. 16, 1934; d. April 9, 2013), Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

**Weber**—Howard, 87 (b. June 1, 1925; d. April 17, 2013), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Wiens**—Mary, 87 (b. March 29, 1926; d. April 5, 2013), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org), including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.**

## Pontius' Puddle



## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## COVER STORY

# A cross bears witness

*Two-year recovery effort following deadly tornado ends with celebration*

Mennonite Disaster Service

**N**early two years after an EF5 tornado struck Joplin, Mo., Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) closed its project site in Joplin with a celebration.

On May 22, 2011, Joplin was cut in half by the more-than-a-kilometre-wide tornado that completely destroyed more than 7,000 homes. The town's infrastructure was heavily damaged, including the hospital and school. In addition to the loss of property, 159 lives were lost in the storm, making this disaster the second deadliest tornado in all of U.S. history.

Local MDS volunteers responded to the

news of the tornado immediately. Within 24 hours, volunteers were helping to clear access roads and were working with local farmers to help move animals to safety. In the weeks to follow, thousands of volunteers poured into the area to begin the job of cleaning up. Weeks later, the first repairs began.

In the two years that MDS worked in Joplin, more than 3,300 volunteers served, completing 125 clean-ups, 23 minor repairs, 25 major repairs and nine new builds. There were also 12 new builds that volunteers worked on from foundation to the "dry-in stage." About 80 Canadians were numbered among the 3,300 volunteers, including those from Mennonite churches in Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan.



*This cross was carved out of a downed tree in the first weeks of clean-up after a deadly tornado struck Joplin, Mo., on May 22, 2011. At a celebration to commemorate two year's of rebuilding efforts, Kevin King, executive director of Mennonite Disaster Service, said of the carving, 'It is now weathered and cracked from the drying sun, proclaiming the injury of the past.'*

MDS volunteers travelled back to Joplin recently to mark the end of MDS's response there and to celebrate getting families back home.

MDS executive director Kevin King attended the evening of celebration and closure. Representatives from partner agencies, including Rebuild Joplin, Fuller Center for Housing, Samaritan's Purse and Joplin Family Worship Center, as well as several families who received a rebuilt home, also attended the ceremony and dinner.

This was King's fourth trip to the project in Joplin. "I entered into town and saw the famous cross was at one of the street corners that one of our volunteers carved out of a tree stump," he said. "It is now weathered and cracked from the drying sun, proclaiming the injury of the past."

Renee White, chair of the Long-term Recovery Committee in Joplin praised MDS's work, saying, "MDS was integral to the rebuilding here in Joplin. MDS showed us a work ethic. You showed us what humility looks like. You are known not only for the quality structures you build, but the spirits that you lifted as well. We are a better and richer community now because of MDS. Thank you." ▀

## 简要报道

### MEDA endorses student-led microfinance campaign

WATERLOO, ONT.—Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) welcomed the Month of Microfinance campaign earlier this year. The event aimed to get youth talking about approaches to microfinance and financial inclusion. As an endorsing partner, MEDA provided its perspectives on the role of microfinance and its unique ways of providing sustainable solutions to poverty and spurring economic growth for millions. "We look forward to reaching university students and academics alike . . . , while sharing MEDA's experience and approaches on how to provide better financial services for the unbanked," said Julie Redfern, MEDA's vice-president of financial services, at the beginning of the campaign. "We also hope to exchange knowledge with other organizations that have a similar mission, and ultimately to build greater awareness for MEDA's, and the industry's, work of fighting poverty with market-led approaches to providing financial services for the unbanked."

—Mennonite Economic Development Associates



MCC PHOTO BY JOANIE PETERS



*Miriam Gross, left, and Donna Entz pose in front of the Al Rashid Mosque in Edmonton. Entz is with Mennonite Church Alberta, and Gross is an intern with Mennonite Central Committee Alberta. The two organizations are supporting an outreach program in North Edmonton to connect Mennonite and Muslim communities.*

## Breaking down barriers

*MCC and Mennonite Church Alberta partner to bring Muslim, Mennonite communities together*

BY JULIE BELL

Mennonite Central Committee Alberta  
EDMONTON

**I**t was a spontaneous and heartfelt greeting from the young man at the Al Rashid Mosque in Edmonton one September day. He welcomed Donna Entz and Miriam Gross, thanking them for their work within his Muslim community.

"For a young Arabic man to say that to women he doesn't know is quite amazing," says Entz. "I was touched by that."

Entz and Gross say the young man's hospitality was especially poignant because it came only days after a deadly attack in Libya. The attack, reportedly prompted by an anti-Islamic video, escalated religious tensions around the world at the time.

Entz and Gross work with a project jointly supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta and Mennonite Church Alberta whose goal

is to build connections between the Mennonite and Muslim communities in North Edmonton.

The women work with newcomers in a variety of activities, including finding tutors from Mennonite schools to mentor immigrant students, and organizing small gatherings that bring Mennonites and Muslims together in social settings.

For Entz, it is a natural progression in a life-long commitment to learning about and working with Muslims. She returned to Canada in 2010 after 30 years with a Mennonite ministry in Burkina Faso, Africa.

"What they tell me as I get to know them here in Edmonton, is they want to be part of this society" she says. "They're relieved when someone tries to move closer to

them culturally and even religiously. They don't have to make the entire effort."

Gross, who's 21, grew up in a household where connecting with other cultures and faiths is valued. "At the mosque I identify myself as Christian," she says. "Then I say I don't want to sit at home and listen to what the media are telling me about Islam. I want to hear about Islam from Muslims."

Mana Ali, who came to Edmonton from Somalia 20 years ago and works at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, says that Gross and Entz demonstrate a powerful message of welcome to immigrants by being open about their faith while, at the same time, respecting Islam as they learn about Muslim culture.

Entz and Gross have become familiar faces at the Al Rashid Mosque. After service, they smile and share the traditional Islamic peace greeting with several women who stop to chat.

"They recognize something about me because I wear a long dress like them, but they also know there's something different," Entz says. "And they want to connect with me, with the mainstream, in some way. These are the opportunities we have. It's an amazing thing." //



Rural Manitoba food producers and urban eaters continue their dialogue about food and faith at the A Rocha centre overlooking the Pembina Valley in southern Manitoba.

# Food, faith and conversation

*Rural producers, urban eaters continue their dialogue*

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
PEMBINA VALLEY, MAN.

In a setting that offers a spectacular view of the Pembina Valley, a group of about two dozen rural and urban Mennonites met to continue their conversation about food and faith.

It was April 13 and the snow was still a thick blanket on the hills, but the A Rocha Centre south of Morden, near the Canadian/U.S. border, was a perfect place to begin looking deeper into bridging the gap between rural producers and urban eaters that was started with 2012's "Germinating Conversations" events.

It quickly became clear last year that both groups reflect wide diversity. From large-scale agri-business farms to small organic family farms, and from urbanites committed to growing their own food to those who enjoy food that is fast and convenient, the conversation has been wide-ranging but always respectful. There is a common faith that brings them together and a willingness to wrestle with the hard

questions while embracing their diversity.

The 2012 conversations were open to the public, but this time the planners wanted to discern together with the presenters if and how they should continue their discourse.

Larry Danielson, a planner with A Rocha, an environmental stewardship organization, said, "We want to take a giant step from 'listening events' to a more direct dialogue about issues involved in our growing and eating of food."

Laura Rance, editor of the weekly *Manitoba Cooperator* and a weekly columnist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*, who had attended each of the conversation events as a listener, was invited to share her observations.

"For a person on the farm, sustainability and environmental stewardship may mean intensively cultivating the land so that we may produce more with less," she said. "For someone else, it might mean less

intensive agriculture and a greater focus on bio-diversity. The loss of common reference points makes us more disconnected than ever before. That's why it's so important that we find ways to talk face to face. That's how we maintain relationships and gain trust."

The story of Dean and Tina Hildebrand, who have been farming for 30 years, is an example of the difficult struggle and choices in faithful discerning.

"We did not see much peaceful going on in agriculture," Dean said. "We didn't like the way we farmed before and so we quit using chemicals."

Today, the Hildebrands use practices such as cover cropping, no tilling and planting a wider variety of crops.

"I find it hard but gratifying," Dean said. "I believe that by growing more nutrient-dense foods and eating accordingly, it is a good way to honour our Creator."

The participants agreed to ongoing respectful dialogue and bridgebuilding.

"This is where I think churches are uniquely positioned to play a role," said Rance. "They are places where people are gathering and finding common ground spiritually, and so they offer a foundation to have a broader connection. I draw a great deal of hope and optimism from this kind of dialogue. It is unique among groups." //



*Paul Krueger of North Leamington United Mennonite Church helps with the pie auction at UMEI Christian High School in Leamington on April 13 in aid of Christian Peacemaker Teams' work around the world.*

## Peace, pies and prophets

STORY AND PHOTO BY RUTH BOEHM

Special to Canadian Mennonite

LEAMINGTON, ONT.

The mouthwatering chocolate cream, coconut cream, cherry, elderberry and apple mango pies were visible upon entering the building, whetting appetites for the pie auction and dessert to follow.

The Peace, Pies and Prophets fundraising event for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) at UMEI Christian High School on April 13 featured Ted Swartz of Ted & Company TheatreWorks and Tim Ruebke of the Fairfield Center for mediation in Harrisonburg, Va., in a performance of "I'd Like to Buy an Enemy." Directed by Ingrid De Sanctis, the drama follows the experiences of a man wanting to purchase an enemy. Many opportunities were presented to buy into a system that depersonalizes others. Fear of the unknown is a key

factor for people to consent to "buying an enemy," the play suggested. The use of humour to reveal assumptions and systems had the audience laughing and thinking at the same time.

Additional sketches included "The Floretta Tone," which provoked a closer look at the language used to describe and talk about war and violence. Whether talking about war or bullying at home, sometimes words gloss over the painful realities of the situation.

When the horn sounded, it was time for the pie auction. Each donated pie came with a description of some significant feature about the history of the recipe. During the pie auction, CPT caps were given to three young boys who collected

### Briefly noted

#### Eden Health Care breaks ground in Winnipeg

WINNIPEG—A new 45-unit affordable housing project initiated by Eden Health Care Services of Winkler, Man., broke ground on April 12 in northeast Winnipeg. This new apartment building will be known as Concordia Village IV. The new apartment building will be constructed on a vacant portion of the Concordia Village campus, an assisted-living housing facility for seniors. The federal government has provided \$5.7 million, with Manitoba Housing providing the remainder of the \$11.9-million project. Eden will be investing in amenities in the common areas to add value to the community building aspect of the apartment. Eden's history of developing safe affordable housing spans 35 years. Eden works from the premise that in order for people with mental illness to recover, they first need to be safely and appropriately housed. Chief executive officer James Friesen states, "This new initiative represents an exciting opportunity for Eden to respond to our constituency in Winnipeg and to the northeast sector of Winnipeg specifically. The partnership this project represents will allow the community to benefit significantly." It is anticipated that Concordia IV will open its doors to residents in August 2014.

—Eden Health Care Services

change from the audience. They used that money—\$226.57—to bid on a pie!

Carol Rose, co-director of CPT operations in Chicago, shared good news about 64 Colombian families who, with support from CPT, finally got deeds to their land recently. Two hundred more families are waiting to get similar news, she told audience members, challenging them to support CPT and its work for justice.

Similar events were held at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, on April 5, and at Toronto United Mennonite Church on April 12. ¶

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# 'Seeds scattered and sown: In every seed a promise'

*Mennonite Church Eastern Canada celebrates its past and looks forward to the next 25 years of ministry*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

Twenty-five years ago Mennonite Church Eastern Canada gathered at the United Mennonite Educational Institute in Leamington, Ont., for its inaugural annual conference.

Photos of the time show middle-aged white men signing documents that joined together three historic conferences: Western Ontario, made up mainly of formerly Amish Mennonites who came to Canada in the 1820s; Mennonite Church of Ontario and Quebec, made up mainly of formerly Swiss and South German Mennonites who began to come to Canada from the United States and Europe in the late 1700s; and the United Mennonite Conference of Ontario, made up of Russian Mennonites who came to Canada from Europe in waves in the 1920s and '40s, and from South America in the '60s.

This year's annual church gathering, held in Kitchener on April 26 and 27, looked and sounded very different. As Barb Smith Morrison, pastor of Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, and Pader Lee, a female leader from First Hmong Mennonite

Church in Kitchener, led worship, a band of men and women from many ethnic groups provided musical accompaniment.

Three new congregations—Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Kitchener, Medahnialem Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Toronto, and The Commons, an Anglo congregation in Hamilton—added to the colour and sound of the 97 full-member congregations and the 25 to 30 church plants, emerging congregations, and existing congregations exploring joining the area church.

In her April 26 sermon, "Seeds of diverse beauty, lavishly sown," retired MC Eastern Canada pastor Sue Steiner thanked God for five gifts the area church has received over the past quarter-century:

- A NEW spiritual thirst and a new yearning for God among individuals and congregations.
- DIVERSE ANABAPTIST beauty.
- AN ECLECTIC pool of pastoral leaders suited to renewing the diverse garden of the area church.
- A DESIRE to be church differently in urban or rural, new or traditional communities.
- REFERRING TO congregations that have closed over the years, for God's gift of new growth after pruning, and for the gift of hope after loss.



Rochelle Benny Gerard, Marisa Pathmanathan and Kameesna Kamal of the Markham Christian Worship Centre perform a worship dance about not needing to be afraid because 'God most high' is in charge.

Referencing the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-20, in which people are the soil, Steiner concluded, "25 years in, we are still God's new creation. In fact, we always are. For God always calls us to receive the good seed within ourselves and to sow it lavishly,

non-anxiously, just like the Gardener."

Continuing the theme of sowing and seeds the next day, César Garcia, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), preached at a worship celebration on the Parable of the Mustard Seed in Mark 4:30-32. Comparing churches to restaurants, Garcia challenged MC Eastern Canada to serve healthy food and to be a healthy area church full of healthy congregations.

For Garcia, healthy congregations are affected by their context and affect their context by staying in contact with God. Rather than being propositional and trans-cultural, the same in belief and structure everywhere, they are like the kingdom of God, vulnerable and weak, natural and spontaneous, rather than independent, powerful, controlling and uniform. They have structures that serve people, and are relational with organic links. Unhealthy churches, on the other hand, are concerned with the health of the organization over and above that of the individuals or congregations, he said.

A highlight of the gathering was a forward-looking dialogue by area church staff, "Sprouting seeds in the next 25 years," that focused on three strategic directions: Identity and spiritual formation, Congregational health and mission, and Unity in mission. With excitement and



Brent Horst from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church helps delegates and guests at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's annual church gathering focus on the theme of 'Seed scattered and sown: In every seed a promise.'

## MENNONITE CHURCH EASTERN CANADA ANNUAL DELEGATE SESSION

hope, the staff painted a picture of congregations and an area church grounded in their relationship to God, maturing individuals and congregations, and united in their core beliefs regarding Scripture, Jesus Christ and a commitment to nonviolent faith.

### **Church business**

With the focus on the 25th anniversary, business was kept to a minimum.

Donations and expenses were balanced as forecast in the budget accepted in 2012, delegates were told.

A new policy for bequests was instigated following the receipt of a multi-million dollar bequest from the estate of Enid and Harold Schmidt. The area church will not

put bequest money into endowments, but will spend it over a 12- to 15-year period, with some money shared with the wider church—including MC Canada and MWC. Bequests will be put into relatively secure investments with organizations like Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and Mennonite Foundation Canada; ethical investing will be paramount.

A short report was given on the fate of the Warden Woods Community Centre building in Toronto. It was noted that the area church desires a negotiated solution, but the centre has instigated a court-mandated settlement that is making its way through the legal process. ≈



*Looking forward to the future, looking back to the past: Ruth Penfold peers over the shoulder of her father Josh Penfold, one of the pastors at Wellesley Mennonite Church, at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's annual church gathering last month in Kitchener.*

## Community means communication

*César Garcia speaks to pastors in Ontario*

**STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY**

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**E**ars pricked up when César Garcia suggested that all national churches need to be in communication with other national churches about issues of faith and practice.

Garcia, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), spoke at a pastors breakfast jointly sponsored by MWC and Mennonite Central Committee Ontario on April 25 at Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church.

Looking at MWC's vision statement, he noted how many times the idea of community appears. Community implies communication and mutual responsibility, he said. In the discussion of ethical issues, such as same-sex relationships, churches in both the Global North and South need to be talking to each other and not going it alone.

He noted that churches in the Global South can learn from the Global North to keep on talking, and not to refuse to address difficult or new issues. At the same time, churches in the Global North need to consider what their sisters and brothers in the South are thinking on issues.

Showing a photo-mosaic of Jesus made up of individual photos of the Dead Sea scrolls, Garcia noted that, while diversity creates beauty, diversity is needed in order to make up the many shadings of Jesus' face to the world. Withdrawal from others—either by divisions in a nation or between national churches—diminishes the picture of Jesus Christians show to the world, he said.



*César Garcia, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) general secretary, left, visits with Vidya J. Narimalla of Kitchener Mennonite Brethren Church at the MWC/Mennonite Central Committee Ontario-sponsored pastors breakfast on April 25.*

The North also needs to hear about the suffering of Anabaptist Christians in many other places in the world, Garcia said. When these suffering Christians are in relationship with others, they no longer feel isolated and powerless.

Garcia noted that evangelism and church planting that focus on Christian identity, to the exclusion of an Anabaptist identity, have led to a hunger among many new Christians for Anabaptist understandings, not only on peace, but also on how to structure leadership in the church.

Garcia also met with pastors in the Niagara Region and Toronto, and addressed Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's annual church gathering and 25th-anniversary celebration while in Ontario. ≈

# Christianity headed south

MWC general secretary ponders changes in global Anabaptism

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

**E**lisabeth Elliot's 1957 classic, *Through Gates of Splendor*, was billed by the publisher as "the boldest and most dramatic missionary exploit of modern times . . . a collision of darkness and light."

The book tells of "the martyrdom of five American missionaries in the Ecuadorian jungle." Elliot's husband was among the five men involved in "Operation Auca," named for the remote tribe they were trying to reach. After making initial contact with some Aucas, the missionaries were ambushed by the tribe on a jungle beach, "defeated," as the dust cover says, by "primal fear and hatred."

I was in high school when I read the book, and found it inspiring.

But the global narrative of Christianity has shifted dramatically since then. The story is no longer about noble white Christians boldly penetrating dark pagan lands abroad. Now, churches in the Global South flourish while those in North America and Europe settle uneasily into a post-Christian era in which traditional religion is increasingly crowded out.

The choice of a Latin American pope is indicative of this shift, as is the choice

of a Colombian as general secretary of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), a selection that was made two years ago when César García took over from American Larry Miller. Subsequently, MWC moved its headquarters from Strasbourg, France, to Bogotá, Colombia. (There's no talk of the somewhat less nimble Catholic Church leaving Rome for, let's say, Brazil, which has more than twice as many Catholics as Italy.)

Today, only a third of Mennonites live in North America and Europe. The same is true of Catholics. According to information put out by the World Council of Churches, a century ago 80 percent of Christians in the world lived in the Global North. Today, less than 40 percent do.

The centre of Christianity has shifted southward, whether or not the North has noticed. Today, Holland—the home of Menno Simons' birthplace—has fewer Mennonites than Angola, Vietnam, Guatemala or 15 other southern countries.

But García cautions against idealization of southern churches. Numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Not all growth has been healthy, he says via Skype from Bogotá. While it is impossible to generalize

across all southern churches—and southern churches are as diverse as northern ones—he says a self-centred, prosperity-oriented gospel is too common.

García singles out Benny Hinn—the controversial California-based televangelist, miracle worker and prosperity pedlar—as an influential force in southern churches, including some Mennonite congregations. Best-selling American writer and pastor Rick Warren is also popular. Less popular, says García, are Anabaptist theologians like John Howard Yoder, John Driver and Mark Baker. García wishes that interest in the latter would be more common, although, of course, a good number of southern Mennonite churches do have solid Anabaptist foundations.

In terms of how churches in the North and South relate, García says the days of understanding missions primarily as a North-to-South endeavour are "finished." Patronizing attitudes must be left behind, he says, adding that the key now is "interdependency."

"Churches in the North need the churches in the South," he says. Generally speaking, the North can learn from the South about how to be a church that emphasizes community and "organic growth, instead of institutionalized structures."

The South can learn about "strong roots," "good foundations," and how to deal with contentious issues in healthy ways, García says.

As for missions, García says the model for which he has most hope is one in which ministry is carried out by multicultural teams and is done in a holistic fashion that includes church planting, education, social development and an emphasis on pacifism.

Among several examples he cites is a partnership that sees Mennonite Church U.S.A.'s Mission Network and the Colombian Mennonite Church work together in Ecuador.

For those of us in the Global North, the challenge is perhaps to humbly wrap our hearts around the southward shift—a gradual process that is at varying stages in different groups—thanking God for the spiritual fervour in the Global South, and seeking opportunities for reciprocal North-South partnerships. ■

## Global Mennonite Population Shift

1958	1990	2012
79% Global North	52% Global North	33% Global North
21% Global South	48% Global South	67% Global South

## 5 Countries with the most Mennonites

1. UNITED STATES	391,000
2. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	235,000
3. ETHIOPIA	224,000
4. INDIA	150,000
5. CANADA	137,000

— Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online



*Participants in the annual Camp Squeah paddle-a-thon reach the end of their fundraising journey down the Fraser River at Fort Langley, B.C.*

## 'A way to give back'

*\$46,000 raised to support summer staff*

**STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN**  
B.C. Correspondent  
FORT LANGLEY, B.C.

**P**addling down the Fraser River all the way from Hope to Fort Langley has been an annual Mennonite Church B.C. tradition since 1999, but this year's paddle-a-thon for Camp Squeah had an unexpected first: part of the journey was by bus.

The 2013 event, held the weekend of April 20 to 21, generates funds for summer volunteer staff to help pay for their post-secondary education. Thirty paddlers in kayaks, canoes and a Voyageur started out at Camp Squeah near Hope, but due to high winds and waves, had to quit less than an hour after they started out. Two canoes had capsized and the group was making little progress.

"We paddled and paddled," said Art Goerzen. "The wind was howling badly, and we heard the weather was worse farther up."

In consultation with their onsite safety expert, the call was made to discontinue the first portion of the trek down the river and transport the participants by bus to Chilliwack, to spend the night at the designated point at Island 22. The ground crew prepared a hearty meal for the participants, as usual, and they spent the night camping or in indoor lodging.

The weather was more cooperative the next morning, and the paddlers continued on down the river. After a noon meal near

Mission, the group arrived to waiting family and friends in Fort Langley late in the afternoon.

Here, camp director Rob Tiessen acknowledged the many who had made the annual event possible, not only paddlers but support staff along the way as well. He noted that over the past 14 paddle-a-thons, an estimated \$174,880 had been raised for the summer staff support fund.

Paddlers must each raise at least \$500 to garner a spot in one of the vessels, but, as incentive to raise more, a canoe is awarded annually to the one who raises the most. This year's winner was James Dueckman of Abbotsford, who raised \$2,850.

This year, an entire family of five took part for the first time. Peace Mennonite Church pastor Tim Kuepfer and family of Richmond all took part, either as part of the ground crew or paddlers.

"It's a way to give back and a good thing to do together," said Sandra Kuepfer. □

# MC Canada identifies spending cuts to meet reduced budget

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

WINNIPEG

**G**rant reductions, reduced travel budgets and deferred hiring will help Mennonite Church Canada address an overall 7 percent donation shortfall in 2012:

- Volunteer leadership will save money by reducing the frequency of face-to-face General Board and Council meetings, in favour of conference calls and online technologies.
- Canadian Mennonite University and *Canadian Mennonite* will see their grants reduced by 12.5 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

- One staff position left vacant by a retirement will not be filled in 2013.
- International Ministries has reduced its budget by 6 percent.
- A combination of smaller cuts in other areas will combine to account for a shortfall of more than \$240,000 in 2012.
- A 17 percent under-expenditure in International Ministries, due to unanticipated delays in acquiring foreign work visas for some workers, will help to compensate for the overall income shortfall.

The national church's General Board approved the 2013-14 budget on April 19,

*'I am humbled by the number of people I see who make sacrifices so that giving to national church ministries can increase.'*

(Daniel Horne)

## Briefly noted

### Menno organizations producing financial-literacy video series

Mennonite Foundation of Canada joins a group of Mennonite organizations that are partnering to produce "Making Change," a financial-literacy video series. The series contrasts contemporary perspectives with the biblical principles of sharing, saving and spending. It is intended to spark discussions about how faith influences and informs how money is managed. Following a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada workshop last fall on faith and finances, several organizations discussed ways to continue the conversation. Mennonite Central Committee, MC Canada, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, MAX Canada, Conrad Grebel University College, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, and Mennonite Foundation of Canada have joined MC Eastern Canada in this partnership. "The series will both entertain and provoke authentic conversation, and we hope people will see that it's actually very liberating to talk about money from a faith perspective," says Jeff Steckley, congregational ministries minister for MC Eastern Canada. The partnership has hired Rosco Films of Waterloo, Ont., to produce the series, which consists of four short videos that will appeal to a wide range of audiences from teens to seniors. A release is planned for this fall.

—Mennonite Foundation of Canada

which will call for nearly \$3.3 million in donation income, based on actual income in the previous fiscal year; the donation target in 2012 was more than \$3.5 million. Audited financial statements are expected to be completed this month.

Daniel Horne, director of partnership development, meets personally with many donors. In spite of a challenging year, Horne has personally witnessed numerous scenarios of sacrificial giving.

"I am humbled by the number of people I see who make sacrifices so that giving to national church ministries can increase," he says. "Sometimes these are seniors who go without something that would make life more convenient for them. Other times it is a passionate business person who has made a choice to invest in the church, instead of their growing business. Their stories challenge me personally to practise sacrificial giving." ■

HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP PHOTO



**Author Arthur Boers**, left, chats with Cecil Wagler, a participant at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp's spring seniors retreat on April 29. Boers shared from his book *The Way Is Made By Walking: Spiritual Hunger in Our Culture Today*, giving a visual presentation of his experience on the Camino de Santiago Trail in the morning and then speaking about 'Strategies for encouraging abundant living' in the afternoon. More than 70 seniors participated in this day of learning and fellowship.

# 'How can I keep from singing?'

*Leonard Enns delivers Conrad Grebel University College's 2013 Eby Lecture*

**STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY**

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

**P**oised to retire, Leonard Enns delivered the 2013 Benjamin Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College on April 12, something he hasn't done for 31 years.

Enns, a music prof and undergraduate officer of music at Grebel, whose career has been mostly in choral music and congregational singing, noted that, while what he had to say has not changed particularly, his ideas now have the benefit of many decades of observation and testing in academy, church and the public concert sphere.

Illustrating his points with both recorded and live music, including an ensemble made up of members of the University of Waterloo Chamber Choir and the DaCapo

Chamber Choir, as well as the capacity crowd in the college chapel, Enns argued for the place of music, with or without text, to connect the intellect and the spirit, making contact with the divine as well as with fellow worshippers or listeners.

Enns holds that music moves people from a simple understanding to a deeper affective and spiritual experience of the text, and helps them co commune with



*Leonard Enns, retiring professor of music and undergraduate officer of music at Conrad Grebel University College, left, discusses his Eby Lecture, 'How can I keep from singing?' with academic dean James Pankratz on April 12.*

both their fellow singers and with God, a cruciform communion with both the horizontal and the vertical.

These communions, or movements, have their place in education, he said, where music makes connections in the person and between people that benefit all disciplines. They also have their place in the church, where communion takes place, and in the public concert, where such communion with both fellow humans and the divine benefits humanity at large, building bridges between individuals, cultures and religions.

Asked after the lecture, which came first—the music or the text—Enns said that almost always he lives with a text over a period of months before setting it to music, whether it be a text from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* in his 2005 piece "Nocturne," or the well-known hymn, "For the Beauty of the Earth," for which he composed choir additions interspersed among the congregational material.

In retirement, Enns will conduct a number of concerts this summer. He will continue directing and composing, especially with the DaCapo Choir. □

## 简要注记

### Marpeck Leadership Award to support Grebel engineering students

WATERLOO, ONT.—As a University of Waterloo engineering graduate and a Conrad Grebel University College alumnus, Edward Penner ('86) and his wife Judy wanted to develop an award that recognized both areas. Named the Marpeck Leadership Award, after Pilgram Marpeck, a 16th-century Anabaptist leader and an engineer, this generous gift to Grebel will support students who are pursuing an engineering degree at the University of Waterloo and who have an aptitude and experience in leadership at the college. The award will be used to retain upper-year students in the residence or apartments. Mary Brubaker Zehr, director of student services, is pleased to have this additional support for student leaders. "Engineers comprise about 20 percent of our residential student body in any given term," she says. "They are gifted students who are full of leadership potential and brilliant ideas. This award money allows us to acknowledge and nurture their potential." "It's wonderful to have alumni who remember Grebel fondly and make it possible for students to have the same formational experience that they had," says Fred W. Martin, director of development. The Marpeck Leadership Award will generate an annual award of approximately \$1,000 beginning in 2014.

—Conrad Grebel University College

## GOD AT WORK IN US

**⌘ Briefly noted****Indigenous bridge builder passes suddenly**

Richard Twiss, a friend of Mennonite Church Canada, passed away suddenly with his family by his side on Feb. 9. He was 58. Twiss dedicated his life to following the Jesus Way as a Lakota, sharing the message that faith is firmly embedded in the vast variety of human cultures. Born on the Rosebud Reservation, S.D., and was also known as Tayoate Ob Najin, which means "He Stands with his People," Twiss co-founded the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS), and Wiconi International, a ministry for indigenous people that he led with his wife Katherine. MC Canada has collaborated with NAIITS in various ways in recent years. "Several congregations and area church groups within Mennonite Church Canada were privileged to have Richard speak in their area and help them in their journey of cross-cultural learning," said Neill von Gunten, former co-director of MC Canada Native Ministry (now Indigenous Relations), adding, "He will be greatly missed." Twiss shares some of his perspectives on life and faith in *One Church Many Tribes* (Regal Books, 2000), available at the MC Canada Resource Centre ([mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1997](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1997)). In a "Church Matters" interview, he explores culture as the heart language of faith ([mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1998](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1998)).



Twiss

—Mennonite Church Canada

Richard Twiss, a friend of Mennonite Church Canada, passed away suddenly with his family by his side on Feb. 9. He was 58. Twiss dedicated his life to following the Jesus Way as a Lakota, sharing the message that faith is firmly embedded in the vast variety of human cultures. Born on the Rosebud Reservation, S.D., and was also known as Tayoate Ob Najin, which means "He Stands with his People," Twiss co-founded the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS), and Wiconi International, a ministry for indigenous people that he led with his wife Katherine. MC Canada has collaborated with NAIITS in various ways in recent years. "Several congregations and area church groups within Mennonite Church Canada were privileged to have Richard speak in their area and help them in their journey of cross-cultural learning," said Neill von Gunten, former co-director of MC Canada Native Ministry (now Indigenous Relations), adding, "He will be greatly missed." Twiss shares some of his perspectives on life and faith in *One Church Many Tribes* (Regal Books, 2000), available at the MC Canada Resource Centre ([mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1997](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1997)). In a "Church Matters" interview, he explores culture as the heart language of faith ([mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1998](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1998)).

# OBITUARY

## MCC B.C. mourns loss of long-time volunteer

*Clyde Dougans  
61, d. March 7, 2013*

BY ANGELIKA DAWSON  
Mennonite Central Committee B.C.  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) staff and volunteers are mourning the loss of their friend and long-term volunteer, Clyde Dougans. Dougans was a fixture at the annual MCC Festival for World Relief in Abbotsford, where he entertained crowds as an auctioneer, helping MCC to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars over the span of his career.

"Clyde was the life and the energy that has driven the MCC auction for many years," said Dora Hoeppner, MCC B.C. relief sale coordinator. "He will be sorely missed."

Tim Kroeker, who volunteers in the

auction area and worked with Dougans for years, reflected on the gifts Dougans brought to the auction and the other volunteers. "Clyde was a great guy and had a huge impact on the MCC sale for over 35 years," Kroeker said. "I always enjoyed seeing his big smile and hearing his laugh. His energy was contagious. He will be sadly missed in September and the Septembers to come."

Dougans would share the stage with other auctioneers, but was far more entertaining when he was on the floor watching as bidding numbers were being raised. It was often said that he might come between



*Clyde Dougans is pictured in action on the auction floor at last year's MCC Festival for World Relief, Abbotsford, B.C. The popular auctioneer passed away on March 7.*

people and their wallets during the auction. He was known to ask the auctioneer to pause for a moment while he had a "chat" with a person who was hesitant to go up one more bid. Occasionally he'd even pull a bill out of his own wallet and offer it as incentive to get that person to the next level. Once that person was won over, he'd do the same thing to the rival bidder.

But Dougans knew that is was not just about entertainment or about acquiring more things. He took the time to understand the organization for which he was raising funds.

"Clyde always encouraged folks at the auction to remember that their bidding on auction items would be helping people around the world have enough food, water and basic necessities of life," recalled Phil Schafran, MCC B.C. director of resource development and communications. "He would say, 'It's only money, folks, and you are helping MCC help others.'"

Dougans is survived by his wife Joy, three children and five "and a half" grandchildren (one grandchild is on the way.) ≈

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ARTBEAT

## THEATRE REVIEW

# Church exclusivity challenged

*Forgiven/Forgotten.*

Written by Johnny Wideman. Produced by Theatre of the Beat. Cross-Canada tour sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Canada, 2012.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

**A**bottle of wine moves through *Forgiven/Forgotten*, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada-sponsored play about restorative justice that premiered last month at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts in Kitchener, Ont.

Theatre of the Beat actors play Phil and his wife Robyn, who receive the bottle

as a wedding gift and save the vintage wine for a future celebration. At one point in the play, which involves a series of flashbacks, they are about to open it, but something gets in the way. That something is Phil's imprisonment for an unnamed crime, and Robyn's ostracism from her community and church.

Phil's crime is not the only bit of

THEATRE OF THE BEAT FACEBOOK PAGE PHOTO



*A scene from Forgiven/Forgotten, the latest play by the Toronto-based Theatre of the Beat troupe, which is on a cross-Canada tour sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Pictured: Kim Walker and Johnny Wideman.*

information left hanging. Robyn finds her way into another church, where she is welcomed by Richard and Mary Anne, and by Pastor Darren, played by the same actor as Phil. Mary Anne is still suffering from anxiety attacks following a break-in at their home.

When Phil is released, he begins to attend church with Robyn, but the church finds this overwhelming, and Phil is asked not to attend until some unfixed future date. They will tell him after the Sunday service at which communion will be served.

The bottle of wine moves from Robyn's hands to Mary Anne's, as a hostess gift. Phil discovers it at their house when he and Robyn are invited over. Robyn and he argue and leave. Richard and Mary Anne leave the room and the table becomes the communion table where the bottle of wine becomes the blood of Christ.

Excellent use of sparse staging and props, as well as video footage of Phil and Robyn's "son" (actually a young Johnny Wideman) playing, draw the audience into the story. The loose ends, together with the intense emotions raised with the impending "excommunication" and the past break in, catch the audience in the horns of a dilemma, feeling for both Phil and Robyn, as well as Richard and Mary Anne, who are all complicated and conflicted. And there the play ends.

*Forgiven/Forgotten* is clear: Phil and Robyn are people with needs, as is their son. How could the church reject them? Except that we don't know if Phil poses a threat to people like Mary Anne or her and Richard's children? How could the church accept Phil?

The lights come up and the four actors, together with their producer and a behind-the-scenes member of Theatre of the Beat, and a member of MCC Ontario's restorative justice staff, who take questions and enter into discussion with the audience around issues the play raises and does not answer. Each member of the audience has the opportunity to try on the feelings of various characters to understand what it would be like in their position. ♦

# Movies, cartoons and Mennonites

*'Bringing the library to life' evening features area writers*

**STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN**

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**C**artooning and movies are certainly not conventional media that Mennonites have traditionally used to express themselves. But on a recent evening at Columbia Bible College, these two art forms were part of "Bringing the library to life," a fundraising event for the college library that featured four Mennonite writers. All spoke of recent books they had published, then answered questions from audience members.

Creating graphic (comic book) novels is

Steven "Reece" Friesen's passion. Friesen, associate pastor of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, has written several graphic novels, all featuring superheroes. Friesen said that as a youngster he always liked to draw cartoons, but threw them out when he grew older and felt the calling of God to do overseas missions. Eventually, Friesen said, "I felt the calling of God to return to comic books."

He has created a Christian female superhero, Pax Avalon, who is ethically



*Steven 'Reece' Friesen, left, discusses the theory behind his Pax Avalon adventure series of graphic novels with Robert Martens at Columbia Bible College's recent 'Bringing the library to life' event.*

consistent in her efforts to overcome injustice by peaceful means. Friesen has written/illustrated several Pax Avalon books, and has found at comic book conventions that his unconventional approach to superheroes is a great conversation starter with non-Christians and those on the fringe. "I am a missionary to comic-book geeks," Friesen said. "It builds bridges. I think God has shown me where the vein of gold is."

Gary Yamasaki, professor of biblical studies at Columbia and a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, has always had a fascination with movies. His recent book, *Perspective Criticism*, uses point-of-view as depicted in Hollywood movies to look at biblical narratives. Yamasaki said that plot and character are usually central in Bible study stories, but point-of-view, or perspective, is also important in how people read the Bible. He said his book would be well suited to adult Sunday school classes or Bible study groups.

"Stories of the Bible often don't include whether you should be approving or disapproving [of what the character is doing]," Yamasaki said. "They don't tell us how to evaluate."

He showed film clips to illustrate his point, noting how the director can manipulate viewers into identifying or detaching from the characters on screen. He asked the audience to consider the story of Gideon laying out a fleece to determine God's will in Judges 6, to decide whether or not the narrative implies that this method of determining God's will should be followed.

Dan Unrau read from *You're the Boy*, about the discovery of a Jewish strain in a Mennonite family, a novel which turned out to be reflective of his own family. Grace Lescheid talked about her book *Prayer: When Answers Aren't Enough*.

Concluding the evening, Columbia's director of libraries, Richard Thiessen, spoke about all the changes in the college library. Currently, the library has some 50,000 volumes, but accesses many more electronically, and things continue to change rapidly. "For me, to be asked what the library will look like in five years—I just can't answer," he said. ¶

## ■ Briefly noted

### Matthew Pauls receives Abner Martin Music Scholarship

Matthew Pauls of London, Ont., has been named the 2012-13 recipient of the \$4,000 Abner Martin Music Scholarship. Pauls is in the second year of a doctor of musical arts program in voice performance at the University of Western Ontario, London. He completed his master of music in literature and performance degree with a major in voice in 2011 at the same institution and is a 2005 Canadian Mennonite University graduate. Pauls has been involved in the music program at Valleyview Mennonite

Church since he moved to London in 2009, where he helps to plan the musical aspects of the worship service, leads singing, and performs in a small ensemble and as soloist. He is also a youth sponsor. He has been a soloist at many venues in southwestern Ontario, including the performance this past November of Larry Nickel's "Requiem for Peace" with the Guelph Chamber Choir.



Pauls

The Abner Martin Music Scholarship is awarded annually to a deserving student who is affiliated with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and is a full-time student in a graduate or undergraduate music program. The next application deadline is Sept. 15.

— Abner Martin Music Scholarship Committee

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# Good Seed Sunday involves 500 congregations

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor  
VANCOUVER

**A**s leaders of the environmental movement are despairing that there is little hope for the future of our world, A Rocha, a national faith-based creation-care organization, saw a need to fill.

A Rocha Canada's annual Good Seed Sunday took place on April 21. The initiative partners with churches to help them deliver services centred around creation care and initiate creation-care projects in their neighbourhoods.

"We think that engaging with people, sharing our story, providing a hopeful [environmental] perspective in the community is missional," says Luke Wilson, the communications director for A Rocha.

The resources include a church service package with sermon notes, Bible verses, suggested songs, and liturgy and worship outlines. Also available are Bible study and small group materials, ideas for action projects, resources for living more simply, online community resources to connect churches using social media, a resource library and daily devotionals.

This year, A Rocha hoped to have 150 churches involved in Good Seed Sunday. It surpassed its goal, however, as 500 churches from across Canada and the United States participated with varying levels of involvement, according to Wilson.

"We're really just trying to spark a campaign around getting people across North America to take a Sunday and have that as a creation-care or earth-keeping Sunday," he says. "It's starting to trend and we want to encourage that trend."

A Rocha sparked the trend through social media, which is how Elizabeth Sawatzky learned more about Good Seed

Sunday. Sawatzky, 29, and her congregation, First United Mennonite Church in Vancouver, participated in the campaign.

The church's April 21 service involved creation-themed songs and Bible verses, and a spiritual reflection on hiking the West Coast Trail by Mike and Melissa Bartel-Sawatzky that was followed by a congregation-wide sharing time about creation care.

"I was encouraged to see so many people of various generations share how the Good Seed Sunday theme impacted them," Sawatzky says. She thinks the campaign is important in understanding the connection between the use of fossil fuels and the harm done to local communities when energy is extracted.

"People all around the world are tied to creation, and so we cannot show careless disregard for the earth," she says. "Instead, to show love and respect to our brothers and sisters, we must learn to be responsible with the world's food, water and natural resources."

A Rocha was reliant on social media to inform people about the Good Seed Sunday campaign. Sawatzky initially heard about First United Mennonite's plan to use the Good Seed Sunday theme through the church, but followed A Rocha on Twitter to get regular updates.

A Rocha's Facebook page, regularly updated with announcements and links to new resources, has almost 400 likes. The organization also blogs using Tumblr, updates videos through Vimeo, and had an Instagram photo contest. Sawatzky won the contest by taking a photo on her cell phone of cherry trees in blossom as she

(Continued on page 34)

PHOTO COURTESY OF A ROCHA



*A Rocha community gardens draw people of all ages.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH SAWATZKY



*The photo that Elizabeth Sawatzky took that won A Rocha's Good Seed Sunday Instagram contest.*

**(Continued from page 33)**

walked to the bus stop in East Vancouver.

A Rocha partnered with Paradigm Ministries to put on the campaign. Key

people in the Christian creation-care movement, including Eugene Peterson and the late John Stott, have contributed their voices to A Rocha's campaign. ¶

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# 'Trusting God to be present'

BY MICHAEL TURMAN

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES



Turman

PHOTO BY MICHAEL TURMAN



*Light streams in through a window in the Cambridge Memorial Hospital chapel.*

I have no medical training. Moving among nursing staff and doctors with years of clinical training and experience on my first day seeing patients at Cambridge (Ont.) Memorial Hospital, I felt out of place.

Am I qualified to be here? I wondered, as I went down the hallway to Room 325, where my supervisor had sent me on my first assessment. I knocked on the door and asked Mary\* if she wanted a visit with me, a volunteer chaplain. She thanked me and politely declined. Success! Perhaps I could do this after all.

From last October to the end of March I spent two days every week at the hospital taking classes and visiting patients as part of the clinical pastoral education (CPE) program. CPE is a volunteer placement that helps participants grow in self-awareness and ministry skills in a hospital chaplaincy setting. I worked with a group of five other students, most of them pastors, to provide spiritual care to any patient, staff or volunteer who needed it.

On an average visiting day I saw up to 15 patients to "assess" if they wanted spiritual care. Mostly this meant knocking on doors and saying a friendly hello; some patients accepted, some declined. I also made repeat visits to people I knew could use support.

Occasionally patients or staff requested a chaplain for a variety of spiritual needs, including prayer for a dead or dying loved one. When that happened, it was our job

to listen, give comfort and support where possible, or to call their parish priest or minister to take over. Every visit gave us something to learn about ourselves or about ministry.

On teaching days we learned care strategies and worked on self-awareness to provide comfort and helpful care. We routinely shared with the group and our supervisor after challenging visits, to learn from each other's experiences.

At the hospital I was a member of a team of doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, pharmacists and recreation therapists. All of us worked together for the good of each patient. As a part-time chaplain I probably saw patients less than any of these staff. Spiritual care has seemingly the smallest role in most patients' recoveries, which is exactly as it should be. Even so, I believe that our presence as chaplains was often critical.

I did no miracles in my seven months. I saw no miraculous healings, conversions or dying-breath reconciliations. However, I did meet people from different walks of life at critical moments in their journey. I had the privilege of hearing people's stories, of witnessing the healing taking place already. I was able to share words of comfort and hope, or a word of prayer.

One visit in particular stands out. Bob\* was an elderly gentleman and our conversation was awkward and hazy, like he was a little bit confused. He seemed to be either lonely or anxious. Although

I did not know how to help him, I sat at his bedside, attended to his words, held his hand and reminded him he was a good person. Afterward, I felt like I had brushed against something inexpressibly sacred. Did I do anything? Bob did not seem to remember much about our visits when I'd meet him again the next week. Did God do something? I believe God was there, working in and through me. Other patients often thanked me for doing little more than stopping by and trusting God to be present.

I learned something about my vocation as a Christian and as a minister at that hospital. Like the mustard seed,

sometimes the smallest presence can make the greatest difference. I do not know all the ways God touched patients' lives at the hospital, nor do I know exactly how much of a difference my chaplaincy made. I do know that God touched my life. Through my efforts to cooperate with God I learned that others may experience a similar touch. ¶

\* *Pseudonyms.*

*Michael Turman is a theological studies student at Conrad Grebel University College. He lives in Kitchener with his wife Alicia.*

*Spiritual care has seemingly the smallest role in most patients' recoveries, which is exactly as it should be.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# On sabbatical . . . from Facebook

BY AARON EPP

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

**I**t's not an original idea. Chances are good you've either done it yourself or you know someone who has given up Facebook for some length of time.

That's what I did for the month of January. The biggest reason: I was concerned with the ubiquity of Facebook in my life. At the time, it was the first website I visited every day. I frequently checked it throughout the day—often while procrastinating—and I had become restless during any moment in the day where I wasn't doing something. So if I was waiting for a bus, waiting in line in the grocery store, or waiting for a friend at a coffee shop, I would go on Facebook on my phone to pass the time.

Before my experiment began I thought I would feel disconnected. I thought I would miss out on events and exciting news. I thought I might feel lonely.

None of those things happened. I felt more calm and less distracted.

But more telling than my month away from Facebook were the habits I noticed

when I resumed my use in February. Reading I did on the subject of social networking and the way it impacts our lives also shaped my thinking and helped me come to a few conclusions. I think the following two are the most important:

**1. WHEN YOU** use Facebook often, it's easy to compare yourself to others and become envious of their lives.

Prior to giving up Facebook for a month, I was acutely aware that I presented a highly edited, best-possible-version of myself online. It never occurred to me that other people do the same thing, and that when I look at the content people post on Facebook it sometimes makes me envious of the rock concert they went to, the vacation they went on, or the new house they bought.

In an article posted last month on RelevantMagazine.com entitled "Instagram's envy effect," writer Shauna Niequist points out that "watching

(Continued on page 36)

PHOTO BY DYLAN HEWLETT



Epp

**(Continued from page 35)**

other peoples' post-worthy moments on Facebook is always going to yield a prettier version of life than the one you're living right now."

"My life looks better on the Internet than it does in real life," Niequist writes. "Everyone's life looks better on the Internet than it does in real life. The Internet is partial truths—we get to decide what people see and what they don't."

"But seeing the best possible, often-unrealistic, half-truth version of other people's lives isn't the only danger of the Internet," she goes on to say. "Our envy buttons also get pushed because we rarely check Facebook when we're having our own peak experiences. We check it when we're bored and when we're lonely, and it intensifies that boredom and loneliness."

I didn't realize this before I gave up Facebook for the month of January, but it certainly has rung true in the months since. The less time I spend on Facebook, the less I compare myself to others and the more content I am.

**2. FACEBOOK DOESN'T** actually help me connect with the people I care about in meaningful ways. In fact, it probably gets in the way of meaningful connection.

I gave up Facebook during a period in my life when I was thinking a lot about vulnerability, and challenging myself to be more vulnerable, open and honest with the people in my life. Previously, it was difficult for me to share my thoughts and feelings with even the people closest to me. It was easier for me to say something via e-mail or Facebook than to risk exposing myself in a potentially messy phone or face-to-face conversation. Or I avoided issues altogether and lost myself in virtual environments.

In her book *Daring Greatly*, social work professor Brené Brown defines vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure." Over and over, she stresses that human beings are made for connection, and that we can't connect with one another without being vulnerable.

"Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy and creativity," she writes. "It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability and authenticity."

If we want to be fully engaged, to be connected, we have to be vulnerable."

I've found social media seductive because I think it will remove the risk from my relationships. But time and again, social media has shortchanged me and I've come up feeling empty and more lonely than I started.

Read enough about social media and you will see this theme come up time and again.

In his book *The Peep Diaries*, Toronto-based journalist Hal Niedzviecki points out that most of us have no desire to use social networking to connect in the real world.

"We'd rather be at home peering at each other online than putting ourselves out there for friendships, messy emotional connection, and all the responsibilities and frustrations that come with forming attachments to others," he writes. "We're tired, we're stressed, and we're conditioned now to get home from our daily labours and lose ourselves in virtual environments, whether they be TV, video games, other people's profiles and blogs, or our own."

Niequist agrees that this is problematic, arguing that "community—the rich kind, the transforming kind, the valuable and difficult kind—doesn't happen in partial truths and well-edited photo collections on Instagram. Community happens when we hear each other's actual voices, when we enter one another's actual homes, with actual messes, around actual tables telling stories that ramble on beyond 140 pithy characters."

There are positive benefits to websites like Facebook, though. One example I've found is observing the way members of Mennonite Church Canada interact in MC Canada's Facebook group. Sharing articles, asking questions and debating topics online is one way we can connect as a church.

Ultimately, Facebook is neither good nor bad in and of itself. But it's important to remember that we need to be intentional about our Facebook use, or it can quickly take up too much of our time.

It's also important to remember that nothing will ever replace the experience of talking with each other face to face. ■

*Aaron Epp, 29, is a member of Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.*

## Facebook doesn't actually help me connect with the people I care about in meaningful ways.

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**June 6:** Columbia Bible College open golf tournament at Redwoods Golf Course.

**June 8:** MCC fundraising lunch, at Garden Park Tower, Abbotsford.

**Jun 21-22:** Brian Derksen concert to celebrate the 40th-anniversary of MCC B.C. thrift shops, at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford.

**June 22:** MCC B.C. annual general meeting at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford, and groundbreaking for new MCC centre in Abbotsford.

**June 22-23:** Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebration.

**July 2-15:** Columbia Bible College Anabaptist heritage tour.

**Sept. 6-7:** MCC Festival for World Relief, at the Abbotsford Tradex.

**Sept. 18-22:** Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering, in Vancouver.

**Sept. 28:** Mennonite Fall Fair, in Prince George.

**Oct. 7-9:** MC B.C. pastor/spouse retreat.

**Oct. 18-20:** MC B.C. women's retreat at Camp Squeah, Hope.

### Alberta

**May 24-26:** "Designed in God's Image" women's retreat at Sunnyside Christian Retreat Centre, Sylvan Lake. Speaker: Michelle Copithorne of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary. For more information, contact Ev Buhr at 780-436-3431.

**June 5:** Annual heritage retreat for seniors at Camp Valaqua, beginning at 10 a.m. Speaker: Will Loewen of Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton, Alta. Closing concert by Corpus Christi Male Choir. For more information, call Kurt Janz at 403-271-7477.

**June 15:** Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon. Registered hikers receive a free T-shirt and hot dog lunch. For more information, or to register, call the camp office at 403-637-2510. All proceeds support the camp.

### Saskatchewan

**May 23-26:** MCC and Theatre of the Beat present *Forgiven/Forgotten*; (23) St. Mary's Wellness and Education Centre, Saskatoon; (24) Gateway Covenant Church, Prince Albert; St. Anne's Church, Saskatoon; Grace Mennonite Church, Regina; all performances at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [www.forgivenforgotten.wordpress.com](http://www.forgivenforgotten.wordpress.com).

**May 25:** RJC golf tournament at Valley Regional Park.

**June 21-22:** RJC year-end musical performances.

### Manitoba

**Until June 22:** "Who will listen to our stories?" An exhibition of storytelling through art featuring the works of Sylvia Regehr Graham and the CancerCare Manitoba Art Therapy Program, at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg.

**May 24-26:** Birding retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, e-mail [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

**May 29:** Westgate Collegiate spring

concert (Grades 7, 8, 9) at Bethel Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.

**May 30:** Westgate Collegiate spring concert (Grades 10, 11, 12) at Bethel Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.

**June 9:** MCI Saengerfest, worship 10:30 a.m., concert, 2 p.m.

**June 11:** CMU President's Golf Classic.

**June 15:** Golf tournament fundraiser for Camp Koinonia. For more information, e-mail [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

**June 17-28:** Canadian School of Peacebuilding at CMU.

**June 23-25:** Wilderness challenge fundraiser for Camp Koinonia. For more information, e-mail [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

**July 29-Aug. 2:** MC Canada youth assembly at Camp Assiniboia, Man.

**Aug. 27:** Westgate Collegiate annual golf tournament at Bridges Golf Club.

**Sept. 14-15:** Charleswood Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebrations include a concert, family activities, worship and food. For more information, call the church at 204-837-7982 or e-mail [cwoodmc@mymts.net](mailto:cwoodmc@mymts.net).

(Continued on page 38)



### Menno Place Appoints New CEO

Menno Place, one of BC's largest campuses of care is pleased to announce that Karen L. Baillie has been appointed as CEO. Karen previously served as the Executive Director of Laurel Place, a 215-person residential care facility in Surrey, BC. and Haro Park Centre, Vancouver's first campus of care. She is recognized as a leader in the field of service to seniors.

Karen Baillie is a values-based leader who will model and carry on the Christian traditions and legacy of our founders.

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### ECO-ADVENTURE TOURS

- ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19/2013)
- AMAZON RAINFOREST & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (Jan 16-26/2014)
- SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA & ITS FJORDS (June 13-26/2014)
- AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (Jan 29-Feb 18/2015)

### EDUCATIONAL TOURS

- BRITISH ISLES (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES) with DAVID & JOYCE ESHLEMAN (Sept 13-25/2013)
- CHINA & YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (Nov 1-15/2013)
- EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (Dec 9-15/2013)
- JAMAICA: ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS (Jan 18-27/2014)
- CUBA with JACK & IRENE SUDERMAN (Feb 7-16/2014)
- CHURCHES & SAFARIS in ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct 10-22/2014)
- VIETNAM & SINGAPORE (Nov 10-24/2014)

### CUSTOM TOURS

- COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15/2013)
- HAITI CUSTOM TOUR (Feb 27-March 9/2014)
- HESSTON COLLEGE STUDENT CHOIR TOUR to EUROPE (May 13-June 12/2014)



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**(Continued from page 37)**

**Oct. 18-20:** Scrapbookers retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, e-mail [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

**Ontario**

**May 17-20:** W(alk), W(itness), W(orship) youth retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. For more information, visit [slmc.ca/retreats](http://slmc.ca/retreats).

**May 21-24:** St. Jacobs Mennonite Church quilt show, part of the Waterloo Region's Quilt & Fibre Art Festival. For more information, visit [www.stjacobs.com/quilt-fibre-festival](http://www.stjacobs.com/quilt-fibre-festival).

**May 26:** Silver Lake Mennonite Camp annual general meeting, at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, from 3 to 4 p.m.

**May 26:** "Ethiopian church on the move" event, with leaders from the Meserete Kristos Church and College, at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**May 31-June 2:** Mennonite Church Eastern Canada "Make a Difference" youth retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp.

**June 2:** Seventh annual Harmonia Sacra solfa shaped-note singing event, at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Leader: Laurence Martin. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

**June 11:** Fundraising chicken barbecue and pie auction for Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, at the camp, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. To reserve a ticket (required), call 519-625-8602 or e-mail [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).

**June 21-23:** Hanover Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebration. For more information about the June 21 Mennonite Youth Fellowship reunion at Riverstone Retreat, or activities on June 22 and 23, contact the church at 519-364-4309 or [hmc@wightman.ca](mailto:hmc@wightman.ca).

**June 23:** Poetry reading by Cheryl Denise (from her book *Leaving Eden*) at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Music led by Fred Martin and No Discernable Key. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

**June 28-30:** Family Camping Weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Campsites are on a first-come,

first-served basis; cabins need to be reserved. For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).

**June 29-30:** Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, 65th-anniversary celebrations. (29) Hymn sing and special music, at 7 p.m. (30) Anniversary service with Karen James Abra, former pastor, and special music, at 10:45 a.m.; a fellowship meal and sharing of memories follows. For more information, or to book a seat for the meal, call 519-232-4425 or e-mail [nmc@isp.ca](mailto:nmc@isp.ca).

**July 25-28:** The Bridgefolk (Mennonite-Catholic) conference, Reconciliation: A Way to Peace, at Conrad Grebel University College. Keynote speakers: John Rempel of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre and Christian McConnell of St. Michael's College at U of T. For more information, or to register, visit [bridgefolk.net](http://bridgefolk.net).

**Aug. 24:** 10th annual Central Ontario all-day Sacred Harp fasola shaped-note singing with midday dinner on the grounds of the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville; from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail [Gillian Inksetter](mailto:Gillian.Inksetter@gillian@inksetter.com) at [gillian@inksetter.com](mailto:gillian@inksetter.com).

**Sept. 22:** Fourth annual *Sing the Journey/Sing the Story* event, at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., led by Mark Diller Harder. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

**Sept. 27-29:** 200th-anniversary celebrations at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener. More details to follow.

**Oct. 20:** 10th annual Gospel Vespers at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, with a focus on *Life Songs II*. Leader: Bob Shantz. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

**Nov. 1:** Acoustic Advent carols at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:40 p.m. Featuring the PMS Singers and No Discernable Key. Leader: Fred Martin. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

**Upcoming Advertising Dates****Issue Date Ads Due**

June 10 May 28

*Focus on Creation Care No. 1*

June 24 June 11

July 8 June 25

July 29 July 16

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## Classifieds For Sale

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## Announcement

### Canadian Word Guild AWARDS

### MYSTERIES OF GRACE AND JUDGMENT DVD

For special awards sale see:

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## Announcement

### Elias Reunion July 13 - 14

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E-mail Linda Klassen  
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## Help Wanted

Norval Intentional Community  
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[www.norvalunited.ca/inten-](http://www.norvalunited.ca/inten-)  
tionalcommunity

**BLUMENORT MENNONITE CHURCH** is an intergenerational,  
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For further inquiries, contact Eric Peters at 204-362-0615.  
Submit resumes, with references, to [epfarms@gmail.com](mailto:epfarms@gmail.com) by  
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**LENDRUM MB CHURCH** invites applications for **TWO  
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Edmonton, Alberta with an average attendance of 150 people.  
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ing for pastors who

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- welcome dialogue reflecting a diversity of opinions

Specifically we are interested in receiving applications from  
individuals who are interested in two or more of these areas:  
preaching, working with youth and young families, small  
groups, adult teaching, and local outreach initiatives.

Salary is according to the MB conference guidelines along with  
generous benefits.

For further information, or to apply, please call  
(780.434.4268) or e-mail to Pastoral Search Committee  
[lmbs@compusmart.ab.ca](mailto:lmbs@compusmart.ab.ca). All communication and applications  
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## Employment Opportunities

### PASTOR AT HARROW MENNONITE CHURCH

Position is FTE (negotiable). For more information or to apply  
please visit [www.mcecc.ca/opportunities](http://www.mcecc.ca/opportunities)

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - MENNOHOMES INC.

Due to the retirement of our current Executive Director,  
MennoHomes inc. invites applications for the position of  
Executive Director of the organization. We are searching for  
a committed individual who will offer gifts of leadership, com-  
passion and an understanding of issues of poverty and home-  
lessness. The individual will work effectively with a volunteer  
board, donors, funding agencies and government services to  
find solutions to these issues. The Executive Director will be  
required to use excellent inter-personal and communication  
skills to lead the organization towards a common vision.

The ideal candidate will have at least 5 years of senior man-  
agement experience, relevant post-secondary education, a  
good knowledge of the Anabaptist constituency in Waterloo  
Region and an understanding of affordable housing issues,  
resources and challenges. The Executive Director represents  
MennoHomes to various church, community and government  
constituencies. The position includes generating the financial  
resources required to respond to affordable housing needs.

This is a 60% full-time equivalent position beginning in  
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N2G 4Z8 or by e-mail to [mennohomescw1@sympatico.ca](mailto:mennohomescw1@sympatico.ca) by  
May 30. More information about MennoHomes Inc. can be  
found at [www.mennohomes.com](http://www.mennohomes.com).

Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the  
position of

### DIRECTOR, MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE ARCHIVES AND GALLERY

Mennonite Church Canada is a dynamic work environment  
with an enthusiastic team of staff who strive to put faith into  
practice. This full-time position, located in Winnipeg, partic-  
ipates in the mandate given to Christian Formation to nurture  
congregations, foster commitment to the larger church, grow  
disciples, form leaders, and promote Anabaptist identity for-  
mation, in order to participate in God's work in the world.

The Director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives and  
Gallery supervises the program of the Archives and Gallery and  
carries out the mandate of the Centre as determined by the  
Christian Formation Council.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment  
to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in  
a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church  
Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and  
responsibilities for this position, see the job description posted  
at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>.

A letter of intent and a resume, or any inquiries or nominations  
can be directed to Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources  
at [kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca), Mennonite Church  
Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4 (ph.  
204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Application process-  
ing will begin May 31st.

# Mom, It's Time

# to Sell the House

FLORADEALE MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



*Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church held a successful dinner theatre on April 12 to 14. In the play, Mom, It's Time to Sell the House, the mother, played by Joan Martin, wipes away tears as her daughters, played by Mary Frey Martin, left, and Shirley Redekop, right, try to persuade her that she can no longer cope in her own home. An ice storm on April 12 caused the Friday evening dinner to be postponed to Sunday noon, but the play and meals still raised about \$11,000, shared between the church building fund and local service agencies. The play was written by Barb Draper and directed by Eleanor Buehler.*