

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Global Gathering about to convene

Mennonite World Conference, July 21-26

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inside

Sermon on the Mount 4

Oka: 25 years later 13

New peace award at Grebel 21

EDITORIAL

Humility over hubris

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

A modern-day wannabe prophet calling himself a “marginal Mennonite” audaciously predicts that this year’s Mennonite World Conference gathering will see a “mass exodus” from that body and maybe the end of the assembly, depending on the outcome of the polarizing sexuality debate at the Mennonite Church USA assembly this month in Kansas City.

Say what? This is a good case of hubris over humility, indicating not only a lack of evidence, but indulging in a provincialism that is fast fading. The very idea that issues preoccupying the Global North could sabotage this gathering indicates that we have not yet faced the reality that our world communion is more and more predominantly non-white from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

When will we in the Global North (North America and Europe) learn that despite our larger wealth and influence, we are no longer the dominant and driving force in shaping the themes, agenda and content of this historic body? It’s a little like turning over the family business to the next generation, where the elder(s) takes his place as the advisor/enabler rather than the manager/developer. Some of us have not yet caught on to this endemic change and think our issues are everyone’s.

As indicated in an earlier editorial,

MWC planners turned that corner decades ago, when at the 1972 gathering in Brazil, the realization dawned that it was focused too much on its white ethnicity and its struggles and needed to pay attention beyond western Mennonites. That bridge of inward-looking parochialism has long been crossed. We are in a new age.



While the sexuality issue may be absorbing much of our spiritual energy in the Global North, it is not a priority issue in the far-flung areas of our Mennonite/Anabaptist world. If we were, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to get bogged down with every regional and national issue confronting our sisters and brothers in their local contexts, five days would never be enough. And we would come away burdened, not inspired.

Who is to say that our issues are greater in substance than those in northern Nigeria, for instance, where the possibility of “genocide” of Christians is an ongoing concern—where eight pastors and 3,038 Church of the Brethren members have been killed, 80 kidnapped and 96,000 displaced by Boko Haram?

Or of the disappearance and suspected murder of peace builders in the Philippines such as John Calaba, who is believed to have been killed because of his opposition to corporate logging on ancestral land? Apparently tricked into meeting over a

meal with a corporate-sponsored militia, he is believed to have been shot and killed. Calaba advocated with PeaceBuilders Community Inc., supported by Mennonite Church Canada.

Or one of the issues facing the growing church in Ethiopia being that of how many wives to have after becoming part of the faith community? Or, the persecution, and sometimes disappearance of Mennonite Christians living under repressive regimes in Asia and Latin America? Why would we think our Global North issues are somehow more important and consequential than these life-threatening issues?

The point of coming together as the Mennonite World Conference is not to wring our hands together over persecution and polarization. It is to be inspired and strengthened despite these dire circumstances. Its vision is one articulated by our senior writer, Will Braun, in talking with César Garcia, the general secretary from Colombia—“interdependency among churches: church planting, social development and peacemaking.” It’s to do all of these with the encouragement of fellow Christians from all over the globe, as we all strive to follow Jesus, the “author and finisher of our faith.”

The inspirational fellowship and singing together is at the heart of this once-in-six years event. I can still vividly remember the chills going up and down my back in the large auditorium Centro Familiar de Adoración in Asunción, Paraguay in 2009, when joining those 6,000 voices in song in many different languages under the direction of Paul Dueck. What a uniting force!

That’s what Mennonite World Conference is all about. There is more—much more—that unites us than divides us. Can we do away with our hubris and replace it with humility? That is our hope as we together “Walk with God,” the theme for this year’s gathering.

ABOUT THE COVER:

International delegates arrive for the 1984 gathering in Strasbourg, France for the 10th Mennonite World Conference. There were more than 8,000 in attendance. Some 6,577 are registered for this year’s 15th gathering in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as of June 24. Nearly 1,100 are Canadians.

PHOTO: D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER

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Guiding values:

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

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

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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contents

July 6, 2015 Vol. 19, No. 14



The Sermon on the Mount 4

In the fourth of a five-part series leading up to Mennonite World Conference assembly, **Mary Schertz** writes that we are called to live out the Sermon on the Mount.

Oka: 25 years later 13

Will Braun reminds us about the violent 78-day armed siege between Indigenous people and the Canadian state 25 years ago.

Hutterites thank John J. Friesen 15

The Hutterian Brethren Education Committee commissioned a painting to thank John J. Friesen for his contributions to the Hutterite community.

Online Now! 20

The full stories are available on our website at canadianmennonite.org.



Alleged murder prompts new peace monitors 23

PeaceBuilders Community Inc. has commissioned five new Peace and Reconciliation monitors in response to a conflict over logging and land rights in the Philippines.

Church growth is the wrong narrative 26

Henry Neufeld reviews a book by Tim Suttle which says churches must strive for faithfulness, not church growth.

Regular features:

For discussion **6** Readers write **7** Moment from yesterday **11**

Milestones **12** Schools directory **28**

Calendar **31** Classified **31**

Humility over hubris 2

DICK BENNER

Reconsidering sacred symbols 7

KEN WARKENTIN

You must die 8

PHIL WAGLER

Winds of change 9

KATIE DOKE SAWATZKY



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



The Sermon on the Mount: living it out in mind and heart

This is the fourth in a five-part series leading up to the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Harrisburg, Pa.

BY MARY SCHERTZ

Special to Canadian Mennonite

Boldly proclaiming and boldly living out the Sermon on the Mount can be a joyous and generous way to live, if our practices are rooted in the loving relationship we have with Jesus.

I was down in Mississippi, at a small African-American church. My parents were volunteering there with a ministry that had many different programs going. They had a farm, a clinic, a law office, a school, sports activities for the youth of the community, a resale shop, among other worthy endeavors.

I was surprised, and dismayed, to hear on Sunday morning a sermon about the Sermon on the Mount being for the last days. There was no dissent in the congregation, a congregation that was vocal about both assent and dissent. Heads were nodding and Amens heard. The dissonance was mine.

Here was a congregation living out the Sermon on the Mount more faithfully than many Anabaptist congregations I knew, but disavowing its relevance for the contemporary situation in which they found themselves. It was neither the first nor the last time I've had to gulp and swallow hard in my intercultural and ecumenical experiences over the years, but it remains one of the most vivid.

Congregations in the Anabaptist traditions have long held that living out the Sermon on the Mount is doable and that, furthermore, it is our calling. We've cherished some assumptions about that notion. One is that it takes a community, a church that is voluntary, visible, and in which there is mutual accountability in order to make the Sermon a way of life. We cannot do this on our own.



The Sermon on the Mount is the thorn in our side and the rainbow in our sky, discomfoting and comforting by turn, but always calling us beyond our perspective to a more joyous and loving existence.

Another assumption is that it takes a peculiar people, a sectarian understanding, to live the way of the Sermon. It is not for mainstream or popular churches which are, by nature, overly influenced by what is practical or notions of the common good that include the necessary, if lamented, use of coercion in order to keep evil within bounds. The Sermon is for those traditions who favour being faithful over being effective in the world at large.

Ulrich Luz challenges those assumptions. Luz is a German scholar who has taken Anabaptist traditions far more seriously than any other commentator I know. In his sections on the history of interpretation he almost always includes Anabaptist perspectives. In his comments on the Sermon on the Mount, however, he takes Anabaptists to task for assuming that the ethic of the Sermon is only for sectarian groups. In fact, he says, the ethic of the Sermon is not only for the entire Christian church but for the whole of the world God created as well. The church in all its forms is held directly accountable by the Sermon, but the world is also held accountable to

the Sermon, if indirectly. The Sermon is, without equivocation, the standard for human behaviour and human attitudes.

Those are bold words, bolder than I have heard among Anabaptist thinkers and church leaders. But they are words that we need to hear. Moreover it is a boldness that we need to adopt, without apology. Who better to make this expansive and missional claim than people who have tried for 500 years to live by Jesus' words in Matthew 5-7? But to proclaim boldly that the Sermon on the Mount is God's standard for the church and the world likely requires two shifts in our understanding of the Sermon—a shift in mind, our thinking, and a shift in heart, our feelings or attitudes.

The shift in mind has to do with the genre of the Sermon. What kind of literature, what genre, is the Sermon? We read mystery novels differently than we do biology textbooks. We view a comedy show differently than we do a documentary on earthquakes. We read a sports report differently than we do an obituary.

The Sermon on the Mount contains a variety of genres, in the small sense of the

word. The Lord's Prayer is a poem. The story of the wise and foolish builders at the end of the Sermon is a parable. The saying about putting out the offending eye and cutting off the offending hand are hyperbole—never in this world to be taken literally.

In the larger sense of genre, the Sermon on the Mount is a series of what we sometimes call focal instances and, it is in this larger sense of genre that it is critical to know what kind of literature the Sermon is. Focal instances function to disturb our conventional thinking and get us to think outside the box. Focal instances function to give us ideas about new and different ways to live in the world. They are not meant to be copied or to be followed in any sort of slavish manner. They are provocative and evocative rather than prescriptive.

So, Jesus says, if someone forces you to carry his or her pack for a mile, do it for two miles. Even in first century Palestine, where such an event was a live possibility, Jesus did not mean for his hearers to go looking for Roman soldiers with packs to carry. What he meant was that when

we are forced to do something against our will or desire, we might well turn the situation around with our provocative and evocative attitude. We might well maintain our dignity; we might well shame our opponent; we might well derive moral goodness out of an attempt to demean us—by refusing to be humiliated and taking the proud, high, moral ground, out of the goodness of our heart.

So, Jesus says, look at the lilies. They don't toil or spin and they still beat Solomon in all his glory. Even if some of us in the contemporary situation can afford not to work, that was hardly true of Jesus's audience. He wasn't advocating a general stoppage of work; he was asking his followers to take a look at their anxiety about work, about putting bread on the table, about survival in that harsh and uncompromising economic situation in which few people had options other than drudgery.

Look at the lilies was not meant as a rule but as a provocation or evocation of a different attitude, a different perspective, a different approach to life. Regard the gift of life, the gift of beauty, the gift of providential care from a loving God.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a rule book to be followed as closely as possible, line by line. The Sermon on the Mount is the thorn in our side and the rainbow in our sky, discomfiting and comforting by turn, but always calling us beyond our perspective to a more joyous and loving existence.

Joy and love constitute the second shift, the shift of heart, necessary to adopting a bold proclamation and living out of the Sermon on the Mount. We have a tendency in religious life to separate the behavioural aspects of the moral life from the grace that grounds it. The Israelite notion of the law was behaviour fundamentally rooted in the love of God for the Israelites. We act in these ways, and we are delighted to do so, because God has shown us steadfast mercy, time after time. It is the narrative of God's love for God's people that keeps us choosing the way of life rather than the way of death.

That Hebraic sense of grace is also at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount. Ulrich Luz points to the Lord's Prayer

Even in first century Palestine, where such an event was a live possibility, Jesus did not mean for his hearers to go looking for Roman soldiers with packs to carry.

as the heart and soul of the Sermon. It is literally at the center, for one thing. It also grounds the Sermon thematically. For instance, the concern for the holiness of the name of God resonates in the injunctions to let one's yes be yes in the early part of the Sermon as well as the command not to just *say* the name of the Lord but to *do* the will of the Lord at the end of the Sermon. The concern for daily bread resonates with the Beatitudes at the beginning but also the lilies of the field in the second half. We fulfill the Sermon, and can only fulfill it, by doing so out of gratitude and love for the God who gives us our daily bread, forgives us, and delivers us from evil.

Boldly proclaiming and boldly living out the Sermon on the Mount can be a joyous and generous way to live, if our practices are rooted in the loving relationship we have with Jesus. It is a way of life that challenges our best thinking. How, in our own world, with our own challenges, can we turn the tables on evil and live with humanity and dignity not only for ourselves, but for our neighbours and for our enemies? What surprising

ways can we think and act outside of the boxes of race, gender, class, and other "isms" in which we find ourselves caught? What does it take to nurture and sustain the joy and the compassion of our own status as deeply loved children of God, followers of Jesus, indwelt by the Spirit?

Living boldly in the Sermon on the Mount, claiming it for the church and the world, just might be the most important key to living well in faith. ❧

Mary Schertz is professor of New Testament at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.



Article commissioned by Canadian Mennonite in preparation for the July 21-26 Mennonite World Conference Assembly
To register: mwc-cmm.org/pa2015

/// For discussion

1. What is the difference between the church being effective and the church being faithful? How much does your congregation concern itself with being effective? What do you think Mary Schertz means by saying that the Sermon on the Mount is for those who "favour being faithful over being effective in the world at large"?
2. How central is the Sermon on the Mount to your understanding of Christianity? Do you agree with Schertz that "living out the Sermon on the Mount is . . . our calling"? How seriously and how literally should we take Jesus' statements in Matthew 5-7?
3. Schertz refers to Ulrich Luz, who says that the Sermon on the Mount is "the standard for human behaviour and human attitudes." Do you agree? Do you see a correlation between the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments?
4. Schertz says that the Sermon on the Mount "is the thorn in our side and the rainbow in our sky." What do you think she means? How can we best encourage each other to joyously live out the Sermon on the Mount?

—BY BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, **to be kept to 300 words or less**, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. In light of the many recent letters on the topic of sexuality, we will edit any letter on this topic to a paragraph and post the rest online at www.canadianmennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ If Christ is not the head, the church suffers dementia

MY WIFE HAS Alzheimer's disease and is presently in long-term care. While visiting her I have observed other residents suffering from various forms of dementia and thought of the persons they had likely been before illness robbed them of their ability to think rationally. Some needed help with simple tasks, others would ask the same question repeatedly, all because their brains were no longer controlling their bodies.

The debilitating effects of dementia drew my mind to passages in the Bible that speak of Christ as the head of the church and reminded me of the importance of the head being in control of the body. Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV) states: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who

FROM OUR LEADERS

Reconsidering sacred symbols

KEN WARKENTIN

I have had a recurring dream that began after a trip to Italy. During my time there I visited at least 50 churches and was struck with the fact that many claimed to be the home of sacred relics—especially bits of the cross of Christ. After reporting this to my historian friend, he responded with the statement that if all the acclaimed "pieces of the cross" in Italy were in one place there would be enough to fill the Sistine Chapel.

In my dream I am a pastor of a church experiencing a huge snow storm. The power is off and no one has any heat. Amazingly the surrounding community comes to the church in which I work thinking that they will find sanctuary, safety and the necessities of life. Because we need heat, several people begin dismantling the pews for firewood, several others cut a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape, and several others begin looking for kindling to light the fire. The search for kindling becomes desperate, and we

begin to realize that we will not be able to light the fire needed to survive.

In my dream I have an entire room filled with the sacred pieces of the cross, sacred bits I have been collecting for decades. Some even have certificates of authenticity. When the people discover I have an office filled with wood that could be used as kindling, I am urged to run and get some.



Do I have sacred symbols and cherished beliefs that are preventing me from serving my world?

"We cannot burn the cross," I say. "It is the very reason for the existence of this church."

The group responds with "Pastor, it's not the cross. It's just wood. Burn it! We are dying here!"

At this point I wake up—wondering, disconcerted, interested in why I keep having this dream. Do I have sacred symbols and cherished beliefs that are

preventing me from serving my world?

I wonder if it is time to reconsider the ways we have held symbols. I wonder which elements of our corporate life together have become enshrined "pieces of the cross" in our closets. Do the symbols of God's love in our churches adorn without inspiring?

I wonder if some of our church buildings themselves serve as symbols of God's presence without the incarnation of Jesus walking, teaching, and healing in our midst. Do they inoculate us from the weight of engaging with the cares, concerns, and needs of our neighbours? Has over familiarity with these symbols caused us to neglect acts of love to our neighbours who are saying to us "we are hurting, we are dying, and we need some

love and support"?

The recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation final report is but one example of this genuine cry. This is a good day for us to consider how the symbols of our faith may be preventing us from incarnating the love of Jesus for his creation.

Ken Warkentin is the executive director for Mennonite Church Manitoba.

is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

A body of believers, the local church, may have beautiful facilities and stimulating programs, but if Christ is not directing the program it may have little lasting effect on the membership. The same questions may be asked repeatedly without considering what Christ would answer. To recognize Christ as the leader of the church requires strong, courageous and humble

human leadership dedicated to serving and glorifying God.

Christ has built the church into an effective force for God's kingdom on earth. The limiting factor is the connection between the head and the body and the willingness of the church to follow Christ's leadership. For the headship of Christ to be an effective reality, every member of the church and every leader must maintain a close personal contact with the head, Christ, with the determination to do his will.

JOSEPH VOEGLIN, TOFIELD, ALTA.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

You must die

PHIL WAGLER

On our deck there sits a small pot. It has been sitting in much the same spot for over a year. My youngest son is a budding gardener, and in the pot that sits on that spot, he dropped an apple seed. Yes, one of his middle names is John.

For a year that seed did nothing. In fact, we were ready to dump the ground and start again when, to little Johnny Applesseed's delight, a sprout emerged. His patience paid off. "Why did it take so long?" he asked.

A seed must lie dormant if there is to be new life. Jesus picked up on this regarding his own death. "*Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds*" (John 12:24-25).

Thanks to my son, the subversive spiritual principle of the Gospel sits in parable on my deck railing. The principle is this: there is no life without a dying.

Sometimes, like germination, awakening to this truth can take a long time. It is so counter-intuitive and we are stubborn people after all. We seek to prove that our knowledge, politics, religiosity, or ethical superiority will bring life. It won't. That's only painting the pot. Or, as Jesus described it to the Pharisees, that's just

washing the outside of the dish while the inside is a grimy mess (Matthew 23:25).

How much of your faith is simply about paying attention to the outside of the pot? What is done to impress others, or even God? What is done to not be perceived as offensive? What is done to rebelliously be offensive? What's common in all this posturing is that it tragically misses the Gospel.

What is the Good News of the Kingdom Jesus brings? It is seen in every dying seed that brings new life.

The revelation of the Kingdom of God was most fully seen in the seed dying. Jesus Christ lays down his life. Only by this is new life in a painted-pot world possible.

But, Jesus doesn't stop with a word

How much of your faith is simply about paying attention to the outside of the pot?



about his own dying. He says if we love our life (i.e. fight to keep from dying), we'll actually lose it, and that if we hate our life (i.e. are ready to lay it down), we'll actually keep it. We must follow him with our own cross (John 12:25-26).

There's that spiritual principle again: there is no life without dying. For the

Apostle Paul this dying is more than a ticket into future eternal bliss but the ushering in of the present-tense aliveness of the Kingdom of God! The Kingdom grows when a person chooses to be crucified with Christ, laying down every self-justifying strategy (Galatians 2:20). Only in this surrender to the victory of Christ is new life possible.

But how do you identify spiritual death and new life? Humility. He doesn't have to, yet Jesus, God with us, humbles himself, seeks the good of others, and becomes obedient to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8). God obeys death? The spiritual principle is embodied in Jesus. The kernel falls. The Christ dies in fully surrendered humility and resurrection, new life, and the glories of the highest heaven resound. Only in this same humility is the fruit of heaven evidenced through us. The miracle of heaven is seen as others are honoured above ourselves. Every act of humility is a retelling of the Gospel.

Friends, in all our ways forward as the

Church of Jesus Christ, humility must lead the way. Everything else is just painting the pot. You and I must die.

Phil Wagler is now waiting for the next pot, where a peach pit was planted to come to life. That one may take some prayer (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).

✉ 'Absurd' to think an atheist can be a Mennonite

RE: "MENNONITE ME," April 27, page 4.

It is truly unfortunate that Robin Fast has lost his Christian faith. But let's be serious, it didn't slip like a blanket off of his shoulders; he made a conscious decision—or, more likely, a thousand little ones—to reject it, including, perhaps, his decision to spend Sundays "not in church but . . . watching reruns on TV and eating sushi."

Fast may sentimentally cling to some values, food preferences and familial cultural connections of his

past. However, for him to suggest that because of this he is a Mennonite, despite being an atheist, is nothing less than absurd.

More importantly, it does a great disservice to many people:

- Martyrs did not endure tongue screws so as to prevent them from sharing cultural tidbits such as recipes for paska, borscht or Easter cheese. Tongue screws were used to keep Mennonites from testifying to their faith as they were led off to be killed, so they couldn't witness to the surrounding crowds despite their own

NEW ORDER VOICE

Winds of change

KATIE DOKE SAWATZKY

In a couple weeks, my family and I will move to my hometown, Regina, where I'll start school next fall.

Maybe it's because I'm in a time of transition in my personal life—books packed up, clothes and toys in boxes, cleaning buckets everywhere—but I'm sensitive to winds of change around me.

It started with our Prime Minister, who committed Canada to decarbonization at the G7 summit in Germany in June. Admittedly, it's a goal set for 2100, but I never thought I'd hear that kind of admission from Stephen Harper, who has banked everything on Canada's oil and gas industries.

And then you have the Pope's recent Encyclical, *Laudato Si* (Praise Be),

which tells "all people" to recognize the harmful impacts of climate change and change their consumptive behaviour. He begins the whole thing by quoting his namesake, Saint Francis: "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs." Wow!

And then there's the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), made after hearing

testimonies from residential school survivors. These changes, most of them demanded of governments, will acknowledge the rights of aboriginal peoples and the legacy of residential schools.

As an eco-justice-minded-but-cynical sort, I'm used to being indignant towards systems that fuel negative change and wary of leaders' efforts or intentions. In fact, I'm so used to being cynical that when even a glimmer of hope, of concrete change, shows (like the PM's admission about decarbonization), it catches me off guard. But leaders can be moved and their



When change is in the air and Hope picks up . . . it's hard not to think of the Spirit at work.

words, political or holy, can be powerful.

It feels like these words have been a long time coming. But while winds of change are evolutionary, they can also be a force that demands to be felt.

In mid-June, my family and I took the ferry to Vancouver Island to visit friends. There had been a windstorm the night before and by the morning the winds had died down only slightly. The captain told us to hang on for safety and later changed course to avoid rougher waters.

People still went on the outside deck. Hair in their faces, jackets billowing, they had to crouch to get back inside. One boy stood on the deck, and, perhaps because he was all alone on the port-side bow, stood straight up with his arms out-stretched, leaned back, and let the wind hold him up.

My cynicism tells me to laugh at Stephen Harper's commitment and count it some kind of campaign ploy. And as much as I love the Pope's eloquent words and support the demands made by the TRC, I wonder about the responses. What will happen? What will everyone do with these words?

But that's just the thing. There are moments after words are spoken and before action is taken, when, just for a little while, we can ride the wind. When change is in the air and Hope picks up and hits with such force that it's hard not

to think of the Spirit at work. These moments happen and I'm thankful for them.

That day on the ferry I stayed inside the boat. I wish I hadn't. Everyone who went outside to feel the gusts on the deck came in with smiles on their faces.

Katie Doke Sawatzky is a writer and freelance editor. She's moving from Vancouver to Regina in July. She can be reached at katiesawatzky@gmail.com.

impending deaths.

- Mennonite churches that actively reach out to their surrounding communities go to pains to ensure that their churches are open and welcoming to all, not merely to members of a specific cultural group.
- Many individuals and congregations that do not share the cultural heritage to which Fast refers have chosen to identify with the Mennonite expression of the Christian faith. To them, being Mennonite has everything to do with its deep, rich, historical-yet-modern expression of the Christian faith and has nothing to do with a particular cultural identity.

PETER WYNGAARDEN, ELMIRA, ONT.

✉ Joke misquoted

RE: “THIS WILL lead to dancing,” May 25, page 28. I find I must respond to Rachel Bergen’s article in which the opening paragraph says, “There’s a running joke in the church that Mennonites don’t dance because it could lead to sex.” In fact the joke is: “Why don’t Mennonites have sex standing up? Answer: “Because it could lead to dancing.” Now it’s funny!

LORI KLASSEN, WINNIPEG

✉ Palmer Becker’s article ‘very much needed’

RE: “MENNONITE CHRISTIANS are unique,” by Palmer Becker, May 25, page 4.

Thanks for publishing this article. It should be committed to memory by every Mennonite-Christian to help us in our discussion with our workmates and neighbours in inviting them to encounter the Jesus we follow and believe in. From my experience, we, the lay people of Mennonite Church Canada have very much needed such an expository article.

Referring to ourselves as Mennonite Christians, using Mennonite as the adjective, will help to counter the image of us being primarily a people of a “Mennonite culture,” that is a mixture of Swiss and/or Russian food and customs. And, I hereby challenge our churches, area churches, and MC Canada in particular, to consider a name change to Mennonite-Christian Church Canada. The acronym MCCC will easily distinguish us from our sister organization, the other MCC (Mennonite Central Committee).

I also suggest the addition of “Core Value #4: Compassion” as one that is also the centre of our work, equal to the Core Value # 3 of Reconciliation. We are a people known in North America through our support of the volunteers and staff of MCC, Mennonite Disaster Service and Mennonite Health Societies. We

have been taught to follow Christ’s teaching of “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Add to that Jesus’ story of our expected response to His grace to us as outlined in the last part of Matthew 25, along with further exhortations in Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 3:14; 4:20-21; James 2:8, and John 13:34-35; 15:12-13.

So, let’s use the information in this article in our discussions with those who need to hear this unique Mennonite-Christian perspective.

WALTER WIEBE

Former Mennonite Church Alberta chair, current MDS volunteer in High River, Alberta

✉ Young people say evolutionary theory strengthens faith

WHILE THERE MAY be things pulling young people away from the Christian faith in a Mennonite perspective, one of those things is not evolutionary theory, as argued by the writer of a letter in the April 13 *Canadian Mennonite* (page 12).

For the past few months, we have been discussing science and faith in our senior high Sunday school class at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton. We think that science and religion can work together and that both can be true. This debate is an unfortunate stumbling block that the church as a whole must face.

Young churchgoers have their faith strengthened by learning about evolutionary theories (which are backed by extensive physical science research) and exploring their own reactions. Seeing adult figures in church communities being so rigid and unwilling to question their own institutions is what gives the church a reputation as an anti-intellectual body.

In our view, the Bible is a book of profound meaning as a whole, but particular pieces cannot be narrowly regarded as being of absolute historical or scientific fact. Science in biblical times is not the science of today and all of us benefit from that difference. Science and history and religious thinking and faith can all be used to understand the world and engage it faithfully. John 3:16 and Genesis 1:1 (the two verses mentioned by the letter-writer) are both important truths, but not scientific facts. They need to be considered in association with our contemporary knowledge of the world and not merely as they were understood in the past.

Science versus religion is a sideshow compared to the more important message from Jesus as told in the Bible—to be people of deep love and acceptance.

ALEX NEUFELDT, OLIVIA NEUFELDT, DARIAN WIEBE-NEUFELD, TOM BUHR, AYRTON BLANK, SABRINA BLANK, DANIEL PRIOR, TARYN HALUZA-DELAY, ETHAN HALUZA-DELAY, KESSLER DOUGLAS, LIAM KACHKAR

✉ In search of male and female

There are some pretty strong perspectives on the issue of gender. As a Christian I am reluctant to get into this debate because it is so emotionally charged. However, I think it is important for Christians to understand that science confirms that there is no simple dichotomy of male/female. There is a continuum that represents variations on this notion of male and female.

This is a complex subject. It is not a simple matter of XX or XY chromosomes coming into play at the time of conception. This is evident from research findings regarding males with Klinefelter Syndrome or females with Turner Syndrome, the latter having only one X chromosome at conception. It is important that we be both gentle and cautious in this area of discussion.

It is easy to alienate people with our lack of knowledge and dogmatic assertions about sin and the Bible. God's ways are not always our ways. Perhaps we have to learn to walk humbly and accept the fact that God wants us to embrace mystery. We do not have all the answers.

F. HAWKINS, LEAMINGTON, ONT.

Dr. Hawkins is a retired professor in social work/social psychology.

NEW TITLES

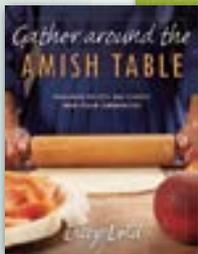
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A moment from yesterday



Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario/Mennonite Archival Image Database

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Archives of Ontario

In 1962, Canada hosted the Mennonite World Conference for the first time. Twelve thousand delegates attended; 6,000 of these were billeted in local homes. Historian T.D. Regehr notes in *Mennonites in Canada: A People Transformed*, "The Kitchener-Waterloo area, where Old Order Amish lived side by side with successful Mennonite businessmen, professionals, and academics, provided a unique opportunity to show the diversity of Canadian Mennonite life. The idea that all life must be brought into harmony and wholeness under the Lordship of Christ, allowing for no distinction between sacred and secular...was strongly affirmed at the conference."



archives.mhsc.ca

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Ballantyne—Lily Leona (b. April 15, 2015), to Jon and Rebecca Ballantyne, Ebenfeld Mennonite, Herschel, Sask. in Edmonton.

Blair—Hamish (b. June 12, 2015), to Alison and Doug Blair, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Carter—Olivia Joy (b. May 26, 2015), to Jacqueline and Robert Carter, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Deen—Valerie Rose (b. May 13, 2015), to Gerdie and Rick Deen, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Dirks—Malakai Rudy Robert (b. May 30, 2015), to Nathan and Taryn Dirks, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., in Botswana.

Dreja—Isaac Alexander Wieslaw (b. May 30, 2015), to Alex and Jolene Dreja, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Giesbrecht—Marley Lillian (b. May 17, 2015) to Matthew and Christina Giesbrecht, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Heinrichs—Bethany Marie (b. June 10, 2015), to Robert Heinrichs and Lisa (Klassen) Heinrichs, Langley Mennonite, B.C.

Jacobs—Willow Jane (b. June 9, 2015) to Wes and Angie Jacobs, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Jantzi—Andrew Wayne Alexander (b. Jan. 11, 2013) adopted by Matt and Jessica Jantzi on March 16, 2015, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Jarvis—Callum Micah Nathan (b. June 2, 2015), to Micah Jarvis and Laura Wallace Jarvis, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Simon David Robert (b. June 8, 2015), to Stephanie (Nickel) and Andrew Klassen, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Koop—Elizabeth Ann (b. May 10, 2015), to Brendan and Jen Koop, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Sears—Ronan Michael (b. April 29, 2015), to Dorothea Toews and Jonathan Sears, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Lisa Lawrence, Tim Veal—Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, June 21, 2015.

Alan Harder, Steven Reimer, Rachel Wahl—Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man., May 31, 2015.

George Guenther, Helen Guenther, Isaac Woelke, Tina Woelke—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 24, 2015.

Macaila Funk, Emily Hooge—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., June 21, 2015.

Suzanne Delinelle—Ottawa Mennonite, Ont., April 19, 2015.

Annie Ropp, Austin Schultz, Isaiah Schultz—Poole Mennonite, Ont., June 7, 2015.

Connor Huxman, Alison Pudwell—Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., May 10, 2015.

Matthew Stefaniuk, Vanessa Stefaniuk—Superb Mennonite, Kerrobert, Sask, June 7, 2015.

Isaac Beech, Emilia Klassen, Hannah Klassen, Elizabeth Pfisterer, Aaron Ruby, Jamie Torrance-Perks, Katarina Klassen—Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont., June 7, 2015.

Janice Nesbitt—Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont., May 24, 2015.

Tyler Poole, Janessa Pretorius, Jaden Pretorius—Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., June 14, 2015.

Brent Derksen, Mandi Dyck, Ruth Enns—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 31, 2015.

Marriages

Brooks/Jones—Drew Brooks and Hannah Jones (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) at First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., June 13, 2015.

Driedger/Siemens—Stacie Driedger and Shawn Siemens, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., May 30, 2015.

Erb/Herrfort—Marj Erb and Stan Herrfort, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., June 6, 2015.

Gerber—Dan, 70 (b. Oct. 30, 1944; d. June 3, 2015), Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Hoffele/Jantzi—Kelsey Hoffele and Nick Jantzi, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., June 13, 2015.

Martens/Verhoog—Audrey Martens (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Noah Verhoog in Steinbach, Man., June 27, 2015.

Deaths

Bergen—Mary (nee Redekop), 88 (b. June 2, 1926; d. April 26, 2015), Eben-Ezer Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Enns—Martha (nee Friesen), 84 (b. Aug. 24, 1930; d. May 18, 2015), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Helen (nee Goerzen), 104 (b. Nov. 14, 1910; d. May 29, 2015), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gascho—Roy 84 (b. March 25, 1930; d. Dec. 8, 2014), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Hamm—Mary (nee Rempel), 84 (b. Oct. 21, 1930; d. June 15, 2015), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Hoepfner—Mary (Wiens) 94 (b. August 15, 1920; d. June 11, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Justina Martha (nee Friesen), 94 (b. Jan. 28, 1921; d. April 15, 2015), Rosemary Mennonite, Alta.

Krieger—Almeda, 84 (b. Jan. 21, 1931; d. May 6, 2015), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Manske—Irv, 98 (b. Aug. 25, 1916; d. June 2, 2015), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Neufeld—Dick, 91 (b. June 7, 1923; d. June 1, 2015), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Pankratz—Helen (nee Klassen), 91 (b. April 16, 1924; d. June 19, 2015), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Penner—Olga (Olly) (nee Wiebe) 86 (b. April 7, 1929; d. May 29, 2015), Altona Mennonite, Man.

VIEWPOINT

Oka: 25 years later

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

It's been 25 years since the military faced off against Mohawk Warriors in the pine forest between the village of Oka and the community of Kanehsatake, 53 kilometres west of Montreal. The 78-day armed siege was the most violent and consequential clash between Indigenous people and the Canadian state in modern times.

What has changed since then?

The flare-up was sparked by a proposed golf course expansion and condo development that would have turned a Mohawk cemetery into a parking lot. It represented something much bigger—a society divided by race and seething with anger.

The images were jarring: tanks rolled through quiet little communities; automatic weapons were brandished on both sides; white rioters burned effigies of Mohawk warriors; and, in an iconic image, a soldier and Mohawk Warrior stared each other down at point-blank range, generations of tension compressed into the few inches between their steely faces.

On July 11, 1990, filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, a member of the Abenaki nation, was driving to work when she heard a radio report about the initial police raid on what had been a peaceful Mohawk camp. She didn't make it into the office that day. She went to Oka.

In a chaotic exchange of gunfire that day, an officer was fatally shot. Though no proof was presented that he died from a Mohawk bullet instead of friendly fire, tensions skyrocketed. The Warriors set up barricades on the highway. A thousand police officers were called in.

Obomsawin's National Film Board production, *Kanesatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, stands as the definitive documentary about the Oka Crisis, a messy depiction of the open wound at the heart of a society.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/SHANEY KOMULAINEN



Canadian soldier Patrick Cloutier and Saskatchewan native Brad Laroque come face to face in a tense standoff at the Kahnesatake reserve in Oka, Que., Sept. 1, 1990.

It was “a very tense place to be,” she recounted by phone from Montreal about the time she spent behind the barricades. “The warriors and soldiers were often insulting each other . . . one gunshot and you knew there would be a fight.”

Behind the scenes, Mohawk leaders were in talks with government officials. Veteran Mennonite mediator John Paul Lederach was invited by Mohawk leaders to serve as a resource. As Lederach wrote a year later, the Mohawks put forward a “clear and serious offer presented in good faith” at a key point in the conflict. Government responded by calling off negotiations and bringing in the army.

Eventually, 30 Warriors and about 20 other supporters holed up on the forested grounds of a treatment centre across the road from the cemetery. Obomsawin was there too, sleeping for a time under a shelter made of garbage bags, providing an intimate view of life under siege.

Twenty-five years later, her voice turns hesitant and edgy as she recounts the final days. “[The Warriors] were pretty much making their wills,” she says.

Surrounded and outnumbered in Kanehsatake, the Warriors decided to burn their weapons and walk out. They weren't surrendering, just going home. Mayhem ensued. Screaming, shoving, people on the ground, arrests, rough treatment.

What has happened since? The burial grounds and other nearby parcels were bought by Ottawa and added to what Aboriginal Affairs spokesperson Michelle Perron called the Kanehsatake “interim land base.” The golf course was not expanded. The condos were built elsewhere.

Perron pointed to an online list of steps taken by the government between 1990 and 2010 to address Kanehsatake concerns. Despite generations of Mohawk efforts, the matter of them having been dispossessed of a homeland by deceitful means in generations past—as documented by Obomsawin and others—remains unresolved. Perron says negotiations are ongoing. Mohawk representatives did not respond to interview requests.

Despite unrest and warnings across Canada, there has not been another Oka. The Caledonia conflict came closest.

Obomsawin, now 82, says Oka was a national turning point. The arc of her work illustrates the change. Images of soldiers and warriors locked in stare-downs have been replaced in more recent films by images of indigenous people marching on Ottawa, young people speaking up in their own languages, calls for sharing, drums beating. Government authorities are not seen pushing back. Tellingly, they are essentially absent. The drama is muted.

Is the conflict narrative giving way to one of reconciliation? Or are we in a generational lull before another Oka, perhaps a non-violent one? ❧

For more on Mennonite involvement at Oka, Obomsawin's work, and the current state of Mohawk-Government relations see
canadianmennonite.org/oka



WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Hope is a gift friends can give each other

BY KATE JANZEN

What do Martha Stewart and Yvonne Johnson have in common? They both spent time in prison. Stewart, wealthy and famous, served five months for manipulating stocks, while Johnson was charged with first degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. This is where the similarities end.

Stewart recently spoke at Leadership Conference for Women in Calgary and, when asked about her prison



In 2008 I was granted day parole and finally granted full parole in 2012, when I was 51."

In 2008, Johnson received guardianship of her two grandchildren. She is very protective of them and tries to guide them to make good choices. She applied for an apartment for the three of them, while at a halfway house. Johnson also completed many courses offered in prison and is interested in creating a website to sell her native artwork.

She has had a number of requests to speak to the law class at the University of Saskatchewan. While there, she has sold many of her books.

Another friend, Mary Stacey, who is deeply interested in native women, runs a counselling service for women like Johnson and recently met with her. That has given Johnson a new sense of excitement about sharing her experiences and becoming self-sufficient.

Johnson's physical and emotional health have been impacted by her experiences—inadequate housing and the demands of raising two grandchildren now entering their early teens. She is reviving A.I.S.H (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) and would like to find steady work. But she tires easily due to medical conditions. So a group of friends is assisting her with getting resources she needs for speaking engagements and other opportunities to sell books in order that she can have her own way of supporting herself and her grandchildren.

Johnson dreams about her grandchildren being able to experience the love of the land that was so vital to her when she was a child. She talks about gardening and having a sweat lodge. Her eyes brighten when I tell her we have room on our property for her to do these things. This summer, her grandchildren are enrolled at Camp Valaqua, Mennonite Church Alberta's year-round facility, and also at Ghost River Rediscovery Camp for indigenous children.

It has been a delight to see Johnson smile and to see glimmers of hope in her eyes. Most of all, she has reminded me that hope is a gift friends can give each other, and that has more value than just writing a cheque. ❧

Kate Janzen attends Foothills Mennonite Church. She met Johnson two years ago when, at the initiative of a church friend, Jeannette Thiessen, Johnson was invited to speak at congregational discussions on how to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. "Johnson's very sad story of injustice and racism was a gift for us and made the TRC 'very real'."



Yvonne Johnson and Rudy Wiebe together authored Johnson's autobiography.

experience, said very little rehabilitation happens and that many of the women should not be there, because of unfair trials.

Johnson grew up marginalized from childhood onwards. After having gone from one prison to another for 19 years, she continues to live in poverty. However, she is trying to recreate a life for herself and her grandchildren by sharing her life experiences and helping others to benefit from the insights she gained.

Johnson is supported in this by a group of friends, including Rudy and Tena Wiebe with whom she has a special relationship, given that Rudy co-authored Johnson's autobiography, *Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman*, with her while she was in prison. The book

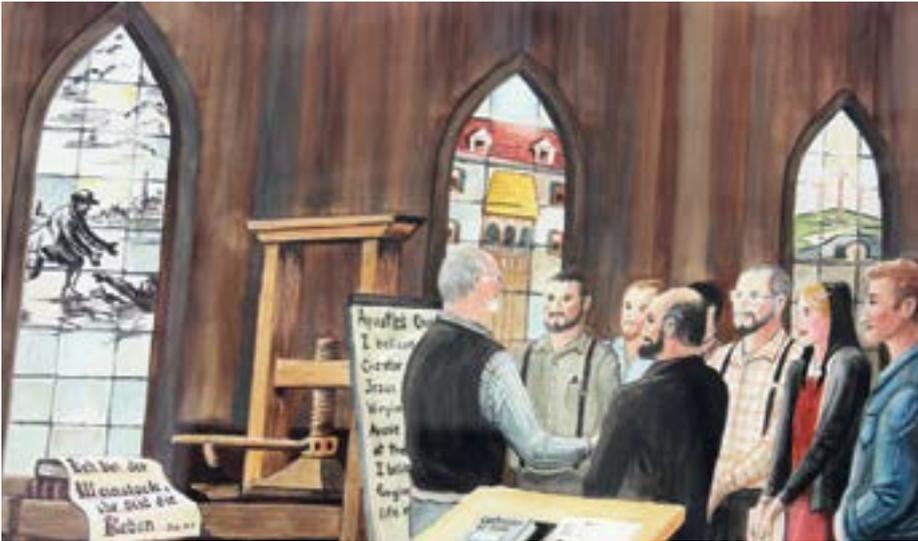
builds a case that casts doubt on her trial and became a national bestseller.

About her imprisonment and sentencing, Johnson says, "I was arrested in September 1989, a few weeks before my 27th birthday, and held without bail until trial, March 1991, when I was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment with possible eligibility for parole after serving 25 years.



Mary Stacey, Yvonne Johnson, Kate Janzen and Jeannette Thiessen are friends who support Johnson in working to become self-sufficient.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH



This painting by Victor Kleinsasser depicts John J. Friesen talking to Hutterite students after class. It was commissioned by the Hutterian Brethren Education Committee and presented to Friesen as a gift.

Hutterites thank John J. Friesen for teaching courses

Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

A new artwork honouring a professor from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) and commissioned by the Hutterian Brethren Education Committee was unveiled in CMU's new library on June 3. It honoured John J. Friesen, professor emeritus of history and theology, for his contribution to the Hutterite community.

Between 2000 and 2014, Friesen taught a number of Old Testament, Anabaptist, and Hutterite history courses to several hundred Hutterite teachers, pastors, and young people from across southern Manitoba, South Dakota, and Minnesota. The painting, created by Victor Kleinsasser of the Crystal Spring Community near Ste. Agathe, Man., depicts a group of Hutterites speaking with Friesen after one of their classes together.

Jesse Hofer, a CMU alumnus and member of the Hutterian Brethren Education Committee, said the painting represents the important relationship that

has developed between Mennonites and Hutterites since Friesen taught his first course to Hutterites.

"The artistic contribution is a sign of our commitment to build and grow this relationship into the future," Hofer said.

In addition to the artwork, the Hutterites made a \$10,000 donation in Friesen's name to help fund Marpeck Commons, the new library, learning commons, and bridge at CMU. Nearly 20 colonies contributed to the donation.

Speaking at the unveiling, Friesen thanked the Hutterian community for its generosity and hospitality, as well as the opportunity to teach them for 14 years.

"I learned so much from your communities, and in the process, made many friends," Friesen said. He added that ultimately, the event was not about him, but about the Hutterites.

"In a society that is highly individualist, economically and socially, you provide a successful alternative communal model.

/// Briefly noted

Chau Dang ordained

Calgary—On June 14, after 20 years of ministry, pastor Chau Dang was ordained by area conference minister, Dan Graber, at the Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite church. Dang came to Calgary as a refugee in 1979, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee. Four years later he accepted Jesus Christ as his saviour and joined the Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church. In 1987 he married Donna Ngo. An electrician by trade, Dang and his family moved to Regina when Dang felt a call to study at the Canadian Bible College. After he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1995, the family moved to Edmonton and planted the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, where Dang served as pastor for seven years. In 2002, Dang accepted an invitation to become the pastor at his home church in Calgary, where he currently serves. Asked about his vision for the church, Dang wrote, "to carry out the great commission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people, advancing God's kingdom here on earth until Christ comes." Graber commented, "It was a good celebration and it's clear he (Chau Dang) is loved by his congregation. And the food was over the top!"

—DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



In a society that is consumer-oriented, you in many ways conserve resources through sharing and communal ownership. In a society that relegates faith into ever-smaller areas of private life, you're committed to having faith permeate and shape all areas of your life. To me, this event signals that you do not want your heritage to become a revered relic of the past, but a rich resource for the future."

CMU President Cheryl Pauls expressed her gratitude to the Hutterian community for its support and noted that at least four Hutterites have studied at CMU in recent years. ///

The Gathering Church celebrates ten years

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONTARIO

Two in three church plants don't make it past the five-year mark. That doesn't mean they haven't been successful, but long life is not part of most church plants. The Gathering Church, a full member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, celebrated its tenth anniversary quietly in February this year.

Pastor Jim Loepp Thiessen left a long-term pastorate in 2004 and was working as an interim when he felt the call to make southwest Kitchener his new church home. From the beginning the congregation has been focussed on being in the subdivision, and many folk there consider The Gathering their church, even if they only attend community events like the annual Pancake Breakfast, the Easter Egg hunt, or Tuesdays in the park free children's activities. Occasionally someone from that

scattered community will contact one of the pastors with a need, but mostly the congregation is the 120 or so who meet at W.T. Townshend Public School, including 55 children under ten years of age.

The congregation has four staff—Loepp Thiessen is the pastor, Catherine Gitzel associate, Rachel Brnjas has charge of children's ministry, and Craig Stephens leads the youth. But there are also a women's group, a men's group, a young adult group, and a female youth group. Gitzel also has charge of the relationships with both the Williamsburg and the Chandler-Mowat community centres. At the latter the congregation provides food for lunches for 80 to 100 kids every Wednesday—sandwiches, muffins and veggie packs. All the activities are structured around building relationships. Some kids come early on



Jim Loepp Thiessen and Catherine Gitzel stand in front of the Gathering Church's storefront offices on Activa Ave. in Kitchener, Ont., across the street from the W. T. Townshend Public School, where they gather on Sunday mornings. The congregation celebrated its tenth anniversary in February this year.

Wednesdays so they can sit and talk with congregational volunteers.

The congregation sets up and breaks down the worship space every Sunday at the school across the street from the storefront offices they rent. Keeping a good relationship with the school's principal and custodians is a priority, especially with 55 kids under 10 in the school every Sunday. While they are borrowing space they don't have to worry about maintenance budgets and have more resources for other projects like the many community events they continue to run after ten years.

The energy in the congregation and its participants is palpable. There is no shirking the spiritual nature of the project—this is a church interested in serving Jesus by serving the community, regardless of whether folk come to the congregation or are simply ministered to. Loepp Thiessen sees going deeper with God, engaging the community in which they find themselves, and developing authentic relationships in that community as continuing goals into the years to come.

He says, “verbal proclamation comes out of serving,” for Mennonites. The Gathering keeps on creating opportunities to do that for its members. He says that Luke 8—the parable of the seeds—continues to inspire him. Not all the seeds they plant will bear fruit but they keep on planting. ☞

PHOTO BY MARG OLFERT



Superb Mennonite Church celebrated 70 years on May 31. The group came in 1928 to the Superb, Saskatchewan, area and met in homes for worship until the building was erected in 1944-45. Four pastors in the area spoke: Dave Feick, Eileen Klaassen, Grant Martens and Lois Siemens. Singing together and the choir was a highlight for many.

PHOTO BY VIVIAN UNGER



Janelle Thiessen van Esch walks ahead of Laurence Thiessen van Esch and Vic Thiessen, who are carrying a banner representing Hope Mennonite Church in a parade at the Winnipeg Pride Festival. Hope Mennonite announced its position as officially welcoming and affirming of the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer (LGBTQ) community in 2013.

God at work in the World Snapshots

PHOTO BY RANDY KLAASSEN / TEXT BY MARIA H. KLASSEN



John Derksen, standing, associate professor at Menno Simons College, Winnipeg, is pictured leading one of three sessions on 'Understanding Islam' at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, Ont., over the weekend of May 30 and 31, during which time he also preached a sermon on 'Christians and people of other faiths'. His sessions introduced Islam's origins and development, its scriptures and teachings, and its presence in the modern world, and he addressed how Christians can relate to people of other faiths. The sessions helped prepare the church to welcome a Muslim family that it is sponsoring for a year under a joint sponsorship program between Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and the federal government. The family was to arrive on June 4.

Lebold dinner funds new pastoral training program

DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

A new focus was announced this year at the Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment fundraising dinner, because last year it reached its goal of \$1 million to fund pastoral training at Conrad Grebel University College (CGUC). This fund, jointly supported by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) and Conrad Grebel, was founded in 1997 and is named after Ralph Lebold and his wife. Lebold was a pioneer in pastoral education beginning in 1961.

At the annual dinner on June 11, Henry Paetkau, Area Church Minister for MCEC, and Trevor Bechtel, Academic Dean at CGUC, announced it would support a new program, the Anabaptist Learning Workshop that will begin this fall. This certificate program, designed by Matthew Bailey-Dick, will support new Canadian pastors who might lack facility in English, teach Anabaptism to leaders new to the Mennonite world and bring training to church leaders who might not have the requisite background to study at the university level.

The program will include practicum elements, in-person elements, as well as a hope for electronic gatherings in the future. Modelled at least in part on already successful training in Hispanic congregations in Toronto and Sherbrooke, Que., the program will also be funded by CGUC and by infusions from the MCEC Legacy Initiative Fund.

At this year's Lebold dinner, Rudy Baergen spoke on the topic, "Becoming an Intercultural Church: Does it matter?" He described a few of his intercultural experiences, noting that when Christians from different cultures come together much patience and determination is necessary to understand each other. Especially in a multi-cultural country like Canada "inter-cultural relationships will not develop without conscientious, patient work."

While he believes that Mennonite congregations need to be places where folk from many cultures can come together in Christ, sometimes new congregations need to be mono-cultural for a while—a safe place in a new land. Baergen noted that the so-called Russian Mennonite congregations have travelled the path that many new Canadian congregations are travelling now.

The evening also featured two other Mennonite leaders. Maciel Hernandez of Toronto Mennonite New Life Church spoke about the Spanish-language training their lay leaders have been receiving from teachers like Arnold Snyder and his book, *From Anabaptist Seed*. This congregation is completely lay-led since Adolfo and Betty Puricelli retired a few years



Rudy Baergen, interim pastor at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church (left) chats with Roberson Mbayamvula, pastor at Hagerman Mennonite Church. Baergen was the keynote speaker at the June 11 Lebold fundraising dinner at Conrad Grebel University College and Mbayamvula was last year's speaker.

ago. Fanosie Legesse, an Ethiopian living in Fergus, Ont., and attending Bethel Mennonite Church nearby, spoke about the image in Revelation of people from every tribe and nation mixing together in worship of God. He believes that the learning goes both ways—not just dominant culture to the new Canadian cultures. ❧

❧ Pastoral Transitions in Ontario

MARLOW GINGERICH was licensed for specific ministry as a stewardship consultant with Mennonite Foundation of Canada at his home congregation, East Zorra Mennonite Church, near Tavistock, Ont. Gingerich is passionate about charitable giving, estate planning, philanthropic education and public speaking for a national charitable foundation. Prior to joining MFC, he served 16 years with Ontario Swine Improvement, most recently as operations manager. Gingerich and his wife Janice and have two sons. At East Zorra Mennonite he serves as congregational chairperson as well as finance and facility chairperson.



Gingerich

DOUG AMSTUTZ began as intentional interim at the Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank Ont., on June 1, 2015. Most recently he served as the interim supply at Rainham Mennonite Church near Selkirk, Ontario. Previously, Doug has co-pastored with his wife Wanda congregations in Scottsdale, Pa. and St. Catharines, Ont. Doug and Wanda were co-country representatives for MCC in Ethiopia for four years. His education includes an A.A. in Liberal Arts from Hesston College, Kan., a B.A. in History and Education from Goshen College, Indiana and an M.Div in Pastoral Ministry from AMBS, Elkhart, Ind. Doug and Wanda and their three daughters, Amani, Abigail and Sophia live in Kitchener.



Amstutz

—DAVE ROGALSKY

Archives preserve stories of faith

STORY AND PHOTO BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Church Canada

WINNIPEG

Historic photographs portraying life in Mennonite communities in south Russia, now eastern Ukraine, at a volunteer appreciation gathering at the Mennonite Heritage Centre on May 29 reminded Egon Enns of a story his father shared with him, but shared only once. “Dad told the story of bandits tying up

the family in the pantry,” he recalls. “My grandfather was killed by the bandits and my father, as a young boy, had to help his mother bury her father.

Enns says his personal journey of trying to gain a better understanding of his family history inspires him to support the Mennonite Heritage Centre, a ministry of Mennonite Church Canada that collects, preserves and shares historical photos and documents.

At the gathering the centre’s staff talked about the value of preserving archival material for future generations.

Korey Dyck, director of the centre, says archives provide an “often overlooked role in the life of the church.” Archives, he explains, “ensure that our faith stories, histories and examples are not lost to time, neglect, the recycling bin or indifference.”

Mennonite Heritage Centre archivist, Conrad Stoesz, encourages people to view and download archival photographs now stored on the newly launched website, Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID). This database provides public access to photo collections managed by seven Mennonite archives in Canada.

“This online photo database gives you the opportunity to search through our rare photos from home, rather than having to come into the archives,” he explains.

Scanning photographs for this new database is an ongoing process. Currently, the database contains 90,000 descriptions of photographs but only 12,000 images are available for downloading.

Another important service provided by Mennonite Heritage Centre is storing archival items for other Mennonite churches and organizations.

“We encourage our churches to submit their archival material to Mennonite Heritage Centre for safe storage and preservation,” says Lil Goertzen, office manager and communications coordinator for the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC).

“Many people are not aware of the valuable information that is stored in boxes in a dark corner of their church building. Access to archived information has proven to be a valuable resource for churches as they research their congregation history in preparation for milestone celebrations.” ❧



Korey Dyck (left), director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre, explores the archive vault with Lil Goertzen and Jonathan Schmidt, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference staff.

/// Briefly noted

New online Mennonite photo database now online

After two years of design and development, the Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID)—<http://archives.mhsc.ca>—went live for public use on March 2. The site is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and includes Mennonite archival partners in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Currently, MAID holds 90,000 descriptions of photos and 12,000 actual images. These numbers will be expanding, explains Lauren Harder-Gissing of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario. “The technology provided by MAID is energizing our partner archives to digitize our photo collections,” she says. “Having all our photos searchable through one source will be a boon for genealogists, historians, and anyone interested in finding out more about Mennonite and Canadian history. Local communities across Canada will also find their histories represented.” Patrons can search, view and order images for non-commercial uses. “This digital tool creates an important link, tying the day-to-day workings of Mennonite archives across the country together in a way previously not done,” says Alf Redekopp, a development team member and former Mennonite Heritage Centre director. Cooperation will be ongoing as partners will continue to add, develop, manage and pay for the database.

—Mennonite Historical Society of Canada





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Nepal churches respond to quake victims

A group of Nepali Anabaptist fellowships is reaching out to communities affected by the April and May 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, with a goal of assisting 2,000 families. canadianmennonite.org/nepal-churches



Engaging women's voices

In a recent symposium, women in post-graduate theological studies at Toronto School of Theology challenged participants to think in new ways about church, theology and mission.

canadianmennonite.org/engaging-voices

Commitment to faith puts farmers at risk

Because of their faith a group of Christians in Burkina Faso risks losing access to the land they farm and to their place within the village community. They refuse to provide chiefs with items designated for sacrifice to the spirits of the land. canadianmennonite.org/farmers-risk



They can't keep up

The fastest growing Mennonite Church in the world can't keep up with its need for leadership training and Bibles. New partnerships will help raise funds for educating more Ethiopian church leaders.

canadianmennonite.org/keep-up

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

CRAIG STEPHENS

is part-time youth pastor at The Gathering Church. He also works as support for a young man with special needs, something he has done for six years. Previously Stephens worked as a youth pastor at Glen Acres Baptist Church in Waterloo for five years and at the House of Friendship's Charles Street Men's Hostel for three years. He has a Bachelor of Religious Education from Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener and is currently working on a Master of Divinity from Tyndale College and Seminary in Toronto. He grew up in Tillsonburg, Ont.



HANS PETERS

was ordained at the Jane Finch Faith Community, Downsview (Toronto) Ont., on May 3, 2015. He grew up outside of the church but gave his life to God in 1983 while living in Quito, Ecuador. After marrying Oderay he joined her as a charismatic Roman Catholic, but soon they joined a non-denominational church plant. In 1989 they moved to Canada. Over the past 18 years they have been involved in nine Mennonite church plants or new Canadian congregations. Peters is a mission associate for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, and is also national coordinator of Mennonite Men/JoinHands. Peters has taken a variety of courses and seminars focusing on Mennonite understanding and community development.



—DAVE ROGALSKY

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

New peace award at Grebel to empower women

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

Conrad Grebel University College is offering a \$10,000 scholarship to a female Master of Peace and Conflict Studies (MPACS) student, thanks to a partnership with Ziauddin Yousafzai, the Global Peace Centre Canada (GPCC) and the Women's Executive Network. Yousafzai is the father of 2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

"Each year we are challenged to find funds to accept international students into our Master of PACS program," explained Lowell Ewert, director of PACS at Conrad Grebel and the University of Waterloo. "This award . . . will help us respond to this need by bringing into our program a female student from a region of the world experiencing conflict. This gift is a concrete way to empower women in peace education in the spirit of Malala."

The University of Waterloo has committed to achieve comprehensive, long-term and sustainable gender equity by developing innovative programming aimed at girls and women, right through to the University's senior leadership. This award creates opportunity and transformation for a female student from a conflict-affected area.

"Women experience the need for peace in special ways," commented President Susan Schultz Huxman. "The major conditions for the absence of peace—poverty, lack of education, and insufficient health care—affect women and girls disproportionately. This scholarship will inspire smart women to achieve and lead, to gain expertise on peace-building and women's empowerment."

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo is home to the oldest peace studies program in Canada. Conrad Grebel is home to the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) Centre for Peace Advancement, which helps to

incubate peace organizations such as the Global Peace Centre Canada. Incorporated in June 2015, the GPCC has been working to advance peace and education in areas of conflict internationally. Its work is guided by a volunteer board of directors and supported by philanthropists, senior academics, and civil society leaders. Jahan Zeb, an MPACS graduate, is the founding director and works in close collaboration with Ziauddin Yousafzai, who serves as honorary chair. ☘



Ziauddin Yousafzai (left) chats with Susan Schultz Huxman about a new peace scholarship that will allow a female student from a region of the world experiencing conflict to study at Conrad Grebel University College in the Master of Peace and Conflict Studies program. Also part of the conversation are Mohan Kendall and Ahmad Shah.



A Hutterite woman sells a piece of pie to Myrna Sawatsky at Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan's annual relief sale and auction, held June 12 and 13 in Saskatoon. The Hutterites, who have donated pies in previous years, made their first appearance as workers at this year's sale. Volunteers of all ages helped make the sale a tremendous success, said Renata Klassen, one of the event's organizers. She estimates the sale garnered about \$100,000 with the top quilt selling for over \$6,000. A new event at this year's sale was Pedal for Peace, which saw about 40 cyclists raise over \$2,000 through entrance fees and sponsorships.

PHOTO BY SALAR AHMED



Mennonite Central Committee will work with its partner organization, Iraqi al-Amal, to provide training to 900 students and 250 teachers in the Najaf, Baghdad and Erbil governorates in Iraq. The photo above shows MCC's work with its partner on another project, the distribution of humanitarian assistance to displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

MCC expands peacebuilding work in Middle East

By JULIE BELL

Mennonite Central Committee

In a region of ongoing conflict and tension, supporting peace and promoting dialogue between religious communities continues to be a fundamental mission for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

A \$500,000 grant from the Canadian government will allow MCC to enhance its peacebuilding work in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. In keeping with MCC's approach to all of its projects, the organization will work with partners in each country to undertake peacebuilding activities.

"I believe our peacebuilding efforts are most significant when they are actively working with networks that are already in place," says Krista Johnson Weicksel, MCC's peacebuilding coordinator. "This is the way to prevent violence from erupting."

The Iraqi Ministry of Education has identified the prevention of sectarian violence as a priority. MCC will work with a local partner, the Iraqi al-Amal Association, to change the civics curriculum in schools in the Najaf, Baghdad and Erbil governorates. Nine hundred students and 250 teachers will receive training in cross-cultural communication,

with emphasis on active citizenship and acceptance of other cultures and religious values. The education ministry says that if this project is successful, the curriculum could be used throughout the country.

In Syria, MCC will continue its long-term partnership with Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue. Young activists and community leaders will receive training in citizenship and inter-religious dialogue, and some will be provided funding for initiatives within their own communities. Up to eight local projects could take place in the Homs, Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous and Latakia governorates.

In Lebanon, where tension between religious groups is growing, a series of workshops will develop strategies on mitigating and resolving inter-religious conflict. A hundred teachers and community leaders in the Mount Lebanon and North governorates will participate. The strategies will be used at a local level to assist collaboration between groups. MCC will work alongside its partner, Permanent Peace Movement.

This peacebuilding work across the region culminates with a conference in

/// Briefly noted

Menno Simons College promotes agriculture in Nepal

Winnipeg—Among the research partners working at sustainable farming in Nepal is Dr. Kirit Patel, assistant professor of international development studies at Menno Simons College, a college of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Principal investigators are from the University of Guelph, and other researchers include the Nepal Agricultural Research Council. Funding in the amount \$2.6 million is coming from the International Development Research Centre and the Government of Canada's Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. This project begins in August and will run for two-and-a-half years with the focus on technological developments for subsistence farming. The project will also work at improving soil fertility and promoting resilient crops.

—Canadian Mennonite University

Beirut, Lebanon, where participants from projects in the three countries will gather.

"They will come together to share stories, resources and curricula with one another and with religious leaders," says Johnson Weicksel. "This will all lead to a statement about religious co-operation in the entire region."

Johnson Weicksel calls MCC's peacebuilding work an integral part of building healthy communities. "War and conflict are costly," she says. "By focussing on building peace and preventing violence, we are actually investing in a better, more sustainable future."

The funding for these projects comes from the Office of Religious Freedom, which operates within the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.

Peacebuilding and interfaith dialogue have long been a major focus for MCC in the Middle East. MCC has also been involved in ongoing relief work in the Middle East, including providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced people. //

Alleged murder of tribal advocate prompts commissioning of peace monitors

BY DEBORAH FROESE WITH FILES FROM JONATHAN CRANSTON
Mennonite Church Canada

The alleged murder of John Calaba, a Dulangan Manobo tribal advocate on April 30, 2015, prompted the commissioning of five Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) monitors in the Philippines on May 18. At the time of his disappearance, Calaba was actively involved in measures to save the tribe's ancestral old-growth forests, including gathering photographic evidence. His body has not been recovered.

PeaceBuilders Community Inc. (PBCI), a ministry supported by Mennonite Church Canada and directed by Witness workers Joji and Dann Pantoja, has walked with the Dulangan Manobo people for several years. They offered coffee growing seminars through the PBCI fair-trade business initiative Coffee for Peace and provided advocacy support in the pursuit of land justice, including training for the newly commissioned PAR monitors. The monitors received official PBCI identification—something new for tribal members, who are often unable to obtain government identification.

Since the Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMA) of the Philippines awarded M&S Company and Silvicultural Industries the right to log in 1992, the Dulangan Manobo report ongoing violence and oppression. They are unable to travel freely throughout their own territory, which is peppered with armed checkpoints controlled by the logging corporations. Homes have been burned and crops destroyed. People have been beaten and murdered.

The Dulangan Manobo view their ancestral homeland on the island of Mindanao as sacred. Forests provide the shade needed to grow productive coffee trees—trees that provide income. But logging destroys the fragile ecosystem, and the current approach to reforestation with imported Australian gemelina trees contributes to soil deterioration and lower crop yields.

Before they can legally end the logging, the tribe must have the land surveyed to obtain a government-issued Certificate

of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) so ownership can be formally recognized. Unfortunately, efforts to conduct the survey have been thwarted by corporations logging the area.

Jonathan Cranston, PBCI staff writer, reports that the corporations involved appear to be subsidiaries of one of Philippine's largest construction conglomerations. He writes, "through a combination of bureaucratic inertia and the deliberate obstruction of the head of the companies and his employees, the CADT has remained always maddeningly beyond the grasp of the tribes people. This is in spite of the many local and some national government officials who have testified to the legitimacy of the tribes' claims."

In Dec. 2014, tribal representatives including John Calaba met with Daniel

PEACEBUILDERS COMMUNITY INC. PHOTO



A member of Dulangan Manobo tribe surveys a freshly bulldozed logging road cut through the old-growth forest of the tribe's ancestral homeland in the Philippines.

Pantoja and the PBCI Information and Communications Team to draft an appeal for justice to Philippine President Benigno Aquino. Bishop Ephraim Tendero, the National Director of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, personally delivered the appeal to the palace of the president and included his own letter of endorsement.

To date there has been no response. ❧

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Ride for Refuge to support ministry in Thailand

By DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

Northeast Thailand is the poorest region in the country. Democracy is uneven, and peaceful protests can land protesters in barred cells overnight. Since a military coup in 2014, poor and landless

subsistence farmers are reportedly being evicted from national reserve lands they have farmed for decades.

The region is home to the indigenous Isaan people, as well as many migrants

from Laos, which borders Thailand to the north. Despite economic challenges, the cities in this region are growing, including the city of Khon Kaen where a new Mennonite church is emerging.

Tom and Christine Poovong of Trinity Mennonite Church, Calgary, have been called to work with the vulnerable and marginalized people of Khon Kaen. They recently launched Menno Nursery, a day-care program reaching out to families in the neighborhood. Tom is building relationships with local entrepreneurs, including some who attend the Maliwan Mennonite Church, to encourage potential income generation projects such as a fish farm and a new coffee shop. These kinds of projects support a long-range vision for establishing a self-sustaining local faith community and extending Christian service to others. A local property owner has already provided the Poovongs with a building for local outreach and worship gatherings.

Mennonite Church Canada is partnering with Ride for Refuge to raise \$45,000 in support of one full year of ministry in Thailand. Ride for Refuge provides online fundraising infrastructure for charities. It is centred on an annual intergenerational, recreational bike ride that takes place in cities across Canada. Congregations are invited to join the ride in support of ministry in Thailand. For details visit donate.mennonitechurch.ca/project/Poovong. %

PHOTO BY GORDON JANZEN



Tom and Christine Poovong recruited local volunteers to assist with a newly launched nursery, a community outreach program in Khon Kaen, Thailand. From left to right: Benz Khemma, Tom and Christine Poovong with their young children, and Amp and Naaming Anantasak with their young son.



In thanks for the concert on National Aboriginal Day by Mino Ode Kwewak N'Gamowak (Good Hearted Women Singers) from Kitchener-Waterloo, Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario, gives a handmade blanket to Tammy Coleman (left) and Aryanna Bartlett (centre). Looking on are Crystal Goulet and Angel Mongrain. On the wall behind them is the plaque given to MCCO at the building dedication by leaders of the Six Nations on whose land 50 Kent Ave. Kitchener is built. It says "May the sun always shine on our friendship." National Aboriginal Day, is celebrated each June 21.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Jamie Arpin-Ricci a man of surprising contrasts

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

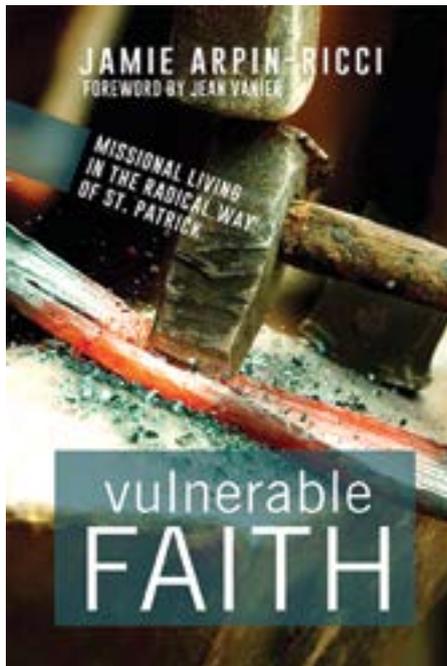
He pastors Little Flowers Community, a small Mennonite congregation in Winnipeg's west end neighbourhood that chose to belong to the larger church body through Mennonite Church Manitoba/Mennonite Church Canada. He co-directs Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Urban Ministries Winnipeg. He's also the director of Chiara House, a new intentional Christian community in Winnipeg, husband to Australian wife Kim and father to Ethiopian son Micah. He and Kim are in the process of adopting another son from Guyana. In addition, Arpin-Ricci is a writer who illustrates Anabaptist principles through the lives of Catholic Saints.

His most recent book, *Vulnerable Faith: Missional Living in the Radical Way of St. Patrick*, incorporates the life of St. Patrick and the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) 12-steps program. The book was launched at CommonWord, the bookstore and resource centre of Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University, on May 7, 2015.

CHVN radio personality Kyle Rudge opened the event with an author interview. After quizzing Arpin-Ricci about his connection with Catholic saints, Rudge asked what prompted the author to incorporate the 12-step program into his latest book.

The 12 steps, Arpin-Ricci stated, "were not principles that were specifically just for people with addictions, but they actually offered a powerful path of transformation for anyone willing to be vulnerable."

According to Arpin-Ricci, the truest expression of faith comes only when we are willing to make ourselves vulnerable—as St. Patrick did and as AA's 12 steps encourage. That means sharing the things we cling to in fear of embarrassment or shame—essentially in fear of death. "This



fear of death, both literal fear of death but also that existential fear of exclusion or alienation . . . is really at the heart of every sinful impulse that we have." These things we cling to, he explained, prevent us from being completely open and honest with ourselves, with others and with God.

And that's why he wrote *Vulnerable Faith*. "I want people to find an opportunity to express the things, to share the things, to bring out the things that they've been terrified to share. The things that keep them from being honest," Arpin-Ricci said in an interview following the launch.

Vulnerability is something Arpin-Ricci has experienced first-hand. Since being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), he's become a pastor who not only supports his faith community, but allows himself to be vulnerable enough to accept support from them.

Arpin-Ricci said the PTSD was likely triggered several years ago. He and several others witnessed a member of Little Flowers Community who struggled with severe untreated mental illness take his life in a "dramatic way." But he credits that same event with cementing the relationships at Little Flowers Community.

When Arpin-Ricci took the man's sister and her daughter to his own home later that evening, he found that almost the entire community had gathered there to offer support. Two thirds of them remained for a week.

"Most of our community who were there from the start will tell you that that's when our community was formed. That's when roots took hold."

Arpin-Ricci describes himself as an idealistic kid who challenged his parents to engage in activities that supported their beliefs. "I had parents and people in my life who said 'you try it and come talk to us.' I was just obnoxious enough and had enough ego to go 'okay.'"

His parents took a risk by encouraging him to test things out, he noted. He gave up a number of university scholarships in order to do six months of Youth with a Mission (YWAM) service. "That was 21 years ago and I never left."

As a younger man, Arpin-Ricci thought he would take over the family newspaper, *The Rainy River Record*. He gave up writing for more than 10 years when he joined YWAM. "That was really painful," he admitted. However, he said that over the last five years God has "given back" with the publication of *Vulnerable Faith* and *The Cost of Community*.

Find links to other publications by Jamie Arpin-Ricci, a video interview, a recording of the *Vulnerable Faith* launch and more at www.commonword.ca/go/176. ❧



Jamie Arpin-Ricci

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Church growth is the wrong narrative

Shrink: Faithful Ministry in a Church-Growth Culture
By Tim Suttle, Zondervan, 2014, 240 pages.

REVIEWED BY HENRY NEUFELD

“Church growth strategies are the death gurgle of a church that has lost its way,” is how Stanley Hauerwas describes this book, noting that, “God is making us leaner and meaner.”

This insightful analysis of contemporary churches comes from a pastor who wanted to become a great leader by using “successful” pastors as his model. Tim Suttle attended seminars on church growth where he met strategies borrowed from the business world. At leadership conferences pastors are told to “dream big” and embrace the latest strategy.

“I mimicked the leadership practices of the mega-church,” he said.

Those sessions leave many pastors feeling bad about not being bigger. Church leaders love models, and try to solve problems by finding models of success and copying them.

A common assumption is that the church’s job is to grow. “[T]his assumption is built not on the gospel but on the American narrative. The church’s job is to be faithful.” He sees current church leadership conversations focusing on the American way of growth and expansion, not on the Christian narrative.

The American narrative teaches that life is about growing, expanding, winning, gaining and impressing. Suttle admits to being part of the “bigger is better” dream. “I spent over a decade chasing bigger, better, higher, faster, stronger,” he says.

Suttle started a church with two families that grew to 200 in three years. “But when

we decided to stop chasing success to pursue faithfulness, we lost 50% of our people,” he writes. If pressed about his church’s growth strategy, he usually says it is to get smaller and die.

Christian leadership is often about what works, makes us grow, gets results, and is most effective while faithfulness takes a back seat. Pastors have morphed into CEOs, he says, “[W]e need a leadership narrative built on Jesus’ vision of the kingdom . . . always the way of descent.”

He describes the mega-church (2000 or more) as a body on steroids. “Our celebrated church leaders have been feeding the church the equivalent of performance-enhancing drugs. God save us from a successful church,” he says.

Suttle notes Willow Creek’s own critique showing that the mega-church has been wonderful in its ability to make Jesus fans, not necessarily followers. He believes the mega-church reflects the way of our culture, not the way of Jesus; the demands of discipleship run contrary to the needs of the organization.

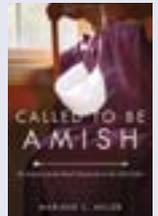
While providing a needed critique of the mega-church, Suttle is not as helpful in the solutions department. He talks about faithfulness but does not articulate sufficiently what it would look like. This becomes problematic when churches try to be faithful by being “missional” since Suttle sees “missional” merely as another strategy.

He suggests vulnerability, risk, gentleness, emotional uncertainty and caring

/// Briefly noted

Called to Be Amish depicts journey from head majorette to Old Order

Fewer than a hundred people have joined the Old Order Amish—and stayed—since 1950. Marlene C. Miller is one of them. She is the author of a new Herald Press book entitled *Called*



to Be Amish: My Journey from Head Majorette to the Old Order. She joined the Amish church as an adult and has been an ardent member of the Old Order Amish for 46 years. In this rare memoir, Miller recounts her unhappy and abusive childhood, how she threw herself into cheerleading and marching band, and then fell in love with a young Amish man, Johnny Miller, on a country ice-skating pond. Against the wishes of both sets of parents, and with an unplanned pregnancy, the two got married and began a family. Miller writes about the strain of having 10 children as a young mother, running a 40-hectare farm, and facing accidents and tragedy. Turning Amish proves to be anything but plain and simple for this former majorette. The book is the second in a recently launched series from Herald Press, *Plainspoken: Real-Life Stories of Amish and Mennonites*.

—MennoMedia

for the “least of these” as essential characteristics of the church—a strong service orientation. He says we should stop asking how many people attend our church.

In order to make Christianity acceptable in our day the gospel has to be sterilized and rendered impotent and harmless. “The temptation is to be relevant, powerful, spectacular.”

With church attendance declining in North America, this might well be a prophet we should heed. Shrink, be freed from ambition, give up the desire to draw a crowd. “What if God wants the America church to shrink?” //

/// Briefly noted

Food art created for adult Sunday School

BLUESKY, ALTA.—When adult Sunday School teacher, Elton Kauffman, challenged his class at Bluesky Mennonite (Alta.), to express the relationship between their congregation and the Holy Spirit, Louise Miller took up the challenge and used food as her medium. On the apple she carved the mother and child. The hands were molded finger jello. The globe was a watermelon with a map of the world carved on it and a quarter cut out of it so that bite-sized pieces could be shared. Her explanation was that the congregation is connected with the Holy Spirit globally, as a community and as a family. The mother holding a baby shows our nurturing spirit and how members of the congregation help each other when needed. The helping hands show reaching out into the community. The globe represents connection to the world and the bite-sized pieces of melon represent the many people who have been touched by the church. Miller is fairly new to the congregation and has not had an easy life, but she is a jewel and adds much to the congregation.

—VERLA HAAS



New from Good Books



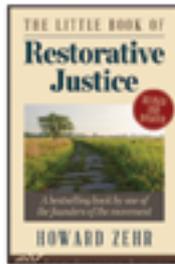
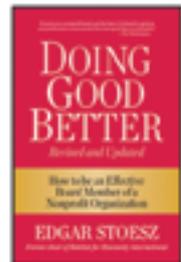
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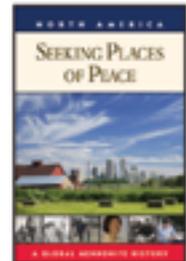
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'Take them where textbooks can't'

By Ryan Wood
Rosthern Junior College

While on the plane to Ottawa with two of my students to attend the closing ceremonies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I read a tagline from an advertisement in a travel magazine: "Take them where textbooks can't." I felt like this was an opportunity to do just that.

The event offered us chances to see and tour national landmarks like Parliament Hill, Rideau Hall, the National Gallery, and the Museum of History. We rubbed shoulders with politicians, church leaders and Residential School survivors. We listened to the Commissioners' final report

live and participated in workshops and a march for reconciliation. Most importantly, we attended sharing circles where survivors told their heart-felt and often painful stories from their time at Indian Residential Schools. Participating in this way made us feel that we were active participants in history, rather than simply spectators.

Too often education is merely passive: I talk, you listen. I say, you do. We can't always travel with students to distant lands to learn, but we can, as educators, try to infuse education with a personal, participatory, empowering element whenever possible.



The history of Canada, the Church and Residential Schools can be presented in a dry, detached, distant way, or the topic can be infused with life, relevance, and a call to empowerment and action to live the teachings of Jesus in the 21st century. In all of our homes, churches and schools, let's take our students where textbooks can't, regardless of how far we travel.

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A different way of thinking

CMU student with dyslexia aspires to be professor one day

BY JONAS CORNELSEN

Special to Canadian Mennonite
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Imagine these words as pictures with no direct meaning. That's part of what it's like to have dyslexia.

"Dyslexia is a different way of thinking," says Mattea Nickel, 19. She was diagnosed 11 years ago, after struggling to understand written words and numbers in elementary school. Now a first-year student at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), she's caught between her intellectual passion and limited accommodation for her learning style.

Up to 20 percent of people show signs of dyslexia, a genetic condition in which different parts of the brain are used to understand language. Because it affects people at different levels, some never know they have it.

Nickel says, "I think in pictures," to explain what happens in her mind. Each word she reads is not tied to its definition, but a mental picture.

This causes trouble reading and spelling, as many words and letters look similar. Words without pictures like "at" or "is" can be missed, making it tough to get the full meaning of sentences.

Dyslexia doesn't make a person less intelligent. Learning problems linked with it come from difficulty with reading, not concepts. Cheryl Hoffmann, director of the KC Dyslexic Learning Centre in Winnipeg, says many students call dyslexia their "dirty little secret." They understand as much as their peers but have to work harder on tests and assignments, and often get lower grades.

That doesn't stop Nickel. She wants to be a professor, but imagines her dyslexia

might make it hard to get through, or even into, higher levels of study that demand more writing.

Meeting different needs

The Canadian Dyslexia Centre says people who have dyslexia would do better in school if they could show their knowledge in different ways, like in oral or dictated exams. This gives universities a challenge: how much flexibility is possible?

Sandra Loeppky, who works in Accessibility Services at CMU, sees the unique needs of each student but struggles to provide custom support because of resources. "We're too small to be as creative as we could be," she says. CMU usually offers extra time and private space to students who struggle with exams.

Loeppky often wonders if writing the same test with more time just creates more anxiety. She says specialized help like readers and scribes might be better for students with dyslexia. Then they could hear the questions and speak their answers without concern for spelling. But that means finding more spaces and paying more workers.

The other challenge for universities is whether alternatives take away from the assignment's purpose. "I'm torn," says Loeppky, wanting to do all she can for students struggling with homework and tests. But she knows universities don't just teach ideas, but specific skills like essay writing. For any adjustment she has to ask, "are you still meeting the course objectives?"

Nickel agrees. She tries her best to meet the university's expectations. "If I choose to go to school and I know I don't learn

VOICE |
of the marginalized



Mattea Nickel



Jonas Cornelsen

well in this style, I just have to deal with it," she says. When asked why she accepts the challenge, she answers simply, "I love learning."

More to be done

While Nickel is content, both she and Hoffmann know more can be done to help students with dyslexia. Hoffmann focuses on targeted instruction in reading and writing as a way to "close the gap" between reading levels and true intelligence. Since people with dyslexia read differently, trying to learn how to in the same way as everyone else can be discouraging.

Hoffmann uses the Barton reading program, a specialized method for dyslexic learners. The sooner a child can start learning this way, the better, she says.

However, Hoffman says Manitoba has too few resources. While up to 20 percent of the population may be affected, hers is

the only learning centre focused on dyslexia in the province.

For Nickel, who had to travel to Saskatchewan to learn the alphabet as a child, the benefits of more local teachers are obvious. "I believe that if I was taught in a different way when I was small, I would be at a different level of intelligence today," she says.

Hoffmann believes dyslexia will be taken more seriously as time goes on. For her part, Nickel wonders if "a new kind of intelligence will come into being," in which students at all levels can express their learning in a style that suits them.

While she knows change will happen slowly, she looks to the future with hope. ❧

Jonas Cornelsen, 21, majors in political studies and communications and media at CMU. He worships at Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Baking cookies for clean water

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

PHOTO BY LEN ANDRES



Tyreese Hildebrandt demonstrates a model of the type of hand pump used to draw water from the sand near a sand dam. Hildebrandt raised money to buy similar pumps by putting on a bake sale at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, where he and his family attend.



Tyreese Hildebrandt is a 10-year-old who dreams of helping people to have clean drinking water. A while back, Hildebrandt read a book that touched him deeply. *Ryan and Jimmy and the Well in Africa that Brought them Together* by Herb Shoveller is about a Canadian boy who raised money to dig a well in Uganda and a Ugandan boy who became his friend. After reading the book, Hildebrandt says he felt "sad, because people could get really sick from drinking dirty water." But he also felt inspired and wanted to raise money, too.

His mother, RaeLynn, persuaded him to begin with a small project. He chose to raise \$90 for Mennonite Central Committee toward planting a garden in Guatemala.

But Hildebrandt still wanted to raise money for clean drinking water. When he and his mother took the money for the gardening project to MCC Saskatchewan, executive director Claire Ewert Fisher showed him a video depicting MCC's sand dam projects in Africa. Hildebrandt

learned that \$210 would purchase a hand pump to draw water from the ground near a sand dam. He committed to raising enough money for two hand pumps.

For both projects, Hildebrandt baked cookies and muffins, selling them at his brother's volleyball tournament, at family Easter gatherings, and at his father's workplace. Eventually, his mother suggested he hold a bake sale at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, where he and his family attend. Betty Unger, a church member who loves to bake, partnered with Hildebrandt to do some of the baking. His grandmother, aunt and several other women also contributed. The sale took place May 3. Hildebrandt sold the leftovers to teachers at school the next day.

He also held a bottle drive and mowed lawns to earn money. With the proceeds from another lawn mowing and a small donation from his parents, Hildebrandt will have earned \$1050, enough for not two, but five hand pumps. His dream is one step closer to becoming a reality. ❧

Calendar

British Columbia

Oct. 16-18: MC B.C. ladies' retreat at Camp Squeah, Hope.

Nov. 13-15: Senior Youth Impact Retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope.

Saskatchewan

July 24-26: Grand Camp Retreat at Shekinah for grandparents or great-grandparents and grandkids ages 3-12. For information call 306-945-4929.

Aug. 22: Sixth annual Spruce River Folk Festival, near Prince Albert, beginning at 11 a.m. Enjoy live music, food and fellowship while learning more about "landless bands" in Saskatchewan. Proceeds to the Young Chippewayan Genealogical Project. Contact Grace Mennonite 306-945-4844 for more information.

Sept. 8-11: MC Sask fall Pastors' Gathering at Churchill River Canoe Outfitters. For more information contact youthminister@mcsask.ca or 306-249-4844.

Oct. 2-4: "Weekend Musical Workshop for the Congregational Voice" with Marilyn Houser Hamm at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon. Call the church office at 306-374-2144 to register interest.

Oct. 3-4: SMYO Jr. High (grades 6-9) retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp to get a glimpse of Mennonite World Conference assembly and to meet Willard Metzger, executive-director of MC Canada. Visit www.smyo.ca for more information.

Manitoba

July 13-17: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for children aged 5 to 8. Register early. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

July 31-Aug. 3: Pioneer Days at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, includes steam-powered threshing, music and food. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Aug. 10-14: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for children aged 9 to 12. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Aug. 10-21: CMU Blazers summer sports camps. (10-14) grades 9 to 10 volleyball and basketball; (17-21) grades 5 to 8 soccer, grades 7 to 10 ultimate

sports, and grades 6 to 8 volleyball and basketball. For more information, e-mail sportscamps@cmu.ca.

Aug. 25: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate 11th-annual golf tournament at Bridges Golf Club, Winnipeg. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Sept. 7: Fall on the Farm at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. Experience harvest work, hog butchering and pioneer demonstrations. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Sept. 9: Mennonite Heritage Village's Heritage Classic Golf Tournament. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Oct. 15: Mennonite Heritage Village volunteer appreciation event for 2015 volunteers. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Ontario

Aug. 10-14: Peace Camp summer program at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo; for children 10 to 14. For more information, visit grebel.ca/peacecamp or e-mail camp coordinator Katie Gingerich at peacecamp@uwaterloo.ca.

Aug. 22: The Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville hosts the "Central Ontario All-Day Sacred Harp Singing" event, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Aug. 23: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 10 a.m.

Aug. 28: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp final concert at Conrad Grebel University College, Great Hall at 7 p.m.

Sept. 19: The Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville is participating in the Waterloo Region's "Door Open" event, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sept. 19: Toronto Mennonite Festival in support of MCC at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

U.S.

July 21-26: Mennonite World Conference at Harrisburg, Pa.

Aug. 20-23: 14th annual Bridgefolk (Mennonite-Catholic) conference, "Ecumenical healing and the mystery of the communion saints," at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Keynote speakers: Nozomu Yamada and Father Alfonso Fausone, both from the Nanzan University, Japan. For more information, visit www.bridgefolk.net.

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



Employment Opportunity

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks a full-time **director of marketing and communications** to direct marketing strategy for enrollment and fund-raising and to manage print and electronic communication.

Qualifications include expertise and experience in leading and producing marketing and communication activities and materials to achieve organizational goals, acquaintance with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada and commitment to the mission and vision of AMBS.

Job description at www.amb.edu/jobs. Apply by July 17 to Ron Ringenberg, vice president, riringenb@amb.edu.



Job Opportunity in British Columbia

This position supports the Executive Director in agency wide duties related to:

1. MCC's supporting constituency
2. Board functions
3. Inter-MCC collaboration
4. MCC BC operations
5. Routine office management.

In this role, the Assistant to the Executive Director must ensure a high standard of communication with individuals and groups that relate to the Executive Director. This position will also support the Advancement Director.

This is a full-time salaried position. Only those candidates who are legally eligible to work in Canada should apply. To apply, please email a cover letter and resume to: Marie Reimer, HR Manager at hrmanager@mccbc.ca, or fax: 604-850-8734. Check <http://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/serve/openings> for more information on MCC job postings British Columbia.



Employment Opportunity ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba invites applications for the part time (0.4 EFT) position of Associate Pastor.

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church is looking for an individual with a capacity to relate to all age groups, with an emphasis on youth. The Associate Pastor will work in a team environment and the responsibilities would take into account the gifts that this person brings. Please visit the church website at www.samc.ca for a more detailed job description under the employment tab.

Women's retreat a time for worship and laughter

BY DARLENE SCHMIDT
Special to Canadian Mennonite
SYLVAN LAKE, ALTA.



PHOTOS BY HELENA BALL

Calgary Chin Church women's singing group shared special music on Sunday morning at the Alberta women's retreat.



A blues group from Foothills Mennonite Church participated in the Saturday night variety show at the Alberta women's retreat.

About 60 women between the ages of 20 and 80 gathered for a Mennonite Church Alberta women's retreat at Sylvan Lake on May 22-24. They joined together to worship, pray, learn, share in meals, and most importantly to laugh together at the Saturday night variety show.

Faye Reynolds of Lethbridge, director of women's ministries for Canadian Baptist Ministries, used the book of Colossians and personal stories and humour in her sessions. She emphasized that for women to thrive it must not be at the expense of others—men, other women, other cultures or impoverished nations. We must work together to thrive by abiding in God's amazing love that flows through us from the Vine. We are the branches, and it is God, the gardener, who should be concerned with the fruit we bear; our focus must be to remain connected to Christ the Vine.

Retreat organizers arranged to partner with a mission project to support a Vietnamese Mennonite Church Calgary project entitled "Cosmetics for Cows," which collects unused makeup that is resold in Vietnam to buy cows for people in Vietnam. Tea towel sets were also available for sale to contribute money for the same project. The support for this project was a huge success!

The summer-like weather was simply remarkable, encouraging women to walk by the lake, read by the small chapel or enjoy the view of the lake and visit in the shade. As well as the gifted speaker and meaningful worship, the excellent accommodations, delicious food and beautiful setting made for a fantastic atmosphere. Many participants and organizers are looking forward to next year's retreat. ☘