

CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 9, 2016

Volume 20 Number 10

Communion and Cabernet

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discussions on faith and alcohol

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EDITORIAL

Widening our circle

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The draw to our Anabaptist/Mennonite theology just keeps happening.

First, it was Stuart Murray, the British-born Baptist who, with many in his network, found a “home” in the Anabaptist fold. He has set up the Anabaptist Network to make a centre for seekers in many communions in the United Kingdom.

Now comes the Anglican Church of Canada wanting to establish a five-year dialogue with Mennonite Church Canada, the proposal to be presented at Assembly 2016 in July. Acknowledging their fall from “privilege” and their historical association with “empire” in this post-Christendom era, Anglicans are seeking dialogue with Mennonites, who they see as a communion that has existed for 500 years as a “church on the margins.”

They are especially attracted to our tradition’s “particular commitment to peace, justice and nonviolence, which puts [the Mennonite church] at odds with the predominant culture, yet it remains a faithful and vibrant expression of the Christian faith.”

Anglicans talk of this theological tenet as a “gift” their communion can receive from Mennonites as they learn to move beyond being a church of the empire. They are hoping the gift exchange is mutual, saying, “It would be for the Mennonites to discern which gifts Anglicanism may have to offer their tradition.” One area to explore would be

the rich liturgical and sacramental life of Anglican Christianity at a time when many Mennonites are seeking to reclaim a deeper understanding of these aspects.”

The association would not be new. We already share ecumenical relationships as fellow members of the Canadian Council of Churches and Kairos, the latter through Mennonite Central Committee.



The Anglican overture has been positively received by MC Canada’s executive director,

Willard Metzger.

On the ground level, this coming together has already been happening, as was playfully portrayed in a recent “On faith” column by John Longhurst. He began his April 17 column with an old joke: “What is the fastest-growing Mennonite church in Winnipeg? Answer: St. Margaret’s Anglican.”

Going on to explain this new phenomenon, Longhurst quotes from an interview with Anglican Archbishop Bruce Myers in the *Anglican Journal*, who says that “all sorts of people happily migrate between St. Margaret’s and st. benedict’s table (sic), adding that this creates all sorts of interesting questions for ecumenism.”

Longhurst goes on to quote Andrew Dyck, associate professor of ministry at Canadian Mennonite University, to explain this attraction to Anglicanism because of its provision of a “richness around the mystery of God, something that is neglected in Mennonite and evangelical worship.”

So Anglicans like our peace theology and practice, and some of us like their liturgy. Longhurst thinks this combination of two important dynamics of faith could be a “model for the country.”

Just as inspiring can be the news coming out of a recent Vatican conference on justice and peace, which rejected the Catholic’s long-held teachings on the “just war” theory and asks the church to reconsider Jesus’ teaching on nonviolence. Conferees called for Pope Francis to consider writing an encyclical or some other “major teaching document,” reorienting the Catholic Church’s teachings on violence.

Miracles never cease. The same church leaders who persecuted our early Anabaptist forbears for this “heresy,” among other resistant teachings, have now come full circle to our longstanding belief of nonviolence and non-participation in all wars. We humbly rejoice in this change of heart and also pray that the very compassionate Pope Francis will follow through with new official documents.

While the argument for a “just war” is to stop unjust violent aggressors, those attending the conference posed the dilemma that “as long as we keep saying we do it with military force, we will not invest the creative energy, the deep thinking, the financial and human resources in creating or identifying the alternatives that actually would make a difference.”

What a coming of full circle of the sisters and brothers to one of the basic tenets of our Anabaptist faith!

Our numbers are small, but our Anabaptist theology fits our post-Christendom world like never before. Will we see these new opportunities for faith-sharing as a gift to struggling faith partners and a gift to ourselves in enriching our own worship and mission? Or will we hesitate over differences that really don’t matter?

ABOUT THE COVER:

‘Alcohol has become ubiquitous in Canada, so much so that on April 5 even Starbucks began serving beer and wine in three of its Toronto outlets,’ writes Alberta correspondent Donita Wiebe-Neufeld in ‘Communion and Cabernet,’ our page 4 feature that offers suggestions on how the church can better handle discussions on faith and alcohol.

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

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



Communion and Cabernet

How the church can better handle discussions on faith and alcohol

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

ALBERTA CORRESPONDENT

Times have changed. It is now common for wedding ceremonies to be at the church while the receptions are held in venues allowing for wine on tables or an open bar.

Alcohol has become ubiquitous in Canada, so much so that on April 5 even Starbucks began serving beer and wine in three of its Toronto outlets. How does this preponderance of alcohol affect life in the Mennonite church? While there may not be alcohol in church buildings, it is certainly a part of the lives of its people. It has become the norm at wedding receptions, is brewed in the homes of more than a few church members and is served at many of their social get-togethers.

Although the vast majority of this may be benign, it is hard to find anyone who has not been touched in some way by alcohol misuse, either in their own life or that of a family member or friend.

So why is there so little discussion about it in churches?

I grew up in a rural Alberta Mennonite church with the assumption that the use of alcohol pushed at the edges of good Christian behaviour. Wedding receptions were commonly held at the church, alcohol- and dance-free. The assumption was “no, and we don’t talk about it,” even though as a teenager I was aware that there were people who drank out of sight of other church members.

Times have changed. It is now common for wedding ceremonies to be at the church while the receptions are held in venues allowing for wine on tables or an open bar. It is not unusual to be offered a drink at the home of a church member. It appears that the general assumption on drinking has shifted to “yes, and we don’t talk about it.”

So how then does—or did—faith inform our practice of alcohol consumption?

Mennonites and alcohol through the years

Leading church reformers in the 16th century, including Luther, complained about excessive drinking among Christians. In 1527, the early Anabaptists took a firm negative stance.

Article 4 of the Schleithem Confession forbade Anabaptists from entering drinking establishments. This prohibition resulted in some being discovered and arrested or executed when they refused to drink in public places.

Complete abstinence, however, was not universally proscribed or practised. The writings of early Anabaptist leaders, such as Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, “contain many admonitions to a sober life with warnings against drunkenness based on such

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passages as I Thessalonians 5:5-8, [however] they did not call for total abstinence," according to the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO).

There were many brewers and distillers among Mennonites in Holland during the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as among those in Prussian settlements. In many cases, brewing was one of the few occupations open to them when they were not considered citizens of the country. "In Russia, there were by 1819 several Mennonite brewers in the Chortiza colony and moderate drinking was fairly common in all the Mennonite settlements in Russia," according to GAMEO. "However, as early as 1830 the Kleine Gemeinde, a small strict schismatic group, protested vigorously against the use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco."

In North America, temperance movements in mainline Protestantism influenced Mennonite opinions on drinking, the GAMEO article notes: "By the early 20th century most Mennonites had become total abstainers, even to the extent of using unfermented grape juice instead of wine for the communion service."

Article 16 of the 1963 Confession of Faith adopted by the Mennonite Church General Conference, "Discipleship and non-conformity," states: "They regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit and crucify their flesh with its affections and lusts. They therefore avoid such things as harmful drugs, beverage alcohol and tobacco."

The current *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1995, shows an attitude shift away

'For John the Baptist has come eating no meat and drinking no wine, and you say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!"' (Luke 7:33-34)

from abstinence. Article 17, "Discipleship and the Christian life," states: "True faith means treating our bodies as God's temples, rather than allowing addictive behaviours to take hold."

Both versions of the confession are supported by the use of I Corinthians 6:19.

Alcohol in the church today

Wide availability of alcohol, its cultural acceptance and even the promotion of frequent use are visible in the lives of some church members.

Ryan Dueck, pastor of Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church, grew up in Manitoba. "When I was younger, alcohol consumption was much more of a taboo in the church," he says. "My parents didn't drink nor did anyone in my extended family, to my knowledge. This has certainly changed over the last 30 or so years."

While Dueck welcomes a less repressive church stance, he says, "When I see people my age or younger carelessly throwing up pictures on social media where alcohol seems quite deliberately prominent, I get nervous. The pendulum can quite easily swing too hard in the opposite direction."

When there is lack of faith discussion accompanying social change, young people in the church are left to lean on popular culture as a main source of

guidance. This is troubling.

Recent reports warn about the increasing abuse of alcohol among young people. In a March 2 report, Dr. Warren Fieldus, an emergency room physician in Nova Scotia, expressed concern about the growing number of young people with serious alcohol problems. "It worries me that people are drinking earlier and they're drinking more on a constant basis," he told Jean Laroche of CBC News. Fieldus has noticed that "early signs of liver cirrhosis, normally reserved for 50- and 60-year-old alcoholics, are now showing up in 20- and 30-year-olds."

It would be naïve to assume that such a prevalent issue does not also exist in the church, so how can we begin to constructively and helpfully discuss and address the issues faithfully?

Addressing the issues

A proactive approach in the church might begin with simple discussion of the uses and abuses of alcohol.

Carol Penner, a former Mennonite Church Eastern Canada pastor who now ministers at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton, related a joke she heard from a church member. "You invite one Mennonite to go fishing with you, they drink all your beer. You invite two Mennonites, neither will drink any."

Like many jokes, it's funny because there is a ring of truth about it. People are concerned about what others think, and therefore do not feel free to openly discuss issues and help each other arrive at a common understanding.

The culture of silence around alcohol use and abuse needs to come to an end in the Mennonite church. Some congregations, Lendrum is one example, provide space and support for Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) groups. This may serve to bring some of the issues forward and encourage discussion.

Barry Andres, executive director of addiction and mental health for Alberta Health Services, says, "I have always found the high level of spirituality present in an AA meeting a paradox to church, which is also spiritual yet can't talk about addiction."

Misunderstandings around alcoholism also need to be corrected to enable people to talk about their issues without fear of rejection. The book *Wasted: An Alcoholic Therapist's Fight for Recovery in a Flawed Treatment System*, was adapted as a CBC TV documentary that aired on the *Nature of Things* on Jan. 21. It follows psychotherapist Mike Pond's struggle with alcoholism and his search for science-based help. Co-author Maureen Palmer writes, "The consensus among scientists is that alcohol or drug addiction, now called substance use disorder . . . is not a moral failing but hijacked brain reward circuitry."

Andres says the scientific community is now describing alcoholism as a disease of the brain, and that the understanding of what is behind the addiction and prevention are being understood in new ways. "The factors [including trauma and depression] are real risk factors, but not absolute predictors, just as there are protective factors [including nurturing relationships and healthy communities]," he explains.

One reason congregants don't talk about issues with alcohol is because of the shame associated with addiction. If alcoholism was understood as a disease, symptomatic of other issues such as mental illness, trauma, broken relationships or abuse, rather than as moral failure,

perhaps the discussion would be enabled and understanding offered to those affected.

Historically, neither permissiveness nor strict legalism have served the church well, as both extremes seem to negate discussion and empathy. The words of Jesus in Luke 7:33-34 warn against both attitudes regarding the use or avoidance of alcohol. Jesus says, "For John the Baptist has come eating no meat and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"

Another is because they are immersed in two cultures, that of the dominant society, and that of their faith community. The dominant culture is always reflected in church; therefore, we need to recognize that the misuse of alcohol is part of that reflection, even though it may be well hidden.

The church does well to find a way to encourage openness and understanding, according to Andres. "We are finally reducing the stigma on mental illness so that people can ask for support for their depression or not need to hide when off work due to it," he says, but adds, "We can't yet do the same with addiction."

Bible study in conjunction with a discussion of culture and current scientific

understandings of addiction is an important way to move forward proactively to equip clergy and congregants to discuss alcohol use, Christian life and witness, and to ready ourselves to help each other more effectively.

Faithful and open discussion, encouragement and caring admonition between trusted people in the church, and a desire for healing and wholeness are attitudes that can serve the church well.

"Church has a big role to play in leveraging protective factors through strong community, mentoring and other supports that nurture youth development and independence." ❧



Besides her role as Canadian Mennonite's Alberta correspondent, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld also serves as co-pastor of First Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

Conrad Stoesz and the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg provided valuable assistance in researching this important topic, which is appreciated by Canadian Mennonite.

❧ For discussion

1. What did your parents, or the church, teach you about the use of alcohol? Did your community have a strong teaching of abstinence in the past? How successful was it? Have you had personal experience with the effects of alcohol abuse?
2. How much does your congregation talk about alcohol? Donita Wiebe-Neufeld writes that there is a "culture of silence around alcohol use." Do you agree? What do you think has contributed to this "culture of silence"?
3. Wiebe-Neufeld refers to reports warning that abuse of alcohol by young people is increasing. Do you think this is true in your community? What attitude does your congregation have towards alcohol? Do you agree that neither permissiveness nor strict legalism has served the church well?
4. What are the implications of regarding alcoholism as a disease, rather than as a moral failing? How can the church encourage healthy attitudes toward alcohol?

—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.canadian-mennonite.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.

✉ Tell the whole Mennonite story

RE: "PEOPLE OF the plains," March 14, page 12.

"What is it with Mennonites and flat surroundings?" Bill Schroeder asks. But we also need to ask, "What is it with Mennonites and hilly country?"

I have noticed for a long time that when we purport to tell the Mennonite story, we tend to tell only our half of it. Certainly Schroeder accurately depicts the Dutch/Russian Mennonite experience of the land as flat lands. Several decades ago, when I worked in Mennonite tourism in Ontario, I realized what had been staring me in the face all along, that the two main branches of Mennonites—Dutch/North German and Swiss/South German—can be defined by their geography.

It seems to be a habit of the heart to settle in familiar surroundings with similar terrain. Both have learned

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FROM OUR LEADERS

Building bridges

LEE DYCK

Bridges are an important part of life in British Columbia. Whether it is the new Port Mann Bridge or any other crossing of our many rivers, bridges are a part of our lives. In Mennonite Church B.C., we are also in the business of building bridges.

Last year our focus was on Anabaptist identity and this year we will build on that with emphasis on building missional capacity from the perspective of "reconciliation of a broken world." Bridge-building and maintenance will be required. We will look at ways to resource our congregations in their communities. What bridges are needed and what tools are needed to do the job? How can this be resourced? How can reconciling links be fostered? What stories will open new bridges as we share "this wonderful message of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19)?

For a bridge to be useful and safe, the



right materials need to be placed in the right locations at the right time. In our lives as believers, we also encounter stages of bridge-building, whether it is with our indigenous neighbours, a friend or family member who is in a crisis, or a fellow believer with whom we have a difference of theology or opinion. The bridges we build need to be trustworthy.

We are all part of this bridge-building, this community of faith that is founded on the gospel of God's love for the world. Missional living comes down to relationships. If I build a bridge to my neighbour, a relationship is formed and the possibility of crossing that bridge to another and then another opens up. Neighbours become friends and before I know it, much to my surprise, we are at the table together sharing each other's joys and sorrows in relationship. A divide has been spanned and new entry points into each other's lives open up.

Missional living depends on these small steps, faithful living, reaching out in

love and enjoying the life God has called you to. It's about joy, not obligation. Abundance, not scarcity.

I build bridges with my neighbours by sharing homemade bread. The art of bread-making and sharing it is something that has been handed down to me through my mother and grandmothers. When the bread is built, so to speak, it is ready for sharing. As long as it remains only a recipe, or sits on my counter or in my freezer, it's just bread. When it is shared, it becomes part of that communion, that liminal space between earth and heaven where barriers are broken down and the bridge into another's life is crossed. As the bread is thankfully received, relationships grow. The desire for connection and belonging is fostered.

In this Eastertide season, as you focus on the hope of the resurrection in your lives, may your conversations and connections build bridges of love, peace and justice in the places where you live, move and have your being.

Lee Dyck is moderator of Mennonite Church B.C.

(Continued from page 7)

well how to work within the topography they have chosen.

The Dutch Mennonites moved from the lowlands of Friesland to the lowlands of Prussia, then to the steppes of Russia. From there, they came to the prairie provinces in Canada and the midwestern prairie states south of the border.

My Swiss Mennonite forebears left the hills of Switzerland and moved to the hilly countryside of South Germany. From there they came to the hills of Pennsylvania and, about the same time as Dutch Mennonites moved to the flat lands of Russia, they came to the hilly country of Waterloo County in Ontario. Since then, many Old (Swiss) Mennonites have moved to the hills of Grey and Bruce counties

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The beautiful mind of Christ

PHIL WAGLER

How does the body of Christ maintain her mental health? We often think about the church as the body of Christ functioning like a human body. In I Corinthians 12, we consider what it means to be a Jesus-centred community in which each part is honoured and each part does its work.

Anabaptists, in particular, hold this metaphor dearly. We love the church, or at least we should—since we confess that following Jesus and being church are indistinguishable—and we really do seek to practise this. It's beautiful. And hard. We persevere, however, spurred on by Paul's word picture to use our gifts for the greater good. For a healthy body, everyone's gift is necessary.

But have you ever wondered how the church maintains her mental health? The metaphor of the body used by Paul must include the head.

Otherwise, it's a rather disgusting visual!

Perhaps our minds wander to those who lead or teachers or scholars? That's an understandable thought, but actually not what the New Testament teaches in regard to the "head" of the church. The metaphor of the church as a body is sprinkled throughout Paul's letter and

every time it is Christ who is the head of the church. He is Lord, Master and the brains of the operation. We have diverse gifts, but no one in the church is the head, save Jesus Christ alone. He is our beautiful mind, and we are only fully healthy as his body if he is leading us and we are responding to his thoughts.

In other words, if we attempt to do the works of the body—including leading, teaching and studying—without the mind of Christ, we are spiritually headless and headed towards death and decline.

Earlier in I Corinthians Paul calls the floundering Greek church to a renewed surrender. Members are to cease following the wisdom of humanity and, instead, tap into the power of God. And

also think spiritually. And to think spiritually requires the indwelling Holy Spirit, which Paul says is the mind of Christ in I Corinthians 2:14-16. And so this beautiful mind is our head and we, the body, are receiving our instructions and seeing the world through him.

We do not start with human wisdom. In fact, such wisdom is doomed to pass away. The church starts with gospel, with good news, with Jesus and his cross, no matter how foolish a notion that seems. Indeed, the cross stands as an indictment against all human thinking of how life should be and how we are made whole, and then we live by the directing and empowering of Spirit of God—the beautiful mind of Christ—in the world.

So discuss amongst yourselves: Which mind is your local fellowship taking directions from? How would your church's

We have diverse gifts, but no one in the church is the head, save Jesus Christ alone.



the power of God—that which was in the mind of God always—is redemption, the forgiveness of sins, and restoration to God and our original calling through Jesus Christ and him crucified. To the world, this message is folly, even a sign of mental instability, but the church actually rests in the mind of the Lord.

If we are a spiritual body, then we must

mental health be maintained or perhaps even restored?

Phil Wagler lives in Surrey, B.C. He and his wife have experienced the impact of mental health as a family and how the Spirit of God can transform even those dark valleys through the church that stays true to him who is the head.

further north.

Let me conclude, as Schroeder does, with a paraphrase: “Swiss Mennonite farmers, too, have had a good thing going; for them, seeking subsequent countryside with similar surroundings was eminently sensible; at least it made sense to them.” And it still makes sense to me.

MAURICE MARTIN, NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

✉ ‘No useful information’ in Philpott interview

RE: “A LIBERAL dose of generosity,” March 14, page 19.

I voted Liberal in the last election and was impressed with Jane Philpott’s profile and pleased to see her become health minister. But I was disappointed in

(Continued on page 10)

NEW ORDER VOICE

A justice-oriented church community

KATIE DOKE SAWATZKY

I haven’t been to the dump before. The route is unfamiliar. My father-in-law and I drive east, now on the outskirts of Regina, and eventually pass the oil refinery, a mammoth mess of tangled pipes behind a sea of parked trucks.

As we pull up, I look upon the hills and see the plastic bags. Some are floating on the breeze, lots are trapped against the fences. They dot the land like candy sprinkles. We find the right place to dump our dirt. I get out and smell the methane, but quickly forget about it as we set to work.

This is the third time I am shovelling this gumbo into a different pile. We just dug out space for two garden beds in the backyard, removing sod and soil a foot deep. I volunteered to help get rid of it, while Glenn stayed at home with the kids.

Afterwards we drive by the jail on our way to Peavey Mart. My father-in-law is a contract renovator who makes this trip often. “Sometimes I see people working out in the fields over there, doing their service,” he comments. I turn around to catch another glimpse of the sandy brick building lined on both sides with short trees.



The refinery, the dump, the local prison. These are places I don’t ever see in my life. And now that I have, all I feel is sadness. I am confronting the markers of our consumption, our supremacy and our colonialism, all in one trip across town. It’s unsettling to return to my backyard and try to think about planting potatoes.

Later on in the week, I read a piece in *Briarpatch* magazine about female inmates in Canadian prisons. In August 2015, Breanna Kannick, incarcerated only for failing to make a court date for

*The refinery, the dump, the local prison.
These are places I don’t ever see in my life.
And now that I have, all I feel is sadness.*

a former drug charge, died in her jail cell five days after arriving. She wasn’t given any proper medical care—any care at all—to ease a drastic withdrawal.

Last fall, I saved a clipping from *The Leader Post* about the incarceration rates of indigenous people in Saskatchewan. They’re staggering. “While indigenous people comprise 15 to 17 percent of the Saskatchewan population, 80 to 90 percent of the men in the province’s jails, 90 to 95 percent of the women and

80-plus percent of the youth are indigenous,” Barb Pacholik writes. A third of the female prison population lives with mental illness, 13 percent for men.

The realization that I live in a racist, white supremacist state is heavy. When I contemplate such injustice, I automatically try to figure out what I can do about it. Something practical, helpful. I read and educate myself, but I need help thinking of next steps. Could the church be a place where I can do this?

I think it can, and it must. The church is a non-commercial space, it welcomes an unrestrained Spirit in worship and it draws inspiration from a Galilean who undermined empire. It’s the perfect place for social-justice initiatives to be born. When I encounter structures that

keep fuelling oppression of land and people, I want to be able to share that burden with other believers and then act. Volunteering at the penitentiary or advocating for waste-to-energy initiatives isn’t as daunting when I’m doing it with a community.

I crave this kind of space and support. I pray I’ll find it.

Katie Doke Sawatzky (katiesawatzky@gmail.com) writes and edits from Regina.

(Continued from page 9)

this interview, as I knew nothing more about her after reading it than I did before.

Since the interviewer brought up the subject of many Mennonites voting Conservative, surely he could have followed that up by asking her for some opinion about that or for her view of the differences between liberal and conservative values.

Also, he did not push her to give any opinion about the various issues around physician-assisted dying, which some Mennonites, as well as others, feel very strongly about. It seemed to me he was being so careful to be polite to her that he got no useful information.

E.J. WIEBE, EDMONTON

✉ The Bible is full of shortcomings and biases

IT HAS BECOME clear to me over the past several years, reading the debate over same-sex relationships in *Canadian Mennonite*, that the greatest hindrance to gracious interaction is our use of the Bible. Somewhere in history, many have become convinced that God sat at his desk in heaven and wrote this book and dropped it in our laps for us to hit each other over the head with.

But the Bible is a collection of stories written by human beings just like us, collected and translated by human beings just like us—actually just half of us, as women have been excluded from this process. These stories are subject to the same shortcomings and biases of any story you or I would write.

There are many wonderful stories in the Bible, but their value is in the sharing with us of other's perceptions of God and the world around us through history. The Bible is a story book, not a rule book.

BARRY HEINRICHS, WINNIPEG

Barry Heinrichs is a member of Hope Mennonite Church.

✉ MC Eastern Canada thanked for 'giving voice to vulnerable people'

RE: "CHURCH LEADERS thanked for naming Vernon Leis" letter, March 14, page 7, and Dick Benner's "More transparency please" editorial, Dec. 14, 2015, page 2.

I write with appreciation for Miriam Frey, who thanked Mennonite Church Eastern Canada leaders for revealing the sexual misconduct of Vernon Leis. She said some of the things that I was trying to say in composing a letter to *Canadian Mennonite*, in particular that "your speaking up has given voice to

vulnerable people who were taught by the church and society to live in silence and secrecy" I, too, want to thank those who are taking the time needed to listen and respond to some of those affected by events from many years ago.

But I had trouble with the editorial that appealed to the church leaders "to be more forthcoming about the process . . . to open the investigative doors a little wider." I think it cannot have been easy to come with this information to the church leaders, as there has to always be the risk that one might not be believed or taken seriously, and opening doors up further might not be the best action to be taken in this situation.

JULENE FAST, ELMIRA, ONT.

✉ Is there a liberation trajectory for gays on the horizon?

RE: "WHAT IS 'good' and 'acceptable'?" feature, Feb. 15, page 4.

Does God work through science as surely as God worked through the prophets of old? Until we can accept that this is most likely the case, we are probably destined to flounder for another generation studying the biblical passages with futility for those "clear" elusive biblical trajectories as to what to do with the "gay problem," even if it means splitting the Mennonite body of Christ one more time in the process.

VICTOR FAST, LONDON, ONT.

To read the full letter, visit canadianmennonite.org.



/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Heidebrecht—Sadie Rosa (b. April 7, 2016), to Steven and Rita Heidebrecht, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.

Kathler—Madelyn Ann (b. March 30, 2016), to Michael and Wendy Kathler, Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

Klemp—Elizabeth Sarah (b. March 22, 2016), to Carrie and Jeff Klemp, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Levi—Tal (b. March 9, 2016), to Pam Krahn and Nadav Levi, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Mulholland—Poppy Janette (b. March 4, 2016), to Amanda (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Guy Mulholland.

Petryschuk—Brayden Ryan (b. March 28, 2016), to Ryan and Alecia Petryschuk, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Taves—Theodore Walter (b. April 3, 2016), to Rebecca Silver Slater and Conrad Taves (Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont.), in Nova Scotia.

Tiessen—Robyn Cali (b. March 10, 2016), to Kim and Derek Tiessen, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Willms—Georgia Marie (b. April 12, 2016), to Jesse and Stephanie Willms, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Baptisms

Jenae Funk, Kathleen Regier—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, April 3, 2016.

Deaths

Busik—Jakob, 79 (b. July 5, 1936; d. April 4, 2016), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Delesky—Erna (nee Loewen), 79 (b. July 13, 1936; d. March 28, 2016), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Dyck—Frank Elvin, 82 (b. June 28, 1933; d. April 9, 2016), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gerbrandt—Margaret (nee Klassen), 97 (b. Oct. 29, 1918; d. April 17, 2016), North Star Mennonite, Draske, Sask.

Guenther—Harold Gordon, 51 (b. March 1, 1965; d. April 8, 2016), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Harder—Elizabeth (Betty) (nee Weier), 96 (b. Nov. 4, 1919; d. April 2, 2016), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Heinrichs—Rosemarie Bilfinger, 80 (b. Dec. 24, 1935; d. March 27, 2016), Toronto United Mennonite.

Kennel—John, 71 (b. July 31, 1944; d. April 4, 2016), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Kuepfer—Fanny, 74 (b. Aug. 22, 1941; d. March 12, 2016), Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Olfert—Jake, 82 (b. Sept. 16, 1933; d. April 1, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Peters—John David, 70 (b. July 14, 1945; d. March 31, 2016), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Pelser—Anne, 92 (b. April 24, 1923; d. April 4, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Rempel—Peter, 79 (b. Nov. 28, 1936; d. March 31, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Sawatsky—Rosie (nee Tiessen), 87 (b. June 6, 1928; d. Jan. 14, 2016), Oak Lake Mennonite, Man.

Schwartzentruber—Brian, 61 (b. Dec. 14, 1954; d. March 28, 2016), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Wideman—Earl, 71 (b. May 11, 1944; d. March 23, 2016), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Wiebe—Raymond, 78 (b. Sept. 10, 1937; d. April 13, 2016), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wiens—Henry, 87 (b. April 3, 1928; d. March 18, 2016), Knox Presbyterian, Cranbrook, B.C., formerly of Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.

Wilkinson—Beatrice Brunk, 72 (b. May 7, 1943; d. Dec. 24, 2015), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

Yantzi—Wilfred, 63 (b. Dec. 5, 1952; d. March 11, 2016), Poole Mennonite, Ont.

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

Clarification

When Home Street Mennonite voted to accept LGBTQ members, 85 percent of the congregational members present at the annual meeting voted in favour. Incomplete information appeared in the March 28 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, page 19.

A moment from yesterday



Naomi Martin holds a book belonging to her late husband, Bishop J.B. Martin, at the family home in 1975. Archivists Lorna Bergy and Sam Steiner look on as she prepares to donate his books and papers to the Mennonite Archives of Ontario. J.B. Martin was a pastor and Bible school teacher who advocated for conscientious objectors during the Second World War and travelled to Israel on behalf of the Mennonite church. When records such as these are handed into the care of an archives, they begin a new life as sources for understanding the past and discerning the future.

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing / Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

All about love

At the request of Elsie Wiebe of Mennonite Women in Manitoba, Mennonite Collegiate Institute graduating student Amelia Pahl interviewed Martha Epp, 77, of Morden, Man., who has been the primary caregiver for her husband Henry, 88, ever since debilitating arthritis set in all over his already frail body four years ago. Both Epp and Pahl attend Morden Mennonite Church.

AP: *In what ways do you care for Henry from day to day?*

ME: First of all, I look after the pills. Not that he couldn't do it, but it's just safer when somebody knows more about the medication and what it can do to you. Another aspect would be encouragement. That's maybe not a physical thing, but it's still very important. And then just making sure that his cleanliness is kept up, like showers, manicures, haircuts. Also, helping him around when we go out; if he's not using his walker, he has his cane, but needs assistance on his left side. Generally, I give all-around care, cooking meals and just being there for

him. It's on-going caring.

AP: *How has this intensity of care affected your relationship with one another?*

ME: I think, if anything, it's brought us closer. We've been married

57 years, and for 36 years we ran a bakery together, working together from morning till evening. We have never been separated for work. Even now, we can spend hours together, we don't have to talk. We just have the comfort of knowing that [we're there for each other].

AP: *Do you wonder about what life would be like when you no longer have each other?*

ME: I think about it a lot, actually. And when I'm down and out, I think about how, for him, it would be a release. When I'm caring for him, I also do all the financial planning and details, and when something needs fixing, it's all on me. It feels so big sometimes. But then I think, if he wasn't here, who would care? Would I care about getting things fixed or would I just let my life run down? I can tell from other people, when they lose a spouse or loved one, how lonely they become. I can't imagine life being any different than being together. We've cried and we've laughed together. We've had a really, really good life.

AP: *How do you care for yourself in the midst of this?*



ME: That is a good question. Sometimes I don't. I realized last year, just before Christmas, that I was becoming very tired and quite agitated at times. I had isolated

myself, and I did not want to see or speak to people, and I realized something wasn't right. Then one Sunday I crashed and just let it out, and the person I fell apart in front of was wonderful in listening and praying with me. That was when I realized I needed some help.

So I went to see a counsellor whom I've gone to for years. She pointed out that caregivers need to be cared for, not just those they care for. She suggested that I take a break, which I did. I went away for a week with my daughter and it was wonderful.

But it's not just getting away, it's also finding quiet time for myself [doing things like quilting, which help her relax]. I keep telling myself I'm never alone; God walks beside us every day. He is wherever we are, and it's amazing how many times we can draw strength from him.

And both Henry and I feel so uplifted when we go to church Sunday mornings. I feel needed there, I feel like I'm getting filled.

I feel the love of people who care. I give thanks to God for that.

AP: *What has this experience of caring for Henry taught you about love?*

ME: I'm thankful for God's love first of all. If we hadn't experienced his love, I think it would be harder for me to deal with love, or show love, even in our relationship. Like I Corinthians says, all of these three—love, faith, hope—are important, but the greatest of these is love. Love is just a wonderful thing. There are no words that can really describe it. It's a wonderful feeling. . . . I don't know how we'd live our life together otherwise. ✎

Amelia Pahl splits her time between church choir, writing and musical theatre.



Martha Epp, left, shows off one of her quilts to interviewer Amelia Pahl.

PHOTOS BY LARRISA PAHL



Martha and Henry Epp

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

From the pews

Candid thoughts about church and faith

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

For an hour each week we sit together. Most of us are mostly silent. Sometimes we listen, sometimes we sing, sometimes we wander off in thought. Sometimes I wonder what other people wonder about. What do they wish church would be? What do they really believe? What pains would they share? What recollections warm their souls? So I asked. I interviewed six people of various backgrounds and ages. Over time, I hope to ask the same questions of dozens more people. This is not a methodologically tight poll in any sense, just snippets of conversation intended to prompt your own conversations and reflections.

What has been most meaningful in your church experience?

Sense of community. Relationships. Choirs. A feeling of acceptance. Weekly communion—"making Christ manifest"—and dedicating oneself to the people of God. Absorbing the wisdom of elders in small-group settings. Communion in the form of weekly potluck meals as an affirmation of community. A very conservative man serving communion to a relative just after learning that person had come out. Poetic hymns that embrace mystery. Dedicated people. Worship experiences. Baptism. A sense of security and belonging in childhood. Insights shared in sermons and elsewhere. Singing Handel's *Messiah* with the Mennonite Oratorio Choir.

What has been most difficult?

Long sermons. "Feeling like I'm not able to be honest in church about what I believe." Focus on the heavenly realm. "Too little silence. . . . Church can be quite noisy." Gender-exclusive language. The crusade atmosphere of church in youth. Church "laziness" toward current global issues. ("I feel like people kind of live in the past.") Tim Hortons cups in the sanctuary, from "invocaffination" to benediction. "Just finding my way . . . making sense of what is said" within the broader context of our world.

Is there room in church for your passions and pains?

Yes. No. Not really. It's risky to share

passions and pains. Can feel "ripped off" if misunderstood. People will listen, but nothing gets off the ground. "I have to hold myself back in terms of expressing my opinions," because it's not worth risking friendships.

Has the church stuck with you in your darkest times?

"Yes, not even a question." During illness, yes, during mental illness, no. "I take responsibility for not communicating my dark hours." Yes, particularly in small-group settings. "[When people ask me,] 'no, seriously how are you?' I value it enormously."

What aspect of the Bible do you find most meaningful?

"Oh goodness . . . maybe the Magnificat." The last chapter of Revelation ("for the healing of the nations"). The teachings of Jesus. "[It is] an absolutely spectacular book, . . . an enormously rich narrative from beginning to end." "Oh brother." "We are created in God's image, meaning we have been given the capacity to love and to forgive and to be there for the orphans and the poor." Jesus' "counter-cultural wake-up message." "Nicodemus really grabs my fancy."

Most difficult?

"Reading it." Wondering "what is this? What can be found here? . . . and still feeling God there." Abraham being asked to

'MENNONITE HERITAGE VILLAGE, STEINBACH'
(BIT.LY/1T7AUMV) BY ROBERT LINSDELL CC BY 2.0



The church at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, Man.

slaughter his son; "that's a crazy story." "John 3:16, because that was supposed to take me straight to heaven, but it never did anything for me." "It's old. Seems far away and irrelevant even though I studied it for much of my life." "Because I take a certain approach to it, I don't really find it difficult."

Do you believe in a literal, eternal hell?

No. "I don't know. . . . I don't care." No. "I don't know if there are flames." "I haven't given it a lot of thought in the last 10 years, but I like to tell [my husband] he should be a little bit afraid just in case."

What role do you see for the broader church (national and area churches)?

It unites people. It provides a broader sense of connection to history and people in other places. "I haven't really thought about that." Not invested in that discussion. "I don't think it needs to provide a creed or statement of faith." To maintain a sense of belonging, history and story while still engaging with a wider set of people.

How would you like to see church change?

Inclusion of poetry. Better acoustics; churches shouldn't be designed like pig barns just to hold a certain number. More specific teaching and resourcing on very practical relational matters. "We talk in great detail about great things, but I just want to be more patient with my kids." "Maybe be more honest." ❧

Holding out hope for the post-Christendom church

Author Stuart Murray shares his vision with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ
Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

The *Naked Anabaptist*, by British author Stuart Murray, summarizes the foundational tenets of Anabaptism, but “I have a feeling it wouldn’t have sold quite as well with a different title,” he quipped.

Murray was speaking in Rosthern as part of a two-week tour thanking Mennonite Church Canada for sending Witness workers Michael and Cheryl Nimz to the United Kingdom. The Nimzes connect Anabaptists scattered throughout the U.K. and provide them with resources.

Murray and his colleague, Alexandra Ellish, addressed Mennonite Church Saskatchewan pastors at a luncheon meeting on April 23. Later that day, Murray spoke at the *Canadian Mennonite*

fundraising banquet. Both events were held at Rosthern Mennonite Church.

During the afternoon session, Murray identified three elements of Anabaptism that are relevant today. First is the focus on the life and teachings of Jesus. “Our culture is not interested in the church, but is still fascinated by Jesus,” he said.

Second is the emphasis on hospitality and community. In the traditional model of faith formation, individuals believe in Christ first, then are baptized and finally belong to the church. Murray suggested that belonging needs to come first. Churches must be patient and welcoming. Florence Driedger of Peace Mennonite in Regina agreed with Murray. “Loneliness is

a huge issue,” and “represents a great opportunity” for the church, she said.

Third is the dual emphasis on peace and evangelism. While these may seem opposed to one another, Murray said the teachings of peace and reconciliation represent good news worth sharing.

Daniel Janzen of Carrot River Mennonite noted that in Canada the influx of Syrian refugees has been met with both fear and welcome. He asked Murray and Ellish to reflect on the U.K. experience with the refugee crisis. Murray said that although churches would willingly sponsor refugees, their government has not made it possible for them to do so. Ellish added that Anabaptists in the U.K. are exploring other ways to help refugees, including through Christian Peacemaker Teams.

In addition to discussing the relevance of Anabaptism, Murray helped the pastors explore whether evangelism can be rehabilitated. While there is a decided lack of interest in organized religion today, there is renewed interest in spirituality. Asking the right questions is important. Rather than “Can I tell you about Jesus?” Murray said asking, “Have you ever had a spiritual experience?” might better pave the way to further conversation. Jesus himself asked many questions, Murray reminded his audience.

“Evangelism is not a one-way process,” he said. In Acts 10, both Peter and Cornelius were converted. “It’s a process of growth on all sides,” he added. Christians must be willing to listen, allowing people to ask difficult questions while also admitting they don’t have all the answers.

Ellish said she invites people to name the holy or mysterious in their lives, although not necessarily calling it God. Once people have done this they may feel encouraged to recognize other holy moments.

Josh Wallace of Warman Mennonite asked Ellish whether she thought culture made a difference in naming the holy. He said he finds it most difficult to talk about faith with people of Mennonite background who are no longer in the church. Ellish replied, “With my working-class neighbours God’s not really a thing.” To get them thinking about God she asks them, “What good thing happened to you this week?”

Jeanette Hanson of Rosthern Mennonite noted that in a postmodern

/// Briefly noted

B.C. pastor heads new *Canadian Mennonite* board

ROSTHERN, SASK.—Henry Krause, pastor of Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship, was elected chair of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) board at its 45th annual meeting, held at Rosthern Mennonite Church from April 21 to 23. He succeeds Tobi Thiessen of Toronto, who is going off the board after serving for six years as a CMPS board appointee. Serving with Krause on the executive committee are Tim Reimer, pastor of Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, as vice-chair; Linda Matties from Abbotsford, B.C., as secretary; Lois Epp of Calgary as treasurer; and Carl DeGurse of Winnipeg as member-at-large. In a fundraiser with Stuart Murray as guest speaker, some 146 registered attendees donated a total of \$7,305, a record amount for a *Canadian Mennonite* fundraiser. In his appeal for financial support from the group, Dick Benner, editor and publisher, said the 62-year-old publication needs help more than ever during “changing times and denominational structures. . . . You will need a place to gather and sort out the issues. You will need us to help maintain an Anabaptist/Mennonite identity—a champion for your causes while keeping a safe distance that frees us to be your critic as well as your cheerleader.” —*Canadian Mennonite*



Henry Krause



Stuart Murray listens as Alexandra Elish speaks about sharing the good news of Jesus with working-class neighbours for whom 'God's not really a thing.' She invites them to talk about good things that happened during the week, thus naming the holy in their lives.

world, Christians aren't always sure they should be evangelizing at all. Murray said Christians need to ask themselves, "Do we really think we have good news to share?"

The postmodern world and post-Christendom church were Murray's topic for the evening banquet. The new reality, said Murray, is that Christians are no longer a majority in western culture. Today's church no longer has the resources, personnel or funding it once had, nor does it carry the influence or authority it once did. "We are not used to speaking as a minority," he said.

While Christians may lament this change, Murray offered a more hopeful scenario. The Christian minority may be creative. "Minorities can do and dare things that majorities cannot or will not," he said. "They are less concerned with reputation and less invested in the status quo. They can pioneer new initiatives and be experimental."

The Christian minority may also be prophetic, speaking out on issues of the day with humility. "As followers of a surprising Jesus we need to be less predictable," said Murray, and "we need to practise what we preach."

Finally, he said, the Christian minority may be hopeful, embodying stability and gratitude for God's abiding love and for the promises of a new heaven and new earth that are yet to be. ☘

ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Grebel president accepts call from EMU

The board of Conrad Grebel University College reflects on the contributions of Susan Schultz Huxman as she prepares to assume a new post in Virginia.

canadianmennonite.org/grebel-president-emu



The 'simple' life in raising an Amish family

New Herald Press author Marianne Jantzi shares about her life, her Ontario community and her writing.

canadianmennonite.org/raising-amish-family



Ukrainian pastor dreams of a new building

A bi-vocational pastor develops architectural plans for a building that would better serve his congregation's community outreach.

canadianmennonite.org/ukrainian-church-building



Recycling provides therapy

A group of Saskatchewan women meets monthly to create fibre arts and crafts, build friendship and support a local MCC thrift store.

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Elmira ends Hawkesville's Bible quiz dynasty

STORY AND PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant

BADEN, ONT.

The team from Elmira Mennonite Church ended the Hawkesville and Markham church dynasties at this year's Bible quizzing competition, held on April 9 at Steinmann Mennonite Church near Baden.

It has been nine years since a team other than from the Hawkesville or the Markham-Stouffville youth groups won the competition organized by Mennonite

rarely made it to the final stages. This year's team appeared to be young, but members brought a team approach to the competition and regularly gained points for having four different quizzers give correct answers. Members of the Elmira team were Cole Bauman, Emily Bauman, Riley Bauman, Vivian Chau, Justin Frayne, Nicolas Ruza and Tia Ruza.

Because there were only five teams this

Elmira was delighted to have its very first win. Although the youth group frequently fielded teams over the years, they rarely made it to the final stages.

Church Eastern Canada. For the past three years, it was Hawkesville's name on the plaque and in the three years before that, Markham won the competition. In 2008 and 2009 the wins also went to Hawkesville and Markham.

Elmira was delighted to have its very first win. Although the youth group frequently fielded teams over the years, they

year, each team competed with each of the other teams in the round robin. As well as Elmira, this year's teams were from East Zorra Mennonite near Tavistock, Community Mennonite of Drayton, First Hmong Mennonite of Kitchener, and from the combined churches of the Markham-Stouffville area. The East Zorra team was in first place going into the semi-finals, but



The 2016 Quizzer-of-the-Year Award went to Julianna Suderman of East Zorra Mennonite Church near Tavistock, Ont.

the final match was between Elmira and Community Mennonite. Questions this year were from the Book of Joshua.

The Quizzer-of-the-Year Award went to Juliana Suderman of East Zorra. This award, chosen by the quizmasters and judges, provides a \$500 scholarship either to Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., or to Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. %

For more photos, visit bit.ly/1Nlgwv2.



MWC PHOTO BY LIESA UNGER



Arli Klassen of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., second from left, and Mennonite World Conference (MWC) regional representatives are pictured at the executive committee meeting in February 2016. MWC regional reps are part-time volunteer staff responsible for developing and supporting relationships with MWC member, associate-member and potential-member churches; local congregations; and MWC-related partners and agencies. Klassen coordinates the regional reps. MWC is in the process of seeking representatives for Southern Africa, Southeast Asia, and three Latin America regions (Andean, Central America, Caribbean).

B.C. paddle-a-thon: a successful tradition

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
FORT LANGLEY, B.C.

The number of people in the vessels may have been smaller this year, but it didn't seem to matter in the end for the total earned at the 2016 Camp Squeah paddle-a-thon.

When the canoes and kayaks arrived at the Fort Langley marina on April 17, the paddlers who had started out from Hope the morning before learned that they had helped raise \$42,000 for the Camp Squeah summer staff bursary fund. The fund helps support college and university students who give of their time to work at Camp Squeah, Mennonite Church B.C.'s camp, for the summer months.

"It's been huge in getting quality staff to come back year after year," commented Rob Tiessen, the camp's executive director. "It's not about how many paddlers are in the water, but how much money is raised." This year, 17 participants earned proportionately more than 34 paddlers had done last year.

Paddlers are supported by sponsors and must raise at least \$500 each. Many, of course, raise much more than that. This year, top earner was Zach Kuepfer, who was given the traditional prize of a canoe.

For some participants, the annual trek down the Fraser River is a not-to-be-missed undertaking. Scott Alexander, a member of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver, has taken part in all but one of the last 15 such events, and wholly supports its purpose.

"The paddle-a-thon is a great outdoor event that brings people together from all over the Fraser Valley," he says. "Both of my boys love to go to Camp Squeah. I think it is important that the people that counsel my kids at summer camp know they get a little bit of extra money when they return to university in the fall." ❧



Spectators give a warm welcome to the first canoe to arrive in Fort Langley at the annual Camp Squeah paddle-a-thon. Paddlers annually make the journey from Hope to Fort Langley to raise funds for the summer staff bursary fund.

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

- **JIM LOEPP THIESSEN** began as the interim pastor of North Leamington United Mennonite Church on Jan. 1. This is a two-year intentional pastorate. A graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, he recently completed 10-and-a-half years planting the Gathering Church in Kitchener.
- **JESSICA FALK** and **JORDAN MOFFAT**, her fiancé, began as youth workers at Bethany Mennonite Church in Virgil on Sept. 1, 2015. They facilitate the junior and senior youth programs, and enjoy challenging the youth with tough questions, focussing on seeing God in day-to-day life, mentoring and teaching them about God, all while growing spiritually themselves. Falk is currently enrolled at Brock University in St. Catharines as a sociology and women and gender studies major. She is passionate about working for women's and children's rights, and hopes to get a job in that field of work when she graduates. Moffat hails from the Niagara Region, where he studied at the Niagara College for Civil Engineering. He has worked as a carpenter and cabinet assembler, and is currently employed as a draftsman at TIW Steel Platework Inc. in St. Catharines.
- **NICK SCHURMAN** was installed at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church on April 10 to work with youth and young adults. Prior to this, he worked with at-risk and street-involved youth in downtown Hamilton, supported adults with disabilities, and served as a pastor with First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener. He is a graduate of McMaster Divinity College. He lives with his wife Meghan in Hamilton, Ont.
- **SARA ERB** was licensed toward ordination on March 6 at Breslau Mennonite Church.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Change coming for workers in South Africa

By DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

When Joshua Tshimanga learned that his family would be moving to South Africa, he announced that he would be ready to leave the next day. Buoyed by his youngest son's enthusiasm, father Hippolyto Tshimanga insisted Joshua would need to finish his school year in Canada—but that seems like a long time for an 8-year-old to wait.

Tshimanga and his wife, Miriam Maenhout-Tshimanga, will relocate their family to Bloemfontein, South Africa, this summer; Tshimanga will work half-time with five congregations that comprise Grace Community Church. Currently director of Africa, Europe and Latin America Ministry for Mennonite Church Canada, he will reduce his administration work with MC Canada to half-time director for Africa. Maenhout-Tshimanga is looking forward to working with women and children in the congregations.

This is the outcome of an invitation from Grace several years in the making. "We are privileged to be honoured with the presence of Hippo in working together to accomplish the global vision and mission of the church," wrote Pastor Leon Pula in an e-mail. Grace is a member of Mennonite World Conference.

The Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA) is also undergoing change. In

response to a South African invitation in 2006 for more Anabaptist theology teaching, Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider-Nighswander developed relationships that laid the foundation for what became ANiSA—a hub for pastors and leaders of Christian churches to explore the Christ-based values of Anabaptism. The couple worked with the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa to initiate relationships with local leaders and congregations.

In 2009, Andrew and Karen Suderman took over, further strengthening ANiSA. "Although apartheid officially ended in 1994, the residual baggage of a system designed to separate people based on skin colour since 1948 is not easily dismantled," says Andrew. And there is additional stress as poverty and civil unrest in neighbouring countries has sent a wave of newcomers to South Africa.

In 2014, when ANiSA leaders and the Sudermans saw in Mzwandile (Mzi) Nkutha a passion and energy for reconciliation work, MC Canada and ministry partners sponsored two years of study for him at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The South African pastor who is active in ANiSA has found a spiritual home in Anabaptist stories and practices—faith values that he will use in the church's ongoing work of restoring right relationships and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

"[T]here are lots of similarities between Anabaptism with the black, prophetic church in South Africa," says Nkutha. "The hope being to witness to God's desire for *shalom*. In ANiSA, we often describe this as our pursuit of peace, justice and reconciliation, with the hope of creating a body that offers a different kind of space—a space where everyone belongs and matters, thus overcoming the racial separation and polarization that has plagued the South African story."

Meanwhile, the Sudermans will complete their time in South Africa on Aug. 31.

PHOTO BY JASON BRYANT



Mzi Nkutha, his wife Lydi and son Uluthando will return to South Africa to work at post-apartheid reconciliation after he concludes his studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

PHOTO BY MATT VEITH



Andrew and Karen Suderman, along with daughter Samantha and son James, have been MC Canada Witness workers in South Africa. They will be moving to Harrisonburg, Va., where Andrew will be an assistant professor of theology in Eastern Mennonite University's Bible and Religion Department.

They will be moving to Harrisonburg, Va., where Andrew will engage his passion for teaching at Eastern Mennonite University.

North American Mennonites began working in South Africa in the 1970s, supporting conscientious objectors to the military draft and those who resisted the system of apartheid. They also started a Bible school in Mthatha to teach Bible and theology to pastors of African Initiated Churches. Since the end of apartheid, Mennonites have worked with South African churches and agencies to strengthen Christian witness. They have also worked on agricultural, food and water issues, refugee support, HIV/AIDS support, and reconciliation between various factions in South African society. ❧

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO



Hippo Tshimanga, his wife Miriam Maenhout-Tshimanga, and their two sons, Emmanuel and Joshua, will relocate to Bloemfontein, South Africa, to work with the five congregations of Grace Community Church.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Stephen Lewis addresses Power of Partnership fundraiser

MCC Ontario's 'first-ever signature event' raises around \$50,000 for refugee relief

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

“Don’t get too used to this kind of event,” said Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, to gales of warm laughter as he welcomed around 500 participants to the organization’s “first-ever signature event,” a four-course dinner at the St. George Banquet Hall in Waterloo on March 30. In spite of the splendour and glitz of the evening, he was at pains to note that MCC still wants to feel at home at ham and scalloped potato dinners in church basements.

The event, dubbed the Power of Partnership, was a celebration of the many refugee families from Syria that MCC has been able to help settle in the past months, as well as a fundraiser to be able

to continue the work. Tickets were \$150 each or \$1,350 for a table of 10. Many local businesses sponsored their own table.

Featured at the event was a refugee sponsorship group from Waterloo Region, comprised in part by the mayors of Kitchener and Waterloo, Berry Vrbanovic and Dave Jaworsky, respectively, and Dan Herman, executive director of the Centre for Digital Entrepreneurship and Economic Performance. The group formed last fall after seeing the photo of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian refugee toddler who drowned as his family attempted to cross from Turkey to Greece.

A short video created by Rosco Films of Kitchener showed the group picking up its family from a hotel in Toronto and bringing them to their new home in Kitchener.



MCC Ontario executive director Rick Cober Bauman, left, shares a laugh with keynote speaker Stephen Lewis at the March 30 Power of Partnership fundraising dinner in Waterloo.

Vrbanovic noted that when he saw the two-and-a-half-year-old in the family, he was an emotional wreck. Vrbanovic called his own mother after that, asking her what it was like in the late 1960s when their family had fled Yugoslavia for Canada, and he was the age of the Syrian toddler he was helping to sponsor to a new life in Canada.

The capstone of the evening was an address by Stephen Lewis, former leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada, Canadian ambassador to the United Nations, professor at McGill University in Montreal and Ryerson University in Toronto, and a tireless worker against HIV/AIDS and for gender equality in Africa. Gasps followed his very free description of violence against women in places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and he challenged MCC to make gender equality its central purpose around the world.

Lewis noted that, as a social democrat, he struggles with parochial organizations like MCC. But he said to great applause, “I like MCC,” using words like “integrity,” “real” and “authentic,” and noting that MCC works without religious or ideological imperatives in human and humane ways. “Gobsmacked” was how he described his response to what he called MCC’s “reach and range.”

On a very serious note, and with the evening’s focus on refugees, he added that, with climate change happening, the industrialized nations can expect “tens of millions of environmental refugees by 2050.”

/// Briefly noted

The cost of peace will win out in the end: Abuelaish

TORONTO—Following Conscience Canada’s annual general meeting on April 9 at Danforth Mennonite Church, Izzeldin Abuelaish, who lost loved ones very close to his heart seven years ago as the result of an Israeli military strike, spoke to a crowd of some 115 listeners. Instead of seeking revenge for the tragedy, he has dedicated his life to sharing a message of peace and reconciliation, one that he continues to deliver with undiluted passion and poignancy, refusing to hate the “enemy.” The title of Abuelaish’s talk was “The cost of peace vs. the cost of war.” In his analysis, however, he kept the use of dollar-related numbers to a minimum. Instead, he focussed on hope. The cost of peace may seem overwhelming at times, but it will win out, he said, and peace will prove to be far healthier for this hurting planet than the unsustainable military tit-for-tats with their accompanying environmental, physical and emotional destruction. Donations for Abuelaish’s charity, Daughters for Life, were accepted at the meeting. Conscience Canada’s mandate is to convince the federal government to allow its members to designate their taxes toward non-military programs.

—BY MURRAY LUMLEY

PHOTO BY DAVID PETKAU



Menno Homes hosted an open house on April 12 to announce the agency's amalgamation with Christian Horizons. Present at the event, from left to right: Lori Weiler-Thiessen, current Menno Homes board member and future Christian Horizons board member; Janet Nolan, Christian Horizons chief executive officer; Lloyd Rabchak, participant at Menno Homes Day Programs; and Jordan Varey, Menno Homes of Saskatchewan Inc. executive director.

Menno Homes to amalgamate with Christian Horizons

Agency serving disabled individuals hopes to extend its reach

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.

Menno Homes of Saskatchewan Inc. recently announced that it will amalgamate with Christian Horizons, effective July 1.

The Waldheim-based agency operates 11 homes for people with disabilities in Waldheim, Saskatoon and Warman, Sask. Additionally, more than 70 individuals participate in the agency's vocational and day programs.

Christian Horizons, based in Kitchener, Ont., operates more than 200 homes for people with disabilities throughout Ontario and in Moose Jaw, Sask.

The decision to amalgamate was not made out of financial necessity. Rather, Menno Homes' board felt the agency could offer more and better services to people with disabilities under the Christian Horizons umbrella than it can on its own.

"Both agencies are currently operating well in the black," says Jordan Varey, the executive director of Menno Homes.

In a March 30 news release, Menno Homes board chair Peter Guenther said, "Amalgamation will allow us to share resources and increase our expertise in working with persons who have exceptional needs. It will also allow us to broaden our services, such as holding a family retreat camp in Saskatchewan."

Menno Homes will change its name to Christian Horizons and its board of directors will cease to exist. Lori Weiler-Thiessen, a current Menno Homes board member, will serve on the Christian Horizons board.

Menno Homes was founded in 1963 by Mennonite Central Committee and has been supported by Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ churches. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MCC Saskatchewan appoints new executive director

SASKATOON—Eileen Klassen Hamm has been appointed executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan effective immediately.



Eileen Klassen Hamm

She succeeds Claire Ewert Fisher. Klassen Hamm is no stranger to MCC, having served with the agency in various capacities since 1992. She has been program director since 2007 and interim executive director since last December. In an April 14 press release, Dan Siebert, chair of the MCC Saskatchewan board of directors, said, "Eileen has demonstrated a strong commitment to the vision and mission of MCC and has demonstrated the ability to work collaboratively with MCC's diverse constituency." As the agency focusses on peacebuilding in 2016, greater attention will be given to the Indigenous Neighbours program, especially in light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. "Eileen has an excellent understanding of the issues facing Indigenous Peoples in Saskatchewan and Canada," said Siebert, "which is essential as we work toward reconciliation with our indigenous neighbours." Klassen Hamm said, "I gladly and humbly offer my learnings, organizational skills and passion for MCC's work in relief, development and peacebuilding to this role in MCC Saskatchewan," adding, "We are stewards of a tremendous legacy of cooperation among and beyond evangelical Anabaptist churches, and I look forward to working alongside our board, our enthusiastic staff team, and the many, many dedicated volunteers and donors who breathe life into MCC."

—BY DONNA SCHULZ

Connecting with our indigenous neighbours

Shantz Mennonite Church faces indigenous issues head on

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
BADEN, ONT.

Only a few days after a horrific fire in Pikangikum, Ont., the people of Shantz Mennonite Church, near Baden, had the opportunity to hear a first-hand account of the issues facing the indigenous people who live there. On the weekend of April 2 to 3, as part of a Mennonite Central Committee Indigenous Neighbours Program conference, Shantz Mennonite heard from Colleen Estes who has lived in Pikangikum for more than 20 years.

Dwight Baer, a member at Shantz, has worked at first nation schools at God's Lake Narrows in Manitoba and at Pikangikum, where he got to know Estes. Through this connection she made a presentation to the church in southern Ontario via a phone hook-up.

In her presentation, Estes talked about the protracted period of grief following the fire in which nine people from one family died. She needed to stay in the community during this time as the bodies were flown out for autopsies and identification. The below-standard housing, with no plaster-board on the wooden studs to slow the fire, was one reason cited as to why the fire moved so fast. Lack of infrastructure in the community to fight fires was another.

Relationships that last over time and through thick and thin are of utmost importance in building connections between settlers and indigenous people, said Estes, who works with Living Hope Native Ministries, the successor organization to Northern Light Gospel Mission, a Mennonite organization that ran a residential school at Poplar Hill, a neighbouring community to Pikangikum. A series of apologies offered by Northern Light for how it did its work was read at a meeting in September, 2013, sponsored by MCC Ontario. Today the Living Hope

organization has a board made up of indigenous and non-indigenous Christians.

Estes teaches a faith-oriented curriculum in the public school in Pikangikum that has a strong indigenous Christian presence. The new school, being built now after the old one burned down in 2006, has a room especially set aside for this curriculum. Throughout her presentation, she stressed that work done with indigenous people needs to be based on long-term, ethical relationship-building—mostly by listening, being a neighbour and taking part when invited. Her work with youth and Bible study is evangelistic, but she has lived there or in other first nation communities all her adult life.

Another presenter at Shantz was Dave Skene, a Métis man from Kitchener, Ont., who works with Global Youth Volunteer Network. He shared his family story of disenfranchisement in Manitoba resulting in

a move to Ontario in the 19th century and a reclaiming of his heritage as an adult.

On the afternoon of April 2 he led a blanket exercise that had interesting additions. Instead of only focussing on the horrors committed against the Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the exercise went on to show how, with limited resources and a huge multi-generational emotional mountain to climb, they are standing up for themselves, and working with settlers to use the land they had been willing to share from the beginning with love and attention.

When the group debriefed after the exercise, some were in tears, having for the first time heard and experienced the depredations experienced by indigenous people. Particularly moving was the idea that blankets riddled with smallpox were given as gifts, seemingly to help but actually to kill. So was the idea that Christians, supposedly coming with the love of Jesus Christ, could do such awful things to children generation after generation.

After Don Penner's April 3 sermon on "Holey, wholly or holy relationships," which stimulated thinking about how Christians relate to others, a panel discussion considered how the congregation can go forward in improving relationships with indigenous people. ❧



Dave Skene, left, a Métis presenter, talks with Terry Janzen and Jill Steckley Leis of Shantz Mennonite Church during the 'Connecting with our indigenous neighbours' ... seeking openings for relationship' conference in early April.

Faith up front in Thailand

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada

A farmer disappointed by tumbling returns on his cassava crop is still eager to use a portion of his property for a future youth Bible camp facility. Another man is excited to witness to Christ in his secular job.

These are just two of the inspiring Christians encountered by a Canadian mission team during a trip to Thailand in February. The group consisted of eight people from Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary and two people from Enderby, B.C. They travelled to Thailand to meet an emerging community of faith led by Tom and Christine Poovong, Trinity Mennonite members and Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Khon Kaen.

The visit was coordinated by retired pastors Hugo and Doreen Neufeld, mission partnership coordinators at Trinity. Hugo is a former member of MC Canada's Witness Council.

The mission team returned from the trip inspired. "We noticed the joy in Christ that believers expressed in worship and in their everyday lives," the Neufelds reflected in an e-mail. "Faith is upfront in what they do every day."

The growing city of Khon Kaen is located in northeast Thailand, a poorer region of the country. It is home to the Isaan people and many migrants from Laos, which borders Thailand to the north. In this largely Buddhist population with few Christians, the Poovongs are providing pastoral leadership to the emerging Maliwan Mennonite Church.

The Neufelds expressed admiration for the extent of the Poovong's ministry and the faith reflected in what they do: "Tom and Christine are connecting with not only the Maliwan congregation, but also with other believers scattered in small villages in Thailand, as well as in Laos, who need support, encouragement and prayers. They have an energetic vision and, with the power of the Holy Spirit, are working hard at carrying it out."

Part of the Poovongs' ministry includes the pursuit of income-generation initiatives to support individual families and provide long-term sustainability for the congregation. Menno Nursery, an outreach project that began last year, offers free child care, allowing parents to seek employment. In a

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MC CANADA



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

late 2015 update, the Poovongs noted that four local families were part of the nursery, two of them being new believers. Menno Nursery is currently being redeveloped to include a pre-school program.

The Poovongs dream of working with individuals to start small businesses like a coffee stand and selling chickens to serve the community and help grow disciples.

During their visit, the mission team sampled everyday life in Thailand under temperatures as high as 38 C. Team members toured animated marketplaces; feasted on local dishes prepared over charcoal-fired stoves; floated through red lotus flowers in a low boat; and travelled through the countryside peppered with Buddhist temples and rice paddies, and frequented by water buffalo. They also travelled over bumpy roads under construction and negotiated the bureaucracy of border crossings for a visit to Laos, where Tom grew up.

In a Maliwan worship service, Tom described the church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3—the city of God—and prayed that both Khon Kaen and Calgary would become known as cities of God too.

The Poovongs are working hard to encourage that vision. "Pray for Tom and Christine, who are being a powerful witness to Christ in a country where there are few Christians," the Neufelds wrote. ✎



On Feb. 23, the Canadian mission team made an early morning trip to the Red Lotus Sea near Udon Thani, Thailand, where thousands upon thousands of lotus blossoms reveal their mostly pink petals above the water between 6 and 11 a.m.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Coffin maker overcomes evil with good

Tulio Pedraza was persecuted from 1949-64 in Colombia

Mennonite World Conference

When missionaries arrived in Colombia to establish the country's first Mennonite congregations, Tulio Pedraza and his wife Sofía became two of their first converts. They were baptized in June 1949.

Only a year earlier, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a liberal political candidate, had been assassinated; his death ignited a civil war that would last for 10 years. Because Protestantism was seen as another threat to Colombia's already strained unity, Colombian Protestants faced significant opposition from municipal authorities, Catholic priests and their own neighbours.

Pedraza was a coffin maker in the small town of Anolaima. He was also blind. This didn't keep his business from becoming successful enough to provide for his family, since he was the only coffin maker in town. But when the local Catholic priest learned about his baptism, he began making life difficult for the Pedraza family.

First he declared Pedraza's "Protestant" coffins unfit for Catholics to be buried in. From the pulpit, he told parishioners that he would not officiate any funeral using a coffin purchased from the Mennonite. Business plummeted. Pedraza could only sell coffins to close friends and those ignorant of the priest's declaration. And even those customers were forced to travel to surrounding towns to hold their funeral services, since the local priest refused to preside.

Then the priest took steps to ensure that even these trickling sales would end. He met a carpenter in another small town. The priest helped procure a house and tools for this carpenter and convinced him to move to Anolaima to begin a rival coffin business. After the arrival of this new competition, Pedraza could no longer pay his suppliers



Tulio Pedraza

and was forced to close his business.

Although he was unsure of what to do next, Pedraza never abandoned the love and decency he learned by imitating his Lord. Rather than begrudging the rival coffin maker, he reached out to him in friendship. When the blind man's own business collapsed, he sold this competitor his tools. Through this gesture of benevolence, he helped establish the business of the very man whose presence finished his.

Pedraza and his wife did whatever they could to make ends meet. They tried to start a bakery, a chicken farm and a candle-making business, but with little success. Pedraza's expertise was in coffin making. None of these new businesses could bring in enough income to provide for the family. He became more discouraged with every

failed venture, but his faith gave him the strength to persist.

Their struggles were exacerbated by other acts of persecution. Writing shortly after Pedraza lost his coffin business, local Mennonite missionary Gerald Stucky reported: "The persecution has continued. Tulio's children were humiliated in the public school because they are Protestants. His property and the lives of his family have been continually menaced. People who were his friends now refuse to speak to him on the street; stores refuse to sell to him; he has become an outcast for the cause of Christ.

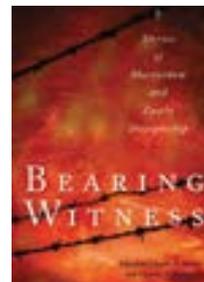
"In spite of this, Tulio continues firm in the faith, trusting in the Lord day by day. He holds no evil in his heart towards those who have worked evil against him. He continues to witness to the light he found in Christ. Tulio is a living witness to the power of the gospel to overcome evil with good."

On more than one occasion, Pedraza's life was threatened for religious reasons. After one particularly frightening encounter, he and his wife spent the night in the refuge of a Mennonite school in the nearby town of Cachipay.

He died peacefully in 1964. The rival carpenter who had been brought in to destroy the Pedraza business donated a coffin for his burial. Even though the funeral was a Mennonite service, the coffin maker attended, risking his own reputation in the community to honour a man who had shown him such unusual love, born from a deep faith. ❧

The Bearing Witness Stories Project enables Anabaptist communities worldwide to share their stories of costly discipleship in ways that inspire greater faithfulness to Jesus Christ and

strengthen the church's unity. Stories like Pedraza's from the Bearing Witness website (martyrstories.com) and others from history were published as a book in 2016. This excerpt is from Bearing Witness: Stories of Martyrdom and Costly Discipleship. Copyright © 2016 by Plough Publishing House. Used with permission.



ARTBEAT

Sir James MacMillan finds 'the spiritual in music'

BY NICOLE SIMONE

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

Conrad Grebel University College hosted Sir James MacMillan as the 2016 Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar. The Scottish composer and conductor, best known for his sacred choral works, gave his Sawatsky Lecture address, "The spiritual in music," on March 1.

An eloquent—and occasionally humorous—speaker, MacMillan drew on a vast range of references, both musical and literary, to explore the relationship between the spiritual and the arts. An overarching theme of the lecture was the place of religious works in an increasingly secularized culture, and the question of whether using material rooted in religion limits the scope of the work or hinders innovation in the art form.

MacMillan argued against this view, quoting poet Michael Symmons Roberts that "the relationship between creative freedom and religious belief is far from limiting."

An example of this was English poet William Blake. MacMillan spoke of Blake's work and the criticism of it from other writers, such as T. S. Eliot, who believed

that Blake's rejection of tradition and the invention of his own religious ideas "was a distraction from the vocation of writing original poetry." Quoting Eliot, MacMillan said, "The concentration resulting from a framework of mythology and theology and philosophy is one of the reasons why Dante is a classic, and Blake only a poet of genius."

MacMillan went on to discuss the current culture in which the religious framework is often rejected, citing English composer Edward Elgar. MacMillan spoke of the frequent downplaying of Elgar's religious beliefs and the public's anxiety in acknowledging his Catholic upbringing in order for his music to be more palatable and "safe" for British audiences.

MacMillan made several references to the spiritual nature of music by 20th-century composers such as John Cage, particularly his famous 4' 33". This piece, in which performers are instructed to not play their instruments and let there be four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence, was originally called "Silent Prayer." Although it

can sometimes be hard to identify in more modern, experimental music, many of the last century's composers never gave up their "search for the sacred," he said.

MacMillan concluded by highlighting parallels between music and spirituality. Music, which many refer to as the most spiritual of the art forms, can have transformative powers and has the ability to change people's lives, he said.

MacMillan welcomed questions from the audience after the lecture, which prompted the discussion of topics such as the frequently reported death of classical music; the relationship between ethics, morality and classical music; and even the problematic term "classical" music itself.

In addition to his lecture, MacMillan met with faculty and students, and spent much of his time in rehearsals with the University of Waterloo Chamber Choir, the Grand Philharmonic Choir and Choir 21. The week culminated in a joint concert with these groups featuring MacMillan's music, conducted by MacMillan himself.

The Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture was established in 2004 to honour Rodney's tenure and Lorna's involvement at Grebel. ❧

Nicole Simone is a fourth-year student pursuing a joint honours major in music and systems design engineering at the University of Waterloo and Conrad Grebel University College.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE



The University of Waterloo Chamber Choir, the Grand Philharmonic Choir and Choir 21 present 'The Music of Sir James MacMillan' as the culmination of MacMillan's visit to Conrad Grebel University College on March 1. Conducted by MacMillan, left, the music on the program included his own works ('The Gallant Weaver' and 'Miserere'), 'Immortal Bach' by Knut Nystedt, and works by Murray Schafer and James Rolfe.

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By Byron Thiessen, Menno Simons Christian School

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Byron Thiessen

obey God's Word.

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(Continued on page 26)

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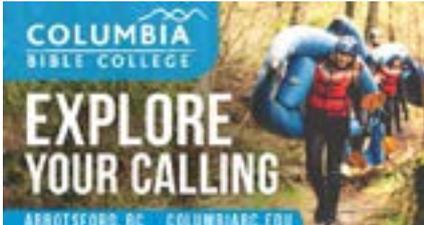
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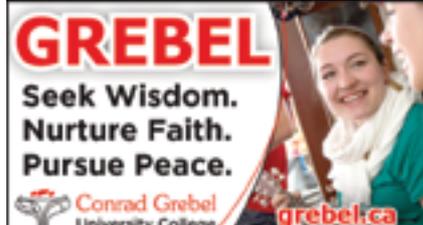
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(Continued from page 25)

- **PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST:** Effective Christians remain focussed on the kingdom.
- **THINK WIN/WIN:** Effective Christians build others up and desire to resolve disagreements.
- **SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD:** Effective Christians serve others.
- **SYNERGY:** Effective Christians creatively cooperate and are part of a team.
- **SHARPEN THE SAW:** Effective Christians have an active prayer life.
- **FINDING OUR VOICE:** Effective Christians take responsibility for souls.

In order for our students to be effective leaders in our world today, they need to be rooted in Christ. As a result, a key verse that we utilize is found in Colossians 2: 7: "Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."

(re)make 2016
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www.mcaawomen.com

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Contradicting the status quo

Theatre of the Beat explores the experiences of conscientious objectors in new play

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

After exploring lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer inclusion in the Mennonite church in *This Will Lead to Dancing*, the Stouffville, Ont.-based theatre company Theatre of the Beat is setting its sights on the experience of conscientious objectors (COs) for its new production.

Entitled *Yellow Bellies*, the play is a historical drama that highlights the experiences and public response to Mennonite COs during the Second World War. The episodic tale takes audiences across Canada, featuring verbatim interviews, fictionalized scenes and live music.

Fred Martin, chair of the company's board of directors, suggested the topic. Artistic director Johnny Wideman says the suggestion piqued his interest because the company explored similar territory in one of its earlier works: *Gadfly: Sam Steiner Dodges the Draft*.

"It's a thing that we've looked at before in other ways, in terms of pacifism or living out one's beliefs when it seems to contradict the status quo or what society says you're supposed to do in a time of war," says Wideman, 28. "It's a theme we're interested in."

This year marks the 75th anniversary of CO camps in Canada, giving the topic an interesting tie-in to today, he adds.

Wideman co-wrote the script with his fellow Theatre of the Beat member, Rebecca Steiner, 26. To research the play, Wideman spent time at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo. Steiner,

who lives in Winnipeg, explored the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives there, enlisting the help of three Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students to help her.

The students researched the stories of COs during the Second World War by reading archived material and conducting interviews to gather information about the time period. Steiner says the play would not be what it is were it not for the students' work.

"Sometimes when you research on your own you have a certain lens," she says. "Having different perspectives added to our research."

Kayla Drudge, one of the CMU students, focussed on music in her research for the play. Her work involved interviewing former Canadian Mennonite Bible College music professor George Wiebe, as well as writing a piece of music that incorporates "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go," a hymn some COs sang when they were homesick.

Drudge says doing research for the play gave her a greater appreciation for what COs went through.

"Reading the actual letters that people wrote, it became so much more real and felt like it connected in a way that it didn't through second-hand stories," the 20-year-old says. "That was cool."

Wideman and Steiner began writing the play in earnest this past January. In April, Wideman travelled to Winnipeg so that he and Steiner could spend a week

(Continued on page 28)

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHNNY WIDEMAN



Johnny Wideman co-wrote Yellow Bellies with his fellow Theatre of the Beat member, Rebecca Steiner.

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Rebecca Steiner was happy to have CMU students do research in the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAYLA DRUDGE



Kayla Drudge, a music student at CMU, focussed on music in her research for Yellow Bellies.

(Continued from page)

workshopping the play. That week culminated in a staged reading at the Archives in front of a crowd of more than 45 people.

Rehearsals for the play begin this month in southern Ontario, with Steiner and University of Waterloo drama professor Andrew Houston co-directing. *Yellow Bellies* will debut on June 11 and 12 at the Global Mennonite Peacebuilding Conference and Festival in Waterloo. Afterwards the company hopes to tour the production across Canada.

Since its inception in 2011, Theatre of the Beat has aimed to create thought-provoking theatre to raise awareness of social justice issues. While the company has performed more than 200 shows in theatres, festivals, churches, universities and prisons throughout Canada and parts of the U.S., its primary audience has often been the Mennonite church.

Wideman did not grow up in a Mennonite church, but in the past few years has attended, and become involved at, Community Mennonite Church in

Stouffville. He says he enjoys writing and performing for a community that has become his home and that he cares about a great deal.

“To know that you’re doing something that is relevant for a very specific group of people means you can cater it more specifically to that group of people, to provoke conversation [and] to hopefully instigate change,” Wideman says. “In some ways, I feel I’m lucky to have such a defined audience.”

In addition to engaging the wider Mennonite community, the company’s members have been given the opportunity to cultivate friendship through artistic expression.

“It’s really special when you find a group of people you can be creative with, and I’ve found that with Theatre of the Beat,” Steiner says. “It’s a really neat team of artist-activist types.” ❧

For this and other Theatre of the Beat productions, visit theatreofthebeat.ca.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

The things that are most worthwhile

Student learns to overcome fear while living at Conrad Grebel University College

BY MAIA FUJIMOTO

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

The following article was originally given as a short speech at a community supper at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., where Maia Fujimoto lived in residence for two years.

Looking back on my years at university, I am always brought back to my first day at Grebel. It was a hot, sweaty day. I remember seeing crowds of students already mingling with each other and thinking, “How do they seem to already know each other?” Since living

at Grebel, I have now learned what “the Mennonite Game” is and that first day makes more sense.

But this day wasn’t only memorable because it was my first day of university. It was memorable because I was terrified, not knowing how I was ever going to get

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAIA FUJIMOTO



Maia Fujimoto recalls feeling terrified when she started university.

through the next four years.

In my first year of university, I was an introvert with social anxiety. Places like Grebel, although warm and welcoming, seem more suited for people who are extroverts. This makes it hard sometimes for someone like me to put myself out there and let my voice be heard.

During my first year, I let fear make my decisions for me. I was convinced that I needed to be practical. By this I mean that there were big things that I wanted to apply for on campus at Grebel. There were clubs that I wanted to join and talent shows that I wanted to perform in. There were even small things, like making the effort to wander the hall, that I didn't do. It seemed so far out of reach that there was no point even trying because of all the bad things that could potentially happen.

I sat down and thought to myself, I want to be happy, I want to try new things and I want to do things that I love. So slowly, very slowly, with help, I started making choices.

Then I got it in my head that, because I was quiet, I would never be able to make friends, succeed at school or fit in at Grebel. These fears progressed to a point where they got the best of me and almost made me not want to be in university anymore. All I wanted to do was run away, because that would have been easier than staying.

Needless to say, I was exhausted. I was exhausted from being afraid of doing things or participating in things that I knew I would love to do. I sat down and thought to myself, I want to be happy, I want to try new things and I want to do things that I love. So slowly, very slowly, with help, I started making choices. I made the choice to bring my fear and anxieties along with me, rather than let them slow me down or stop me from doing the things that I love and that I know will make me happy.

I love music, so the first choice I made was to join the chapel choir. I come from a Roman Catholic family and didn't know much about Mennonites or Anabaptism

before I came to Grebel. What better way to learn than to join a choir that attended every chapel service? It was my own little victory.

I started actively hall-wandering into whichever room had an open door so I could chat with the students inside. Some of those random hall-wanderings brought about some of the best friendships that are so precious and are still continuing to grow today. I live with most of those people now in a house off campus.

I wanted to join the Grebel student council. I didn't know if I would get voted in, and I almost didn't apply, but I tried and it was an awesome semester working as one of the associate representatives.

I went on an exchange to Ireland for five months in my third year. Although the idea of the exchange was terrifying,

because it meant being away from my friends and family, the minute I got on the plane it wasn't that scary anymore.

Looking back, I wouldn't change anything about my first-year university experience. Instead of regretting that I let fear make some decisions for me, I think fear can push me to do better, to be better and to be happy. My first year was an amazing learning experience that helped shape me and propel me to be the person I am today.

I don't really know what I will do after graduation. What I do know is that I will take my fears along with me, constantly reminding myself that it is usually the things that scare us that turn out to be the most worthwhile. ❧

Maia Fujimoto, 22, recently graduated from the University of Waterloo with an honours bachelor of arts degree in peace and conflict studies. She is originally from Mississauga, Ont.

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
PHOTOS THIS PAGE



Maia Fujimoto, pictured here at her recent graduation, joined the chapel choir at Grebel so she could get to know the Mennonite faith.



Maia Fujimoto credits the fear she felt at the beginning of her studies with motivating her to become who she is today.

Calendar

Alberta

June 4: Heritage retreat for those 50 and over at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Theme: "Refugees/ in search of a homeland." For more information, call Hugo Neufeld at 403-201-4358 or e-mail hdneuf@shaw.ca.

June 10-11: MCC Relief Sale, at Coaldale.

Saskatchewan

May 28: RJC golf tournament at Valley Regional Park.

June 10-11: MCC Relief Sale at Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

May 27-29: Camps with Meaning Birding retreat at Camp Koinonia. For information or to register go to www.campswithmeaning.org/retreats/ or call 204-895-2267.

June 4: Mennonite Collegiate Institute fundraising golf tournament, at Oakview Golf Course, Gretna. To register, e-mail info@mciblues.net.

June 5: Mennonite Collegiate Institute saengerfest; worship at 10:30 a.m. and concert at 2 p.m.

June 11: Seventh annual Mennonite Heritage Village/Eden tractor trek fundraiser, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Ontario

May 15: Martin Family Singers and Waterloo Orchestra Singers present Haydn's Creation, a fundraising event for the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. Tickets available at MCC Ontario or by visiting nhmrs.com.

May 24-27: Display of many quilts purchased in the last 50 years at the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. A fundraiser for MCC. For more information, visit stjacobs.com/events.

May 25: "Why Do God's People Sing?" at Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, presented by John Bell of Iona, Scotland, 7-9 p.m.

May 27-28: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale.

May 31: MC Eastern Canada's annual retreat for retired pastors and their

spouses, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Theme: "Christianity and the world of Islam." Resource people: Brice

Balmer and Tom Mayvaian. For more information, call Glenn and Mary Ellen Zehr at 519-662-6914.

Employment Opportunities

PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH

www.peacemennonite.ca



Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, British Columbia, is seeking a **FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR** with pastoral and/or other work experience.

We are a church with about 200 attenders. We intend to continue to grow and be an evangelizing influence for Christ in the multicultural community of East Richmond.

Applicants must have a strong commitment to Anabaptist beliefs centred on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The candidate is expected to have proven skills in:

- Effective preaching and communication;
- Congregational care and counselling;
- Pastoral team leadership and developing lay leaders;
- Working with and relating to a multicultural community.

This position is available starting summer 2016.

Please send applications to pastoralsearch@peacemennonite.ca.

PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH

www.peacemennonite.ca



Peace Mennonite Church (PMC) in Richmond, British Columbia, is seeking applicants for the following **PASTORAL STAFF ROLES**. Some of these roles could be combined in one qualified staff person.

- **Youth** (half time): to build relationships with church and community youth and young adults; to provide relevant activities for their growth.
- **Worship Coordinator** (10 -12 hrs/wk): to shape and facilitate the public worship life of the community; to provide administrative support to this aspect of church life.
- **Community Outreach** (half-time): to give leadership to our community engagement plans and initiatives, including families, our Community Meal, and the building of relationships and partnerships with the community (e.g. Food Bank).

PMC intends to continue to grow and be an evangelizing influence for Christ in the multicultural community of East Richmond. We are a church with about 200 attenders.

More detailed information is available from:

pastoralsearch@peacemennonite.ca.

Classifieds

Coming Event

Ailsa Craig (Ont.) Community Quilt Festival. The event is a destination for all who enjoy fabric and artistic beauty. Unlike any other in the world, the event has featured quilts of the Netherlands, Denmark, Israel, Great Britain and France. This year's feature: Fibre Art Exhibition Quilts of Latvia. Meet quilters from Latvia and take part in workshops. Mon., May 23 through Sat., May 28, 2016. www.ailsacraigquiltfestival.ca

Help Wanted

Seeking a full time, seasonal **Dump Truck Driver** Must have a clean driving record and dump truck experience. Please email resume to jeljoehaulage@gmail.com. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted, and references will be required upon a successful interview.

Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! Faith-based Hotel Tours to Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Poland and Ukraine, focussing on the Mennonite-Anabaptist heritage. More information online: mennoniteheritagetours.eu

Three-bedroom cottage at Red Bay on the Bruce Peninsula, nestled among maple trees. Short walk to sandy beach and small park and includes a rear deck. Available June 25 through September 3. Call Diane at 519-746-4920.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Guelph Bible Conference Centre is looking for a qualified individual to join our staff, serving as Food Service Manager. Job description is available at www.guelphbiblecc.com.

Resumes will be accepted until June 30, 2016.

MCC BC JOB OPPORTUNITY
Senior Accountant, Abbotsford

Mennonite Central Committee is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches that shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice.

We require an individual who shares our vision and values, and is qualified to assume the responsibility of Senior Accountant at MCC BC in Abbotsford.

Responsibilities include full cycle accounting for multiple departments, including 10 Thrift Shop locations, payroll, accounting for and management of properties, equipment and other assets owned by MCC BC, various reports and oversight of the donation receiving process.

Individuals with an accounting designation, 5 years' experience in a non-profit environment, familiarity with Great Plains Dynamics and Donor Perfect Online, or similar, preferred. Please apply at <http://mcc.org/get-involved/serve/openings/senior-accountant>

Applications due May 31, 2016.

MCC Saskatchewan
JOB OPPORTUNITY
Program Director

Mennonite Central Committee is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches that shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice.

The Program Director is a member of the MCCS Management Team and provides leadership and supervision to the MCCS Program Team. This person represents MCCS in the MCC Canada Program Director Network and communicates MCC's work with the church constituency and the broader community within Saskatchewan.

We require an individual who shares our vision and values, and is qualified to assume the responsibility of a senior leadership position within MCC Saskatchewan (MCCS). This position is a full time (1.0 FTE) and available on a salaried basis.

To learn more and apply: <http://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/serve/openings/program-director>

Applications Close Date: May 25, 2016
Start date: Monday, June 13, 2016

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Springstein Mennonite Church seeks a **lead pastor** (0.8 time) for our small, rural congregation located 20km west of Winnipeg. SMC's multi-generational congregation seeks a spiritual leader to feed and equip its members to live godly lives and show God's love to its neighbours. Submission deadline June 1. Start date early fall. Please make inquiries with Rick Neufeld: rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca



Hesston College seeks candidates for **President**. The ideal candidate for Hesston College's next president will be an Anabaptist Christian committed to joining a local MCUSA congregation upon appointment. He/She will also hold a terminal degree (Ph.D.; Ed.D.; J.D.; D.Min.; etc.) and have leadership experience at a higher education institution.

Strengths The president must be an imaginative innovator in higher education who seeks solutions from unusual places and voices, positioning Hesston as an attractive option for prospective students and potential faculty and staff. The president must be a collaborative leader who supports, inspires and empowers administrators, faculty and staff through thoughtful decision making processes. The president must possess an astute financial mindset, generating resources including fundraising for Hesston's fiscal future while making tough decisions within the complex economic terrain of higher education.

Fit The president must authentically engage a diverse body of communities with skillful, culturally-aware communication, increasing financial support, developing new partnerships and discovering new opportunities for campus engagement. The president must come to understand the challenges faced by a Midwestern Christian two-year college in order to guide Hesston through difficult economic, social and political terrain. The president must be an accessible "pastoral presence" as a committed Anabaptist Christian, for students, faculty and staff.

Motivation The president feels called by God and a sense of purpose to fulfill this position. The president is energized by the relational, Christ-centered community of Hesston College and is inspired to further its mission and values. The president prioritizes student learning and development, nurturing interpersonal relationships in order to strengthen the Hesston College Experience.

Search Process Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or resume may be submitted to Hesston College Presidential Search Committee at HC_SearchCom@MennoniteEducation.org; or through postal mail to: Hesston College Presidential Search Committee, Mennonite Education Agency, 3145 Benham Avenue, Suite #2, Elkhart, IN 46517. Candidates from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Mennonite 'routes' go deep

Corduroy road found in Waterloo, Ont., attributed to Mennonite settlers

PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Building of a light-rail transit system along the spine of Waterloo and Kitchener had to change focus in March when excavations in Uptown Waterloo exposed the remains of a corduroy road. Archeologists are dating the road to the late 1700s or early 1800s. It was probably built by Mennonites, the original settlers in the area. The road would have connected Abraham Erb's house and grist mill. Corduroy roads, made of logs laid perpendicular to the path of travel, were placed in swamps to keep horses, carts and people from getting stuck in the wet soil. Uptown Waterloo is crossed by Laurel Creek, now buried in the very centre of the city, and was a swampy area in those early days. The road was discovered directly in front of the Waterloo Ten Thousand Villages store, a Mennonite presence in the 21st century.