

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Just reading

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EDITORIAL

To 'clothed' Anabaptists

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Sometimes it takes an outsider to tell us quiet, unassuming Mennonites that we do indeed have clothes.

Stuart Murray, a British biblical scholar from the Baptist tradition who has just published *The Naked Anabaptist*, wonders, in an interview with John Longhurst on page 4, why North American Mennonites have so little interest in Anabaptism when so many spiritual seekers outside of our tradition are “coming home” to a 500-year-old belief system in this post-Christian era.

The author cites numerous examples of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics and Quakers finding Anabaptism “surprisingly relevant” in contemporary culture. It’s not that these mainstream communions are searching for a new denomination or look-



seem special anymore,” is a fair analysis.

Perhaps for some of us, acculturation has advanced to the developmental stage of being embarrassed to associate with a tradition of radical beliefs and living on the political/religious margins that have marked our five-century-long history. We wonder how that enhances our witness, if we want to “witness” at all.

We might be weary of miscast stereotypes, charges of separatism, of having our brand of pacifism labelled as “unpatriotic” at best or “subversive” at worst. I was in for a jolt recently when a BBC reporter asked me to identify some “real Mennonites locally—you know, the ones who drive horse and buggies”—for a TV documentary. It was not an inspiring moment, as I tried to disabuse her of broad-brush

We might be weary of... having our brand of pacifism labelled as “unpatriotic” at best or “subversive” at worst.

ing for a way to leave their own, he writes, but rather they “are seeking inspiration, resources and fresh perspectives to enrich and enhance their own lives.”

Murray, chair of the Anabaptist Network, hears lots of discussion at our seminaries and colleges on his visits to Canada and the US, but asks why it hasn’t filtered down to the congregations. While this may be over-stating the case slightly, his speculation that “maybe it has gotten so lost beneath all the Mennonite traditions and trappings over time, it doesn’t

stereotypes.

Or, in a more proactive mode, we might want to understate our core Anabaptist beliefs as we quietly get more involved in the socio-political processes, strategically going low profile so as to be more effective and less offensive, in an attempt to bring our values to bear on institutional systems.

Wherever we are on this spectrum, Murray, in a profoundly prophetic way, is calling us back to our roots and asking us to re-define a set of durable beliefs to

fit the contemporary scene—a landscape vividly described by Greg Boyd (author of *Myth of a Christian Nation*) in the foreword to Murray’s book (*excerpted on page 6*) as only “a cultural vestige of the once mighty empire of Christendom in Europe and North America.”

“There is an increasingly shared conviction,” writes Boyd, “that the kingdom of God we are called to is radically different from all versions of the kingdoms of the world. While the kingdoms of the world all manifest the character of Caesar as they seek to rule people and conquer enemies with the power of the sword, the kingdom of God always manifests the character of Jesus, seeking to serve and love enemies as it manifests the power of the cross.”

In a unique way, Murray turns all of our misgivings, all of our inhibitions, on their head, and asks us to give our brand of peace, for instance, as a gift to the wider church—a calling to that larger body to be “no longer compromised by its partnership with wealth, power, status and control.”

It is not that we are uninformed. We owe a debt of gratitude to our biblical scholars and historians—the “tribal chiefs,” to use Murray’s parlance—such as C. Arnold Snyder, James Reimer, Walter Klaassen and William Klassen, Tom Yoder Neufeld, Alan and Eleanor Kreider, Harry Huebner, David Schroeder, Mary Shertz, Gale Gerber Koontz and Jack Suderman, to name a few of our higher-profile theologians/historians, not to mention the theological dean of our era, the late John Howard Yoder, who has given Anabaptism currency in broader theological circles and to us as students in the pew.

Thank you, Stuart Murray, for making us conscious of our Anabaptist “clothes.” All we need to do is wear them for “such a time as this.”

ABOUT THE COVER:

Twice a year, *Canadian Mennonite* presents our special Focus on Books & Resources section, featuring a wide selection of new non-fiction and fiction written by or for Mennonites, as chosen by Books & Resources editor Barb Draper. Stories, reviews and our spring new book list begin on page 29.

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Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, and news and analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:23-25, NRSV).

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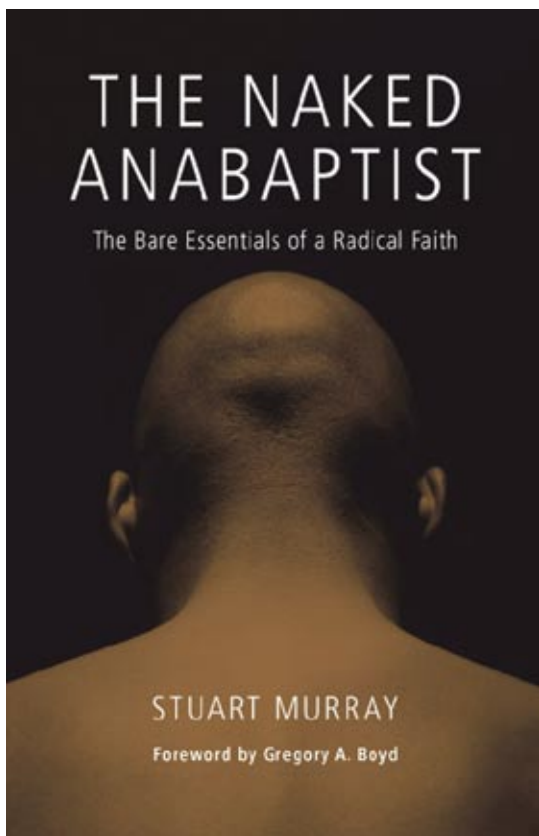
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[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

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Me, my, mo, Menno: **WILL LOEWEN**

Exposing the 'bare essentials'

Author Stuart Murray talks about the making of The Naked Anabaptist



'I still find it ironic that it seems to be those of us who didn't grow up as Mennonites who are far more excited about Anabaptist tradition than traditional Mennonites today. Maybe this book can help change that a bit.'
(Stuart Murray)

Anabaptism has been around for almost 500 years. For much of that time, it has been clothed in Mennonite and Amish traditions and culture. But what does it look like without Mennonite and Amish clothing? That's what Stuart Murray wondered. The result is The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials Of A Radical Faith (Herald Press).

For Murray, who helps direct the Anabaptist Network in Great Britain and Ireland, Anabaptism is a way of following Jesus that challenges, disturbs and inspires, summoning Christians to lives of discipleship and worship.

John Longhurst, director of marketing and sales for Mennonite Publishing Network, interviewed Murray in March.

Longhurst: *Why did you write this book?*



Murray: More and more people in Great Britain are seeing Anabaptism as an exciting way to live out their faith. They want to know: Where did Anabaptism come from? What are its core convictions? And do I have to give up my own church tradition to become one? *The Naked Anabaptist* is my effort to provide some answers. It's a way to simply answer the questions people are asking about Anabaptism by people who know nothing about it, or who are confused about what it really was all about.

Longhurst: *What kinds of questions were being asked?*

Murray: The questions that came up most often were: What is an Anabaptist? Where did they come from? What do they believe? Can I become an Anabaptist? What is the difference between Anabaptists and Mennonites? Can I be an Anabaptist without living in a "common purse" community like the Hutterites, driving a buggy like the Amish, or belonging to a Mennonite church and singing in four-part harmony?

Longhurst: *How did you come up with the term "naked Anabaptist"?*

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES FEATURE

of Anabaptism

Since the early Anabaptists also lived at the margins of society, their experiences and perspectives are attractive to many people who are looking for ways to live faithfully as followers of Jesus today.

Murray: It was actually my friend Noel Moules who coined it. While travelling with some Mennonite church leaders in 2008 in Pennsylvania, he was quizzed about the growing interest in Anabaptism in Britain and Ireland. They wanted to know why growing numbers of British and Irish Christians were interested in Anabaptism, and what Anabaptism looked like without the Mennonite or Amish culture in which it is usually clothed in North America. To which Noel replied, “You mean, what does a ‘naked Anabaptist’ look like?” When I heard Noel’s story, I knew I had a title for this book.

Longhurst: *Why do you think there is growing interest in Anabaptism in Great Britain and other countries in Europe?*

Murray: Europe has become very secular. The old links between the church and the state—what used to be called “Christendom”—are disappearing. Today, we are living in a post-Christendom era, when the church is no longer at the centre of societal life. Since the early Anabaptists also lived at the margins of society, their experiences and perspectives are attractive to many people who are looking for ways to live faithfully as followers of Jesus today.

Longhurst: *What are the “bare essentials” of Anabaptism for you?*

Murray: For me, there are seven essentials, or core convictions:

- First and foremost is belief in Jesus; he is our example, teacher, friend, redeemer and Lord.
- The second is seeing Jesus as the focal point of God’s revelation.
- The third is being free from the state and all that Christendom implied.
- Fourth, Anabaptists are committed to finding ways to be good news to the poor, powerless and persecuted.
- Fifth, Anabaptist churches are called to be communities of discipleship and mission, friendship, mutual accountability and multi-voiced worship.
- Sixth, spirituality and economics are interconnected for Anabaptists—something that is very important in our individualist and consumerist culture.
- Finally, for Anabaptists, peace is central to the gospel. It is not the centre of the gospel—Jesus is the centre of it all. It is as followers of Jesus that we are committed to finding nonviolent alternatives to violence in our world—not peace for its own sake.

Longhurst: *You wrote this book for people in Great Britain. Do you think it will be useful in North America, too?*

Murray: I hope so! During my visits to the U.S. and Canada I have encountered the same kinds of questions; people are genuinely interested in Anabaptism, but either don’t know anything about it or can’t see past the Amish and Mennonite clothing that covers it. That includes Mennonites themselves, by the way. My hope is that many Mennonites in the U.S. and Canada will read it and become interested in recovering their own radical heritage.

Longhurst: *What do you mean by “recover their own radical heritage”?*

Murray: During my visits to the U.S. and Canada I have been amazed by the lack of interest in Anabaptism that I find among many North American Mennonites. I don’t know why that is, exactly. I know that there has been a lot of discussion about Anabaptism at seminaries and colleges, but I wonder if it hasn’t been able to filter down to congregations. Or maybe it has gotten so lost beneath all the Mennonite traditions and trappings over time so that it doesn’t seem special anymore.

I don’t want to be misunderstood. I am deeply appreciative of Mennonites and how they have kept Anabaptism alive all these years. They have demonstrated how Anabaptist insights are worked out in the lives of families and congregations, and how this tradition can be passed on to the next generation. I would not be an Anabaptist if not for the work of Alan and Eleanor Krieder and the London (England) Mennonite Centre. We owe them a great debt.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES FEATURE

But I still find it ironic that it seems to be those of us who didn't grow up as Mennonites who are far more excited about Anabaptist tradition than traditional Mennonites today. Maybe this book can help change that a bit.

Longhurst: *What is your ultimate goal*

for this book?

Murray: My goal is not to promote Anabaptism for its own sake. My interest is in promoting a way of living that helps people to become more faithful followers of Jesus. Through it, I want to pay tribute to generations of Anabaptist Christians who witnessed faithfully, refused to

conform to social norms, pioneered new ways of being church, challenged dominant assumptions about violence and sometimes suffered appallingly. But, in the end, I am interested in the Anabaptist tradition only as a means to an end—and that end is to point us to Jesus as the one we are to follow and worship. ☿

Anabaptism provides a map in the post-Christendom wilderness

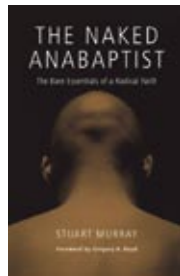
BY GREGORY A. BOYD

It is becoming undeniably clear that western civilization has entered a post-Christian age.

Whereas Christians once believed the world would eventually be brought within the expanding empire of Christendom, it is now obvious this will never happen. To the contrary, Christendom has been losing its influence on western culture for several hundred years.

Undoubtedly, a cultural vestige of the once mighty empire of Christendom will continue for some time in Europe and America, if only in the form of lingering innocuous elements of a Christian civic religion. But, for all intents and purposes, the “church militant and triumphant” has become an artifact of history. While many western Christians understandably are grieved and distressed over this loss, growing choruses of Jesus-followers are viewing it as something to celebrate. I include myself among this rising tribe, as does Stuart Murray, author of *The Naked Anabaptist*.

It's not that we are in any sense pleased with the morally bankrupt form of secularism that has replaced Christendom's reign in the West. It's just that we believe the “church militant and triumphant” bore little resemblance to the church God established through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. And now, having left the Egypt of Christendom, we



must prepare ourselves for a long and difficult journey in the wilderness.

There is an increasingly shared conviction that the kingdom of God we are called to is radically different from all versions of the kingdoms of the world. While the kingdoms of the world all manifest the

character of Caesar as they seek to rule people and conquer enemies with the power of the sword, the kingdom of God always manifests the character of Jesus, seeking to serve people and love enemies as it manifests the power of the cross.

The movement Jesus inaugurated is, by its very nature, a countercultural, anti-empire movement. More and more followers of Jesus are coming to understand this distinction and to understand that our allegiance to God's kingdom must subvert all other allegiances.

While the mainstream church has, to a significant degree, unwittingly absorbed the values of intense individualism, consumerism and materialism, more and

more post-Christendom disciples in the West are becoming convinced that these values are at odds with everything Jesus was about. They are realizing that we are called to live in community with others, to live simply, humbly and justly, and to share our lives and our resources with one another and with all who are in need.

What many of those who are journeying in the wilderness of post-Christendom Christianity don't yet realize is that their rejection of Christendom and their insights into the countercultural nature of God's kingdom are hardly new.

In fact, the vision of the kingdom these tribes are espousing was the general understanding of the church for the first three centuries of its existence. It was quickly exchanged for the model of the “church militant and triumphant” in the fourth century, when Roman Emperor Constantine endowed the church with political power and the church tragically accepted it. Still, throughout the church's history, there have been pockets of Jesus-followers who, despite fierce persecution from the institutional church, held fast to

While the kingdoms of the world all manifest the character of Caesar as they seek to rule people and conquer enemies with the power of the sword, the kingdom of God always manifests the character of Jesus, seeking to serve people and love enemies as it manifests the power of the cross.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES FEATURE

the vision of the kingdom that's arising among post-Christendom Christians today.

The most significant historic expression of the anti-Christendom, Jesus-looking kingdom began during the Reformation among a group of radicals who came to be known as Anabaptists. Although they often had to pay for it with their lives, this group set itself apart from other reforming movements by espousing the very values the rising tribe of kingdom people is espousing today.

This group was passionate in its conviction that the kingdom of God is

radically distinct from the kingdom of the world—and that these two must always be kept distinct. They quickly came to the conclusion that following Jesus requires us to love our enemies and to refuse to resort to violence. They believed that all followers of Jesus are called to live in committed communities with one another as we together cultivate a lifestyle characterized by simplicity, humility, generosity and a passion for justice. And they were convinced that salvation was not primarily about getting people to heaven when they die, but was about God's transforming power affecting every

area of life, society and creation.

Although Christendom's leaders tortured and executed almost all leaders of the Anabaptist movement, by the grace of God the movement survived and has borne witness to God's uniquely beautiful kingdom for the past 500 years. ❧

Gregory A. Boyd is author of The Myth of a Christian Nation and The Myth of a Christian Religion. This article was adapted from his foreword to The Naked Anabaptist.

Join 'Naked Anabaptists' on Facebook

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Mennonite Publishing Network Release

No, it's not what you might be thinking—nobody is nude. At least, not literally, although more than 300 people have joined the Naked Anabaptist group on the Facebook social media site to metaphorically explore what it means to strip down to the bare essentials of the Anabaptist faith.

The new group was formed by Winnipeg Mennonite pastor and blogger Jamie Arpin Ricci, to discuss issues raised by Stuart Murray in *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith*.

According to Arpin Ricci, who pastors Little Flowers Community Church in that city's West End, the group exists to "further the vision of Stuart Murray's new book, and to push beyond the assumptions and cultural expression of this historic Christian tradition."

Questions and comments on the site have been varied and widespread.

After reading the first 50 pages of the book, Leonard Hjalmarson of Oklahoma said, "Two things stand out so far: first, that many of us who are Anabaptist are not fellowshipping in Anabaptist traditions. And, paradoxically, some of us who are in Mennonite traditions are frustrated that they aren't more Anabaptist."

Byron Rempel-Burkholder, editor of Mennonite Publishing Network's

Rejoice! devotional, wondered, "Must Anabaptism be manifest in Anabaptist denominations, or should we be content to leave it as a theological orientation or a movement?"

Matt Stone wanted to know, "How can neo-Anabaptists and hyphenated-Anabaptists live out their faith commitments within non-Anabaptist churches, when

community is such an emphasis in the Anabaptist path?"

The Naked Anabaptist Facebook group can be found by searching for "Naked Anabaptist" at facebook.com. ❧

With files from Ross W. Muir, managing editor.

/// For discussion

1. What do you think will happen to the Christian church in North America in the next decades? In what ways is a strong and influential church beneficial, and in what ways does its power and influence harm its message? What reputation does the Mennonite church have in your community?

2. Stuart Murray lists seven bare essentials or core convictions of Anabaptism. If your congregation listed its core convictions, how would they compare? How are these convictions different from those found in other denominations? If these are the characteristics of Anabaptism, how well do they describe your congregation?

3. Murray says, "I have been amazed by the lack of interest in Anabaptism that I find among many North American Mennonites," and suggests that Anabaptism may have gotten lost under all the Mennonite traditions. Do you agree that there is a lack of interest in Anabaptism? If so, why might that be the case? In what ways have Mennonite traditions buried or carried Anabaptist convictions?

4. Gregory Boyd comments that, "the mainstream church has . . . absorbed the values of intense individualism, consumerism and materialism," but that "these values are at odds with everything Jesus was about." Do you agree? What might the Christian church look like if it espoused the values of simplicity, humility, justice and sharing with those in need?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

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

✉ Condemning the 'sawdust trail' may come back to bite us

RE: "WALKING UP the sawdust trail" column, March 8, page 15.

I have sat on sawdust-trail-tent hardwood benches, but in the west, where such meetings were less Mennonite and more interdenominational.

We critique, and at times condemn, the sawdust-trail tent in the context of current circumstances and thinking. We can be assured that two generations from now, or sooner, the church will similarly critique our church practices.

My reflections juxtapose the tent meeting era with 2010:

- Sin was categorically condemned then; today, some sins are condemned.
- In the tent era, Jesus was, without question, the way of salvation. The church today has a wider door on this one, and, in some cases, it is unclear.
- In the tent era, the lost included those in the non-western world. Today, we assist the church in the south in its theological base.
- In tent times, emotion was quite evident. Our church now guards against emotion in public. It is seen as a weakness.

The church now addresses concerns not on the radar screen of the sawdust trail era. One point of focus is the environment.

Also, we recognize the absence of social justice nationally and internationally. As we critique the tent-meeting era now, in a decade or two we may hear more of our sin of consumption while others face death for lack of food and clothing.

JOHN PETERS, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ 'Misquote' takes original Holocaust statement out of context

RE: "TO BECOME a 'true democracy' Jews must 'get over' the Holocaust" letter, Jan. 25, page 12.

Words are very important. Context is even more important. Communication cannot exist without its subjective context and therefore, bias. To clarify a few points:

- *Canadian Mennonite* labelled Peter Peters' viewpoint: "To become a 'true democracy' Jews must 'get over' the Holocaust". This selective editing has created a distortion. A fairer label of his viewpoint would look like: "Jews will need to get over the horrors." Using the original language of the letter encourages discussion of the topic.

The editor's response assumes that the Holocaust has assumed archetypal status and that any critical analysis will appear disrespectful.

The letter in response, "Telling Jews to 'get over' the Holocaust an insensitive remark," March 8, page 9, continues this, unfortunately. The use of the misquote betrays the bias of the editor as well as the reader who responded to the original letter, again using an inappropriately truncated misquote of the original author.

The problem with the selective quote is that it does not seek resolution of an issue, but appears to inflame it. We move from discussing the Palestinian land as payment or redress of a horror—one which the Palestinians were not the perpetrators of—to focusing on the phrase, "get over the holocaust".

ALFRED REMPEL, KITCHENER, ONT.

✉ 'Hockey for Haiti' event helps earthquake survivors

CAN YOU IMAGINE anything more improbable than aging men playing hockey with 14-year-old girls, some of who were their own grandchildren? This happened at Schroh Arena in Saskatoon, Sask., on March 15, with the proceeds going to children's programs in earthquake-shattered Haiti.

The idea was the brainchild of a couple senior hockey players: Ernie Epp and Ben Boehm. We grandpas knew we wanted to play a charity game some time ago, but did not have a charitable mission in mind. The Haitian earthquake gave us a focus.

The girls—members of the Saskatoon Bantam AA Comets of the Saskatoon Midget Girls League—were kind to us old-timers and refrained from using their slap shots much. Or was it our consistent poke-checks that made it difficult for them to get their sticks high enough for the necessary slap? We'd like to think so. . . .

On one penalty shot, the young shooter patted our goalie on his helmet after her shot, seemingly saying, "It's okay, grandpa. I won't shoot any harder next time!"

Late in the game, the Comets pulled their goalie to add muscle to their offence. One of the grandpas shot a puck from our end, which banked off the boards at just the right angle. Too late, the Bantams defence realized that it was heading for the net. Harv Birns will

now go down in hockey history as getting his finest goal "off the bank"

No doubt the girls will want a rematch, but we don't know if we can get off our recliners long enough to play them. We do know that we all enjoyed the game and the reason for it: to help Haitian children. We raised \$4,200—including \$1,500 from the Comets—for Mennonite Central Committee's efforts in Haiti.
DON REIMER, SASKATOON, SASK.

FAMILY TIES

They call it 'couple-love'

MELISSA MILLER

A season of weddings. That's what I see as I look ahead to the next few months. Many of the children born in the 1980s are now young adults falling in love, pledging their troth and bravely preparing to marry.

Several invitations for these weddings dot our family bulletin board, some of which include photos of the engaged couple. They are young, full of promise and good intention. With sparkling eyes and sweet smiles, they radiate joy and eagerness to declare their love. They are beautiful and so is the love that spurs them forward.

It is a joy to witness these young people move towards their commitment. I have known some of these soon-to-be married people since they were babes. I fed them peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and rocked them to sleep. I wiped their tears and changed their diapers. I watched their distinctive personalities emerge, and witnessed their amazing growth. How is it possible that they have become these mature, ready-for-commitment adults? Like the singer in *Fiddler on the Roof*, I wonder, "Wasn't it yesterday when they were small?"

I have been asked to provide premarital counselling for some couples. We meet and talk about the kinds of things that

make marriages strong and happy: About being steadfast companions, people who can be counted on to be there for each other; about providing a safe harbour for each other, a secure place of steadfast love and attachment; about "space" in the relationship, and freedom to be the person God created each one to be; about balancing couple time and individual

time, balancing time with friends and extended family, and alone time to seal their bond; about sexuality and finances and communication and conflict.

I am heartened by the wisdom of these couples, and humbled by the privilege of watching couple-love in its infancy. As they negotiate the early stages of their commitment, they seem like fledglings taking wing, learning about themselves and their lover, their strength, their vulnerability, their limits, their joy.

There will be challenging times ahead for them, although no one can predict exactly what difficulties a particular couple will face. If those who are marrying today are like the generations who have preceded them, there could be any number of things that will test their love. Economic strains are certainly

a possibility. Some may struggle with infertility. The children who come may bring trials, like physical or mental health strains, or the turbulence that often accompanies adolescence. The adults may find themselves flattened by illness: cancer, depression or addictions. Some will lose sight of their commitment and not always be faithful. Others will grow apart or it will seem just too hard—or even impossible—to stay married.

That's why I call them brave. They boldly make their vows before God and in the presence of their community,



I am heartened by the wisdom of these couples, and humbled by the privilege of watching couple-love in its infancy.

declaring their love and fidelity in the face of all the possible tribulations that lie ahead. In their youthful commitment, they shine out a light of hope and promise. Even the seasoned—or cynical—veterans of married life find it hard to resist such bright cheer and optimism.

As I prepare for these weddings and pray for these young lovers, I return to the words of Song of Solomon 8:6-7. "Set me like a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm," sings the lover. "For love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. . . Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it." May it be so.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, where she ponders family relationships as a pastor, counsellor and author.

✉ Acts of forgiveness shouldn't be constrained to a timetable

AFTER READING THE “Brother of slain missionary responds to questions about forgiveness” letter, March 22, page 8, it reminded me of countless times I have witnessed these same events where true forgiveness and the ceremony of forgiveness were not allowed to be made complete due to time constraints or other reasons of lesser value.

As a member of the Mohawk people, we have ceremonies that we participate in when forgiveness needs to be acted upon and put forth for the benefit of not

only the offending parties but for all to witness and learn from. Several times I have been on the receiving end of the words of forgiveness put forth by members of the church that had no more value than Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology to the residential school survivors, mainly because I was not allowed, due to time constraints, to accept the apology within a cultural context that would have allowed me to not only accept words of forgiveness but to also allow me to bring forth a response that would have prepared new and fertile soil for the beginning of a new and meaningful relationship.

I am often perplexed that the church does not take

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Take good care of your children

GARY SAWATZKY

“Who will take care of our children if something happens to us?”

The decision about guardianship of minor children is one of the major hurdles facing parents when writing a will. Often it is because parents can't agree on whom to name.

Each parent may want his or her side of the family to be responsible. Sometimes they are in a new area and don't yet have a lot of close friends

to choose from. It may be that they have a special-needs child and have no one who could take on this responsibility.

Whatever your circumstances, when choosing guardians you should consider someone:

- You trust with the responsibility of caring for your children;
- Who is willing and able to take on this responsibility;
- Who has similar faith, values and lifestyle;
- Who lives close to your children, so as to minimize disruption to friends;
- Old enough, but not too old (think of

the person's current age and add 18 to 25); and

- With whom your children have established a trusting and loving relationship.

If your children are older, have a discussion with them to see with whom they would be willing to live.



The decision about guardianship of minor children is one of the major hurdles facing parents when writing a will.

Naming a guardian—and an alternate, in case the first choice is no longer able to accept the responsibility or declines the responsibility due to a change in circumstances—is a significant decision.

Once you have chosen your guardians, have a discussion with them to make sure that they are willing to act. If you change your mind and name someone else later, let the original guardians know that you have made a change. No one wants the surprise of finding out that they are now guardians when they weren't expecting it, or expecting it and finding out that they have been replaced.

In the event that you agree to be a guardian for someone else, have a frank conversation with the parents: “I'm honoured to be chosen as guardian, but please tell me what resources you are setting aside for the children so that I won't go broke caring for your children, and we know who will be in charge of the funds.” The trustee of the funds and guardians do not need to be the same people, but they need to be able to communicate well about money issues, as these conversations may go on for years.

Choosing a guardian for your children may be difficult, but don't let this stop

you from writing a will. Not having a will means leaving the decision to the courts. Your children will have a guardian, either your choice or the court's choice. They will be better served by a decision you make and include in your will. Take good care of them.

Gary Sawatzky is a stewardship consultant at the Calgary, Alta., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada. For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

the time to enjoy the emotions and heartfelt energies that are being expressed when one human being can come forth and join hands in the presence of God with someone they either willfully or unwillfully harmed and vow to create a new and blessed relationship in spirit, because there isn't enough time or it isn't in the program bulletin.

The church has so much to learn from the indigenous people of the world who still do take the time to work through issues with ceremonies of forgiveness

and renewal, no matter how long it takes, even if it isn't in the bulletin.

SAKOIETA' WIDRICK, SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER IROQUOIS TERRITORY, ONT.

✉ **Goal of athletics is to 'express divine qualities as best we can'**

RE: "OLYMPIC COVERAGE lessens reader's opinion of magazine" letter, March 22, page 13.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Specializing in a Google world

ARLYN FRIESEN EPP

In a Google world where millions of written works are at your fingertips, it's tough for the average user to discern appropriate resources for Christian formation,

leadership, peace and mission. And it's an even greater challenge to keep Anabaptist and

related resources as visible and accessible as we've come to expect them to be.

Fortunately, there are circles of partnership in our wider Mennonite world that help us tailor bibliographies and help widen their accessibility:

- **PUBLISHING:** For a relatively small denomination, we've seen a remarkable amount of material pass through an Anabaptist "criterion grid" as part of the publishing process. Mennonite Publishing Network and other Anabaptist publishers offer a wide selection of curricula, theology, history, worship, fiction and other resources. Sample bibliographies, like the ones found in this Focus on Books & Resources issue of *Canadian Mennonite* (page 32), place unique titles before our eyes.

- **DENOMINATIONAL RESOURCES:** Mennonite Church Canada, its area

churches and congregations generate much material for our common use. Many of these items are available as free downloads through the MC Canada



[W]e have many tried and tested original resources developed by individuals and congregations, all free to download.

resource centre at mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre. On our website you'll find all of our online videos, podcasts, denominational publications and departmental resources generated by staff and leadership. In addition, we have many tried and tested original resources developed by individuals and congregations, all free to download. Search for unique Sunday morning worship ideas, educational resources, workshop outlines and more. We also welcome new submissions, so please send us yours!

- **CHURCH LIBRARIES:** Libraries are sometimes the forgotten gem in the discipleship treasure chest. Read Ben Myers's blog posting (mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1319) to be convinced that a library is still the "embodiment of revolution," is "dangerous," and yet is "the safest and friendliest place on earth." O that we

might honour the riches that might lie there!

- **RESOURCE CENTRES:** Resource centres serve as an extension of the church library and an arm of our denomination and publishing networks. MC Canada's resource centre is one of a number of libraries that assemble family and congregational materials—Anabaptist and ecumenical resources—for your convenience. Subscribe to our monthly resource update to keep abreast of new, seasonal and Anabaptist resources at mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/347.

This spring, in an effort to increase accessibility and selection, four of our resource centres—Columbia Bible College, the MC Canada resource centre and MC Eastern Canada, as well as Mennonite and Brethren in Christ resource centre—are launching a joint project that will link our databases into an inter-library loan system. You'll be able to access all of our materials through any one of our online catalogues.

As we partner to equip the home and church with accessible Anabaptist resources, we also welcome your feedback and resource suggestions. In the saturation of a Google marketplace, may we find and be fed by life-giving materials true to our Christian faith.

Arlyn Friesen Epp is the director of MC Canada's resource centre in Winnipeg.

God may not be an avid fan of speed skating or any other sport, but our purpose in doing things such as athletics is to express divine qualities as best we can, qualities like intelligence, exactness, control, strength, perfection, love, kindness and purity.

I Peter 2:12 tells us to “maintain good conduct among the gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and

glorify God on the day of visitation” (RSV).

Paul says to Timothy, though, that in God’s sight it is more important that we “aim at righteousness” (I Timothy 6:11) than win a medal. He also notes that “there is great gain in godliness with contentment” (I Timothy 6:6).

WES EPP, CALGARY, ALTA.

THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

When good sermons get funny

ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

Preachers, at a minimum, are persons whom we entrust to speak important words at the right time and place. So when the preacher mis-speaks, it is embarrassing for the preacher and has the potential to be funny for the rest of us.

Roald Dahl, in *The Vicar of Nibbleswicke*, tells the story of a lovable young vicar who has a mysterious form of dyslexia that makes him reverse crucial words. For instance, when praying the Lord’s Prayer he intones “forgive us our ‘sessapserts,’ as we forgive those who ‘sessapsert’ against us.” This is harmless enough, but when he gets “God” and “Dog” mixed up, the parishioners are less than amused.



we laugh.

Another reason why we laugh at preachers is because they do not always live out the beliefs they preach. Street comedians in the Middle Ages enjoyed exposing lazy, gluttonous and arrogant clergy. Much of the “religious” comedy on popular North American shows like *Saturday Night Live* and *This Hour*

has 22 Minutes has to do with exposing the financial and sexual escapades of well-known preachers.

Incongruity between the content of the sermon and the way it is presented can also be funny. In his sermon “Take a pew,” Robin Cook takes the verse from Genesis, “My brother was an hairy man, and I am

Making fun of the preacher is biblical.

In the movie *Four Weddings and a Funeral* a nervous young priest (played by Rowan Atkinson of *Mr. Bean* fame) blesses a young couple in the name of “the Father, the Son and the Holy Spigot.”

We like our preachers to get the most basic words right, but when they don’t,

a smooth man,” with utmost seriousness and then uses it to make ridiculous analogies to “life today.” “Take a pew” makes fun of how the preacher tries to convince us not with content, but simply with the rise and fall of his “preacher voice.” In this vein, check out Reverend Jesse Jackson’s

preaching of “Green Eggs and Ham” on YouTube.

Making fun of the preacher is biblical. The Book of Jonah makes great fun of its preacher-prophet. Recent Jonah scholarship has suggested that if there was a talent night for the prophets guild in Jerusalem in the 3rd century B.C., the Book of Jonah would be just the story for prophets to lighten up and laugh at themselves. Jonah does not get the best words of the book; they go to the pagan sailors and the pagan king. Jonah only seems to manage words that are ironic, ridiculous and of the compliant variety. Even his prayer seems presumptuous.

When Jonah finally gets to preach, he only gets a short sermon, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be destroyed,” which God rescinds in the end, making a mockery of Jonah and his sermon. God seems to work around, and even in spite of, Jonah and his misspoken words.

The comic message of the Book of Jonah is that prophets or preachers, regardless of their grand claims, are not the brokers of God’s love; God is the broker of God’s love. The prophets get to laugh at the way they sometimes feel indispensable.

Preachers are called and sent with words, but misspeak them we will. Laugh at Jonah or the preacher as you will, but remember that their predicament is true of all of us. We are more incidental to the plot than we think. We are bit players, mere babbling fools in God’s theatre. ✎

Allan Rudy-Froese studies preaching at the Toronto School of Theology. Send him a line at allanrf@rogers.com.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Arsenault—Alice Ann (b. Feb. 11, 2010), to Paul and Christa Arsenault, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Bender—Kai (b. April 2, 2010), to Wendy Janzen and Chip Bender, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Brisbin—Lucas Frank (b. Jan. 14, 2010), to MaryAnn and Brad Brisbin, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Fehr—Jesse Connor (b. March 9, 2010), to Clint and Andrea Fehr, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Ferron-Bouius—Zahra Tate (b. April 12, 2010), to Aimee Ferron and Derek Bouius, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Fransen—Maxwell Henry Griffin (b. March 29, 2010), to Shelley and Aaron Lepp Fransen, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Gerber—Hadley Lynae (b. April 2, 2010), to Josh and Melissa Gerber, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Hiemstra—Noah Jacob (b. March 6, 2010), to Rodney and Janel Hiemstra, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Janssen—Winston James (b. April 17, 2010), to Pete and Tanya Janssen, Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

Klaassen—Sadie Annica Lorette (b. March 26, 2010), to Curtiss and Joeleane Klaassen, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., in Saskatoon, Sask.

Kostanecki—Teyo X (b. April 2, 2010), to Moni Janssen and Bartek Kostanecki, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Kuepfer—twins Jacob Daniel and Joshuwa Camren (b. March 12, 2010), to Danny and Amanda, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Baptisms

Jeremy Enns—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., April 4, 2010.

Marriages

Dirks/Niessen—Stephanie Dirks (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) and Kevin Niessen, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, March 27, 2010.

Lepp/Zeba—Virginia Lepp (Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.) and Ismael Zeba, in Lome, Togo, Feb. 27, 2010.

Deaths

Claassen—Manfred, 84 (b. Feb. 26, 1926; d. April 4, 2010), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Cornies—Maria (nee Tiessen), 98 (b. Sept. 8, 1911; d. March 4, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Dueck—John G., 84 (b. Dec. 22, 1925; d. Feb. 10, 2010), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Ens—Elizabeth, 100 (d. April 7, 2010), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Epp—Paul, 87 (b. July 21, 1922; d. April 8, 2010), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Goossen—Jake, 97 (b. Oct. 28, 1912; d. March 24, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Hildebrand—Mary (nee Janzen), 91 (b. Dec. 20, 1918; d. March 19, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Janzen—Katharina, 99 (b. Dec. 21, 1910; d. March 26, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Mary, 93 (b. April 16, 1916; d. March 14, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Klippenstein—Alvin, 69 (b. March 30, 1940; d. March 19, 2010), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



YOUNG PROPHETS

What to do with postmodernism?

BY DAVID M. CSINOS

Theologian Brian McLaren's recent book, *A New Kind of Christianity*, has become fuel for a long-running argument between Christians. Groups like the Southern Baptists condemn his writings and do everything they can to stomp out the "emerging" movement that is being driven by his ideas.



knowledge and experiences of the world have evolved.

That is part of the beauty and mystery of the gospel: Because Christ is alive, his message is alive, and living things change over time. This is why McLaren refers to the gospel as a "continually generative genesis." It's a message that is continuously

being born again.

What is more, it's the responsibility of the church to adapt the gospel—and the church itself—so that it continues to live in and through us. As we look back in time, we can see that the church has transformed the good news as it encountered the rise of Constantine, the Enlightenment and Quebec's Quiet Revolution. And as the church has adapted the gospel, it has been changed as well.

I'm not saying that there have been multiple gospels. There has been—and is—only one gospel preached by Jesus: "the kingdom of God is at hand." But this good news, while remaining constant at its core, has been shaped and reshaped throughout the life of the church. After all, the gospel means something different to 21st-century Canadians than it did to first-century Palestinians or 16th-century Germans. What it means for the kingdom of God to be at hand has been transformed as the church in its many contexts encountered new problems and opportunities.

Unfortunately, the church has not always adapted and embodied the gospel in ideal ways. The living church, like any human being, makes mistakes. However,

depending on what we learn from them, our mistakes can be the best things that happen to us, for they teach us what not to do in the future.

So what exactly should we do with postmodernism? Should we love it or hate it? I believe we should do neither. As Christians, our highest allegiance is not to modernity or to postmodernity, but to Christ.

Rather than wholeheartedly jumping on the postmodern bandwagon—or silencing postmodern prophets—we can critically engage postmodernism in order to understand how the church and the gospel might be faithfully shaped by it, as well as how the church might challenge aspects of the movement that hinder human dignity from flourishing. And as Mennonites, we must ensure that when we engage postmodernism, we do so with humility, peace, justice and care for the world that God loves.

Let's wade step by step into the waters of postmodernity so that we—the church—and the gospel are not left alone on the shore, separated from the living ocean of the world. As we take these steps in faith, we will see that a new kind of Christianity is indeed emerging from these waters, a Christianity that engages issues of contemporary Canada, including the growing polarization between those who participate and do not participate in their religious traditions, Canada's relationship with its First Nations, and the new kind of patriotism that sprouted during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

This Christianity is not a new Christianity, but a revised version of the Christianity we inherited and are re-fashioning in order to be faithful to the gospel and to Christ in the 21st century. May God be with us as we embark on the adventure that awaits us in these waters. ❧

David M. Csinos recently moved back to southwestern Ontario after studying in the southeastern U.S. He holds a B.A. degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., and a master of theological studies degree from McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont. He can be reached at davecsinos@yahoo.com.

Because Christ is alive, his message is alive, and living things change over time.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

When faith collides with academic freedom

TWU calls university teachers union report a 'black list,' while CMU president tries to 'not make too much of it'

By **ROSS W. MUIR**
Managing Editor

After stories went national earlier this year announcing that Trinity Western University (TWU) in Langley, B.C., had fallen afoul of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) over issues of academic freedom, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg now finds itself implicated in the same controversy.

CAUT vs. TWU

Late last year, CAUT issued a report stating that “there is no question that [TWU] violates the commitment to academic freedom that is the foundational bedrock of the university community in Canada and internationally.”

The report’s authors arrived at that conclusion by turning TWU’s own policy statements against it. Such statements include: “Jesus Christ . . . saw his role as in part setting people free from bondage to ignorance, fear, evil and material things while providing the ultimate definition of truth,” and TWU “rejects as incompatible with human nature and revelational theism a definition of academic freedom which arbitrarily and exclusively requires pluralism without commitment, denies the existence of any fixed points of reference, maximizes the quest for truth to the extent of assuming it is ever knowable, and implies absolute freedom from moral and religious responsibility to its community.” It was also noted that faculty were selected in part on their “commitment to the Christian faith.”

CAUT has since posted the report on its website, leaving TWU worried about the impact it will have on its enrolment, staff recruitment and research funding, and whether it may tarnish the degrees its

students earn.

“We’ll be watching any impacts very carefully,” TWU president Jonathan Raymond told *The Province* columnist Brian Lewis in February. He is also quoted in a Jan. 30 *National Post* story as saying the report has put the school “under a cloud of suspicion,” characterizing the report as “a black list.”

Such a description is supported by Al Hiebert, president of Christian Higher Education Canada, an umbrella group for Christian universities in Canada, including TWU and CMU, which is now awaiting the outcome of its own investigation by CAUT. “The list and investigation implies there’s something sinister,” Hiebert is quoted as saying in the same *National Post* article. “I would also call it harassment. It’s putting the education of those schools and the research of their faculty under the heading of, ‘We don’t need to take them seriously.’”

CMU trying to sidestep controversy

For his part, CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt is taking a low-key approach to his university’s response to CAUT’s investigation, despite the fact the story has been played out in both the provincial and national press. While “not overly concerned” about the report, which is not yet completed at this point, he told *Canadian Mennonite* during a stop in Waterloo, Ont., last month, “I am somewhat anxious; I’m trying not to get into a battle with them.”

“My natural inclination is to try to not make too much of it,” Gerbrandt said,

noting that CAUT, a faculty union with no representation at CMU, has no formal role in university academic structures and was not well known outside of the university system until this story went national.

Gerbrandt believes that CAUT’s goal of ensuring academic freedom in Canada’s post-secondary education system is a laudable one. “Faculty need to be able to think critically, even about faith issues, if the church is to meet the challenge of a new era,” he said. As to how far outside the mainstream CMU professors are allowed to stray, he said, “Faculty have the right to be wrong. It’s part of the scholarly and theological process.”

At the Shaftesbury campus, all employees must be Christians, although not necessarily Anabaptists. Faculty and staff are encouraged to “affirm the faith tradition of their denomination, even as they support the mission of CMU” he explained, adding by way of example, “We want Lutherans to be Lutherans.” At Menno Simons College on the University of Winnipeg campus, staff have to be able to “advance the [college’s] mission, a mission flowing from our Anabaptist understandings of faith, peace and justice,” he said.

In a March 17 internal memo to CMU staff, which Gerbrandt made available to *Canadian Mennonite*, he took a similar line to that of TWU over the relationship between faith and academic freedom. “CMU does not understand academic freedom to be inherently undermined by the expectation that faculty at CMU be Christian,” he wrote, adding later that “the CMU context frees faculty and students to more openly bring God and faith questions into the conversation, openly and comfortably,” a goal for which the university was created.

At this point anyway, it appears that CAUT has specifically targeted Christian institutions. Besides CMU and TWU, Crandall University in Moncton, N.B., and Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., are also being investigated. If that is the case—that CAUT is creating a list of faith-based schools—Gerbrandt concluded proudly, “I want to be on it.”

As of press time, CAUT’s report on CMU had not been posted on its website. ❧



Gerbrandt

B.C. ANNUAL DELEGATE SESSIONS

Church growth, expansion lauded by B.C. delegates

Dan Rempel chosen to replace Gerd Bartel as MC B.C. moderator

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
CHILLIWACK, B.C.

Beginnings, endings and growth marked the Mennonite Church B.C. annual meetings at Eden Mennonite Church, Chilliwack, on April 10, under the banner of “The hope of the reconciling gospel of Jesus.” Delegates welcomed one congregation while saying goodbye to another, witnessed the passing of the leadership torch from one moderator to another, and heard about new ministries in the province.

Learning of expansion projects in the area church through its Evangelism and Church Development Committee was an encouraging highlight for many. Living Hope Christian Fellowship of Surrey reported on its recent involvement in launching a new congregation in Surrey’s Sullivan area. Living Hope had long hoped to be a congregation that could birth another.

“God is a missional God. He is a sending God,” said Living Hope member Carla Hordyk in reporting on her church’s outreach efforts. “I’m a missionary, cleverly disguised as a church member.”

Another growing ministry is the Abbotsford Vietnamese Fellowship under the leadership of Nhien Pham. Pham reported that the group meets twice a month and now includes children and youths. A recent New Year’s celebration drew 200 people, many non-Christian. “Please pray for us,” Pham requested.

A highlight of the day was the reception into membership of Western Hmong Mennonite Church of Maple Ridge. Many Hmong people from Southeast Asia became refugees following the Vietnam War. Eventually, a number came to Canada, with a half-dozen families who settled in

Maple Ridge deciding to unite with the Mennonite church family.

“We hope the Mennonites will help us to grow and to change the face of Mennonites to so many colours,” said church chair Ge Yang. “Someday, with the Mennonites’ help, we’re going to build the ‘Mennonite International Church.’ I tell you, that’ll be beautiful.”

MC B.C. also bid farewell to a dissolved congregation. Abbotsford Mennonite Fellowship, which decided to disband earlier this year, was officially recognized for its contributions to MC B.C. for more than a decade.

Church business

Delegates passed a resolution from First Mennonite Burns Lake that had been tabled at the 2009 sessions, calling on MC B.C. to commit itself “to license only pastoral candidates who have the qualifications and who agree with and accept the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* as their confession and guideline for their ministry.”

Camp Squeah executive director Rob Tiessen commented on a banner year in which two new accommodations at camp were opened. He also recognized the contribution of long-time head cook Eileen Friesen, who died unexpectedly in March.

Church life in mission

Throughout the day, pastors from the three local area congregations—host Eden Mennonite, Crossroads Community Church of Chilliwack and Yarrow United Mennonite Church—shared how they live out their mission in their communities. Each in turn received a prayer of blessing.

Reflecting on completing his term, moderator Gerd Bartel likened leadership to coaching a sports team. “The team has been amazing,” he told the assembly, adding that serving “has been a great joy.”

Dan Rempel of Cedar Valley Mennonite Church in Mission will assume the moderator’s mantle for the next three years.

At the conclusion of the sessions, executive minister Garry Janzen thanked incoming and outgoing workers for their service. He urged everyone to “be aware of the Lord’s calling to the next assignment.” ❧



Garry Janzen, executive minister of Mennonite Church B.C., right, welcomes into membership Western Hmong Mennonite Church, represented by church chair Ge Yang. Janzen is wearing a tie handcrafted by a member of the Hmong congregation.

B.C. ANNUAL DELEGATE SESSIONS

Canada a 'hard soil' for the gospel

MC Canada congregations and members must strengthen the vitality of the church, outgoing general secretary declares

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
CHILLIWACK, B.C.

Being the church in the 21st century is no easy task, Robert J. Suderman told the delegates and pastors gathered at Eden Mennonite Church, Chilliwack early last month for the annual gathering of Mennonite Church British Columbia. It was a sort of Pauline farewell for the retiring general secretary of MC Canada.

"Some writers suggest that Canada is a country with 'very hard soil' for the gospel of Jesus Christ—one of the hardest in the world," said Suderman, who took time to personally visit all 230 congregations of the denomination during his tenure.

Suderman, who retires on July 31, then proceeded to identify five themes that go to the heart of strengthening the vitality of the church and to attend to its ongoing health:

- Unity and diversity in the life of the church;
- Being a peace church;
- Confessing and witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord in a pluralistic context;
- Human sexuality in the life of the church; and
- Ecological concerns from a faith perspective.

To address these themes specifically, he listed five corresponding guidelines:

- Covenant together to study the Bible and explore biblical teaching;
- Remain in loving dialogue as the body of



Suderman

Christ, confessing that we are all sinners and in need of God's grace and the Holy Spirit's guidance;

- Covenant to show compassion and to pray for each other;
- Participate in an ongoing search for discernment and for openness to each other; and

- Covenant with God to obey what we discern together, through his strength and grace.

"As a national church," he said in speaking to the divisions that have occurred during his tenure, "we are facing the complex reality that, while different parts of our body [the priesthood of all believers] are reflecting the same foundational Scripture, guided by the same Holy Spirit, which reveals the mind/will of the same God, our discernment appears, at times, to be contradictory and irreconcilable in understanding Christian faithfulness."

He called for a discernment that is not predetermined, but one that is open to "an inherent tension of sufficiency and surprise." While discernment does not "pre-suppose change," he further taught, "it is open to surprises engineered by the Holy Spirit."

What is fundamentally at stake, he added, "is our capacity to be the church in fulfilling our ongoing vocation of discerning the *kairos* of God for our time. The primary issue is not what exactly we will decide about the challenges that face us, but whether we can

be the church in doing so."

In engaging an ecclesial process, he said all of the priests of the "priesthood" are welcome to participate and each voice needs to be heard with integrity and sincerity. This does not mean "full agreement," but it does mean "taking seriously the voice of the priesthood, even when our personal opinions or preferences may differ."

Discernment is a vocation to which the church has been permanently called, he concluded. "The heart and soul of facing the need for discernment is our conviction that the church is worth the effort." ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Lutherans, Mennonites affirm joint peace concerns

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA—Lutherans and Mennonites in Latin America and the Caribbean celebrated a joint commitment to peace in the world, as a delegation of Mennonites was welcomed at a regional conference of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). At the conference's pre-assembly, Mennonite Church of Colombia president Tomas Orjuela said, "Our commitment as Mennonites is to serve the Lord and our country." "Peace must get concrete forms, as is the case this afternoon," said Jenny Neme, a Mennonite representative working for the Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (JustaPaz), referring to LWF's intentions to ask forgiveness of God and Mennonites later this year for their historical mistreatment of Anabaptists. "These actions of reconciliation are a witness that has a significance that goes far beyond the churches," she added. Mennonite pastor Ricardo Pinzón told the Lutherans, "With your action we can build on forgiveness and reconciliation new scenarios of hope." Lutherans and Mennonites took part in a worship service around a candle whose colour blended purple for repentance and white for joyful resurrection. —Lutheran World Information Release

'The primary issue is not what exactly we will decide about the challenges that face us, but whether we can be the church in doing so.'

(Robert J. Suderman)

Upholding our covenants under God

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release
WINNIPEG

Adrian Jacobs agrees with the sentiment displayed on billboards and advertisements across Canada. “We are all treaty people,” according to him. “When the treaties were negotiated, they bestowed rights and responsibilities on both First Nations and Euro-Canadian settlers.”

An aboriginal speaker, educator and author, Jacobs brought his perspectives to the April 9 opening worship service of the annual spring Partnership Circle, “Removing barriers, building bridges,” which brought aboriginal and non-aboriginal partner churches in Manitoba together at Thunderbird House in Winnipeg. A ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and MC Manitoba, the event was shaped around the theme, “We are all treaty people: Biblical perspectives on covenant.”

As a member of the Cayuga Nation of the Six Nations of Grand River Country, Jacobs grew up near Caledonia, Ont., a First Nations land claim area. With a



Aboriginal speaker Adrian Jacobs brings his perspectives on treaty issues to the April 9 opening worship service of the annual spring Partnership Circle, “Removing Barriers, Building Bridges,” in Winnipeg.

number of relatives involved with land claims at leadership levels, Jacobs was exposed to the issues from an early age, and when he became a Christian he felt even more compelled to participate.

“I grew up thinking Christianity was a white man’s religion,” Jacobs said. “But things happened that were miraculous,

wonderful.” He described a youth of experimentation and rebellion, and he jested that his older brother mentored him in sin. But one morning Jacobs awoke at 4 a.m. to hear that same brother praising God for singing birds and the beauty of the emerging day.

“He changed,” Jacobs says. “He was a follower of Jesus.”

Jacobs said he tried to argue against his brother’s new conviction, but to no avail. Eventually he became a Christian too—and it challenged his identity. “I took everything that was native and burned it,” he said.

But he was unhappy and unsettled in his faith without understanding why. When he ventured into the library of the National Native Bible College in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, near Deseronto, Ont., he found that, although the library held thousands of books, only a few of them featured aboriginals. The weighty imbalance led him to a study of aboriginal issues and into a journey of rethinking his perspectives about culture and Christianity.

“Culture is such a pervasive thing that it’s something we don’t even realize we live with,” Jacobs observed in an interview for MC Canada’s radio program, *Church Matters*. As he re-embraced his native heritage and came to understand his faith through his culture, Jacobs felt led to advocate for his people, particularly in regard to land claim issues.

Canadians generally view treaties and

Manitoba Mennonites encouraged to attend residential school hearings

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

Neill and Edith von Gunten, MC Canada Native Ministry co-directors, are urging Manitoba Mennonites to attend the inaugural Truth and Reconciliation Commission meetings that will take place in Winnipeg from June 15 to 19. Besides offering an opportunity to listen to accounts of some of the province’s residential school survivors (both native and non-native), the five-day event will include a variety of programs and displays for visitors of all ages.

“This is a public event . . . to build awareness and to educate the general public through the stories of residential school survivors,” says Neill.

“These survivors also include pilots who flew in to

pick up the aboriginal children, caretakers and others who found it very traumatic,” adds Edith.

The von Guntens want at least one representative from every Mennonite church in Manitoba to come to the inaugural event.

“As Mennonites, we are part of the Canadian scene that allowed this to happen,” said Neill. “Our attitudes towards this and our lack of understanding implicates us. An opportunity like this to be part of the healing only comes along once.”

After the hearings in Winnipeg, the commission will travel across Manitoba and then the rest of the country over the next four to five years.

violation of them as something that First Nations must get over and move beyond, Jacobs said, but in the Canadian Constitution treaties are acknowledged as the law of the land. First Nations people understand treaties to be covenants or agreements between people under God. "It's like the marriage commitment, something that is meant to be a lifelong commitment," Jacobs said.

Jacobs believes that Canadians can never fully pay First Nations people what they are owed and that First Nations people must be gracious enough to forgive past wrongs, so that together they can work for what is right and fair to both sides. "We don't want to kick people out of their homes," said Jacobs, who currently works for the University of Alberta as a cultural facilitator with a travelling diabetes medical team.

Allan Owens, a reserved and quiet church leader from Pauingassi, a First Nations community in northern Manitoba, was so stirred by Jacobs' address that he walked across the room, put his hand on Jacobs' shoulder, removed his hat and prayed in Ojibway for Jacobs' ministry.

The April 10 meeting also provided time for aboriginal church partners from

Pauingassi, Cross Lake and Riverton, and seven non-aboriginal Manitoba Mennonite churches to renew their partnership commitments. With Neill and Edith von Gunten of MC Canada and Norm Voth of MC Manitoba facilitating, the groups shared plans for VBS programs, leadership, and assistance with gardening and preserving.

"Groups like this give me hope. I am encouraged by the two-way partnership event here," said Jacobs.

Florence Benson-Umpherville of Cross Lake was encouraged by her meeting with representatives from Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. "For the first time we have a formal partner," she enthused.

Riverton Fellowship Circle and its partners talked about ways of incorporating drumming and dance in its worship.

Don Brown, who came to explore the possibility of partnering on behalf of his church, Graysville Mennonite, said, "I heard the other side of the story finally. Others need to hear this." ❧

With files from Canadian Mennonite's Manitoba correspondent Evelyn Rempel Petkau.



Ross Shantz of Wilmot Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont., discusses church restructuring issues with keynote speaker Cam Shapansky at a church restructuring seminar at Conrad Grebel University College.

who wanted to serve couldn't find ways of using their gifts. One woman who wanted to decorate the sanctuary for worship was shunted from one committee to another, to no avail. Under the new structure, though, Shapansky said she was blessed to go and work.

The new teams were given job descriptions with blank areas "to write their own ideas and tasks," he explained, noting that terms were shortened and leaders were tasked with finding their own replacements, a responsibility not for the faint of heart.

Quoting John Kotter, he underlined the need for a "burning platform," a term used in business management and change. "The congregation needs to have come to the place where the status quo is not an option," he said.

When challenged on this "negativity," he noted that Wanner had begun by looking at its human assets and then worked towards finding ways to free these people for service. Many times during the implementation process leaders had wondered about going back to the old structure, he admitted. He reported, though, that now over a year into the change process, people are beginning to find the new structures freeing.

The seminar was offered by Associates Resourcing the Church and Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., as part of a course leading to a conflict management and congregational leadership certificate. ❧

One church's experience

Restructuring seminar delivered by 'a church leader who has done it and lived to tell the tale'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

"If all you ever do is all you've ever done, then all you'll ever get is all you ever got." This old proverb was on the overhead as the participants entered a seminar for congregational leaders recently.

Leading the seminar was Cam Shapansky, the last congregational chair at Wanner Mennonite Church, near Kitchener, Ont., who currently works for the California-based Blue North Strategies organization. The church-restructuring seminar was billed as "a real life example from a church leader who has done it and lived to tell the tale!"

Shapansky became the leader of

Wanner's first ministries team, a four-person group that replaced the much larger church council. Besides the church council, all the committees were reshaped into ministry teams, moving from more than 80 elected positions to only 16.

He described the process Wanner followed to restructure after the church had developed a new congregational vision, priorities and guiding principles after discovering that there were many people in the congregation who were nearly burned out and ready to leave after years of service.

On the other hand, he said that others

From Kajiji to St. Jacobs

Sawatsky Visiting Scholar speaks about his dreams for his Congolese hometown

STORY AND PHOTO BY KARL JUHLKE

Conrad Grebel University College Release
WATERLOO, ONT.

The town of St. Jacobs, Ont., is half a world away from Kajiji, Democratic Republic of Congo, but friendship and dreams span the world.

Pakisa Tshimika from Kajiji, and Milo and Laura Shantz from St. Jacobs became friends about 10 years ago while Tshimika was associate executive secretary for Mennonite World Conference. Last November, 10 months after Milo's death, Tshimika was sitting in one of Milo's favourite chairs in the Shantz home, reflecting on the impact of Milo on the St. Jacobs community.

"It dawned on me that Kajiji could be like St. Jacobs, and my dream started," Tshimika said at a public lecture, "The Kajiji of my dreams," at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, earlier this spring. He was at Grebel for a week as the Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar, during which time he also gave classroom lectures and took part in discussions and informal conversations with students, faculty and guests.

The Kajiji of his dreams is his hometown

in Congo, very close to the Angolan border. It is a town that was spared the terror of war during the transition to independence in the 1960s and a civil war in recent years.

Yet, he wondered, "what is there to show for it?" The infrastructure of Kajiji has decayed, there are few opportunities for employment, and the potential of the region is vastly underutilized. Kajiji seems trapped inside the larger tragedies of Congo, and even these immense tragedies seem to generate little passion and resolve within Congo or internationally.

"How can five million people in the Congo die so silently?" he wondered.

Tshimika described his vision for an international "dream team" of 25 to 30 people who will imagine a Kajiji full of promise and hope.

Tshimika himself has tried to fulfill this vision. He served as a public health administrator in the Kajiji region, and established the Mama Makeka House of Hope in honour of his mother and brother, to provide an organizational base for the vision and

projects that will develop. His first priorities are programs that involve and serve women and youths, and that develop a culture of peace.

"This type of engagement in current global issues is exactly what we hope for in our Sawatsky Visiting Scholar," observed academic dean Jim Pankratz. "Pakisa's honesty, audacious vision and resilient hope provide an inspiring service to Conrad Grebel University College and this community." ❧

❧ Briefly noted

2010 Grebel Peace Speech Contest won by John Wray

WATERLOO, ONT.— John Wray is a second-time winner of Conrad Grebel University College's annual Peace Speech Contest. Wray, in his final year in the PACS program, spoke



Wray

on finding the "Human within the human." His motivation, he admitted, was "playing Modern Warfare 2, which is ironic for someone in PACS [peace and conflict studies]. . . I began to realize the magnitude of what is being simulated in the game": that both video-game players and real-life soldiers have to consider enemy combatants as objects rather than other humans who have family, friends and a life back home. PACS director Lowell Ewert, who served as a judge, said Wray's speech "underscores the importance in peace work to focus on people, instead of ideology and politics." Grebel chaplain Ed Janzen, another judge, commented, "There is no more pressing a time than now to discover that . . . in our enemies there is a person who is the focus of God's love." Wray won \$250 for his first-place finish and will represent Grebel at the bi-national C. Henry Smith Oratorical Competition in May.

—Conrad Grebel University College Release



Pakisa Tshimika, left, this year's Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar, is pictured with Lorna Sawatsky and Jim Pankratz, Conrad Grebel University College's academic dean, after Tshimika's closing lecture, "The Kajiji of my dreams," on March 5.

Exploring ethics as a call to see God at work in the world today

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN
 Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
 ELKHART, IND.

Harry Huebner, professor emeritus at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, emphasized the need to “participate” in Christ as he explored Christian ethics with students and faculty at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) earlier this year.

Speaking on the theme, “In Christ in the world,” Huebner presented the seminary’s annual Theological Lectureship, inviting listeners to view ethics (right and good actions) as visible forms of invisible grace—as “sacrament.”

With this view the world can see “how both God and human beings are involved in bringing about real change in the world,” Huebner said. “God is not only acting with us and through us in our church liturgy, but also in our businesses, jobs, friendships and recreational activities, or even through those who are not Christian.” This understanding helps people see how they can participate in, and give expression to, what God intends for the world.

Huebner added that Christians will find the best wisdom available to them in Jesus

Christ: his life, death and resurrection. “One might say that to participate in Christ is to act in openness to God’s resurrection power; to place our own actions into the wonder and mystery of what might actually happen in this material world through little power of our own,” he said, adding, “[I]n Christ the entire world is being recreated; and we are invited to participate.”

AMBS student Jonny Gerig Meyer responded to Huebner’s third lecture,

summarizing this challenge: “God is at work in the world in Christ today, and we are called to recognize and join . . . in this divine activity”

Huebner is currently working on a book entitled *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Learning to be a Storied People*, to be published by Baylor University Press, and he is author of *Echoes of the World: Theological Ethics as Rhetorical Practice* (Pandora, 2005). ❧

Huebner added that Christians will find the best wisdom available to them in Jesus Christ: his life, death and resurrection.



Harry Huebner, emeritus professor at Canadian Mennonite University, delivered this year’s Theological Lectureship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., speaking on the theme, “In Christ in the world.”

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

HELP FOR HAITI

The next step: Helping to build infrastructure in rural Haiti

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE

Mennonite Central Committee Release

The response of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to Haiti's Jan. 12 earthquake will gradually shift from the capital city of Port-au-Prince to rural communities that are expected to play an integral role in rebuilding the country.

By 2011, MCC's work will centre in the Artibonite Valley, about 90 minutes north of Port-au-Prince. Eight MCC staff members live in Desarmes, a town in the Artibonite Valley, where MCC already has an established program.

The Haitian government estimates that 162,500 of the 600,000 people who fled Port-au-Prince after the earthquake sought shelter in the Artibonite Department, where the Artibonite Valley is located. The movement of displaced people to the rural areas puts an economic strain on those communities, but it also presents an opportunity to change some of the

underlying problems that made the earthquake so devastating.

MCC Haiti staff and international

program development leaders embraced the decentralization approach when they met in Haiti in late March to develop a long-term plan for the organization's earthquake response. They were acting on the advice of MCC's partners, MCC Haiti national staff and international workers, and Haitian political leaders.

"The majority of our work needs to be outside the city," says Virgil Troyer, an MCC regional disaster management coordinator, "so the rural areas can have the infrastructure to support the people migrating there, and to keep people from

MCC PHOTO BY BEN DEPP



'What the provinces lack is the services of the state. If they can get roads, health centres and schools, people could stay there.'
(MCC Haiti worker Garly Michel)

A young girl draws water from a cistern at a Mennonite Central Committee-supported water distribution site in Cité Soleil, part of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital city. MCC's priority on emergency assistance, like this, is gradually refocusing on self-sustaining priorities.

moving back into the city.”

Decentralization is a concept espoused by the Haitian government and many international aid organizations, Troyer notes. The infrastructure in Port-au-Prince was never set up to handle the population that was living there, he adds. Even before the earthquake, the systems for water, electricity, roads and housing could not handle the demand. People built houses in ravines and hillsides and on top of each other, which resulted in massive damage during the earthquake, he points out.

Yet the capital city has been the centre around which the country revolves, Troyer says. It’s the primary place Haitians go to conduct government business, attend universities and good secondary schools, and get care at respected hospitals.

“What the provinces lack is the services of the state,” says Garly Michel, an MCC worker who is from Haiti and works in Port-au-Prince. “If they can get roads, health centres and schools, people could stay there.”

To encourage people to stay there, the government is appealing to international governments and non-governmental organizations to help establish that infrastructure.

The provinces already have resources for work, says Michel. They have water, land and a labour force. However, in recent years food production has dwindled because trade agreements have made imported food

cheaper to buy than food grown in Haiti. MCC is focusing some earthquake response money towards increasing profitable production and encouraging local production and consumption.

“For the long vision, there must be a development plan that allows for more food

in the provinces,” says Jean Remy Azor, an MCC staff member in Desarmes. “If there is no such vision to augment local production, there will come a time when we depend too much on imports. . . . Our stomachs will be in the hands of foreign countries.” ❧

Colombians call on Canadians to oppose free-trade deal

BY CANADIAN MENNONITE STAFF

From a Mennonite Central Committee Release

Colombian Anabaptist churches and partner organizations of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which has an active presence in the South American country, have voiced their deep concern about a potential trade deal between Canada and Colombia.

On March 10, Canada’s ministers of international trade and foreign affairs introduced Bill C-2 (formerly Bill C-23), the Colombia-Canada Free Trade Agreement, as the new session of Parliament’s first order of business.

But the Colombians believe that the “closed-door” policy on debates and information pertaining to the deal have created a cloud of uncertainty around the possible effects that this pact will have on the Colombian economy, as well as on the dire human rights situation and the humanitarian crisis that are currently facing the country.

Colombians have also voiced their concern that basic processes of prior consultation with marginalized groups in society will not be respected, and greater foreign investment in the mining industry, particularly, will contribute to an exacerbation of the violence around land rights and the massive displacement of populations from resource-rich territories.

Despite Colombian government affirmations that paramilitary structures have been dismantled, and that the country is “safer”—thanks to democratic security policies—MCC partners have documented grave human rights abuses in many territories throughout the country where

paramilitary organizations continue to operate with varying degrees of impunity.

The Christian Centre for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (JustaPaz), an MCC partner, documented six assassinations of pastors in 2009 in the Department of Córdoba by paramilitary groups that have re-armed. The same groups have been named as responsible for massive displacement in the same department: 1,230 people from five churches were reportedly forced from their homes and communities.

This is not an environment which is conducive to healthy foreign investment, according to Rebecca Bartel, a Latin America and the Caribbean policy analyst for MCC, nor is it an environment in which Colombians will benefit from greater Canadian exports competing in local markets in unfair economic conditions.

People of faith from all over the world are calling for international trade and investment systems that respect and promote the dignity of the human person as created in the image of God; ensure the well-being and development of people in all nations as children of God; foster gender and racial equity before a God who loves and values everyone equally; and lead to environmental sustainability, for which people are charged as stewards of God’s creation.

MCC has drafted sample letters of protest that can be sent to individual Canadian MPs, Minister of International Trade Peter Van Loan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon, in opposition to Bill C-2. To get copies of these letters, visit ottawa.mcc.org. ❧

MCC GRAPHIC BY FREDRICK YOCUM



MCC’s emergency response work in Haiti is focused in the orange area that includes Port-au-Prince and west of the capital, in Leogane, Petit-Goave and Grand Goave. The focus of MCC’s long-term work will be in the Artibonite Valley, a 90-minute drive north of the capital, where many displaced people have fled.

Crime and punishment myths debunked

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

BADEN, ONT.

Using charts from federal government websites, Mark Yantzi challenged the often-held ideas that prison sentences or the death penalty are punishments that deter crime during a presentation at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, earlier this spring. Since the death penalty was abolished in Canada, the annual rate of murders per population has dropped year by year, he said.

Again using government statistics, he showed that unemployment is an accurate indicator of crime rates: the greater the level of unemployment, the greater the rate of crimes such as burglary and robbery.

Yantzi also noted that 80 percent of violent crime is perpetrated by “someone you know,” and not by strangers—as society often thinks.

Yantzi has a long history of challenging commonly held ideas about justice. It was his work, together with Dave Worth, a fellow Mennonite and parole officer, and Gordon McConnell, a provincial judge, who spawned the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, now used widely across Canada and around the world.

The “Elmira case,” in which two young offenders were given the opportunity to meet the victims of their vandalism spree face to face, and to offer restitution, is seen as the root of alternative sentencing wherever Yantzi goes.

Prison and fines are backward-looking when seeking to redress a crime against society, according to Yantzi, while restorative justice models are future-oriented as they try to heal the victims, who are so often

left out of the judicial process, and teach responsibility to offenders. Statistics actually show that doing time in prison is one of the most accurate predictors of repeated criminal activity, he pointed out.

Sponsored by the Peace and Justice Committee of Steinmann Mennonite, 150 local people attended the breakfast on March 6 and contributed to the ongoing work of peace and justice in the congregation. ❧

/// Briefly noted

House ownership turned over to House of Friendship

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ONT.—Representatives of House of Friendship (HOF) and the Kiwanis clubs of Kitchener-Waterloo and Twin Cities gathered with neighbours, friends and community partners recently to officially announce a lasting gift to House of Friendship’s Kiwanis House program. Nearly a quarter-century ago, five Kiwanis clubs rallied together to purchase and renovate a red-brick house in the heart of Kitchener and made it available to HOF for a program serving disadvantaged youths. The Kiwanis Youth Residence officially opened on May 22, 1986. On March 24, the Kiwanis clubs of Kitchener-Waterloo and Twin Cities went one step further, and gave the house to HOF, which will use it to continue providing a transitional home for young men, 16-19 years of age, who can benefit from a residential life-skills program. “Kiwanis Clubs have been invaluable partners in establishing this unique and important program,” said HOF executive director John Neufeld. “And now they have ensured the program will always have a home. Through their generosity, they have indeed changed the world for the better, one life at a time and one community at a time, and we thank them for this.”

—House of Friendship/Kiwanis clubs
Joint Release



Mark Yantzi, left, discusses peace and justice issues with Jim and Carolyn Steckle at Steinmann Mennonite Church’s peace and justice breakfast last month in Baden, Ont.

GOD AT WORK IN US

'From farm to fork'



STORY AND PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
OSLER, SASK.

So many people spend their time and energy accumulating things, but what they really want are simpler lives and deeper connections with others. Knowing that reconnecting with friends and family always involves food, the owners of Pine View Farms All Natural Meats near Osler offer grain-fed, hormone-free food products to those living in their small corner of the world.

Co-owners Kevin and Melanie Boldt have come a long way in the past 12 years, when they set out with the goal of staying financially afloat on their own terms. This meant making the farm viable without resorting to one or both of them supplementing their incomes with off-farm work. It hasn't been easy.

"In the first six years of farming, we had one bumper crop, one average crop and four years of drought," says Melanie, adding, "So many things are out of your control as a food producer; you're at the mercy

of global markets, supply and demand."

Rather than be victims of what they see as a faulty system, the Boldts decided to forge a new path. But becoming pioneers in a farm-gate operation—in which farmers sell their produce directly to consumers from their farm—was a new and untested area then.

"In the beginning, we were just doing what we thought was right . . . what aligns us with our values and beliefs," Melanie explains.

"Now it's more of a conscious effort, a philosophy of how we do things," Kevin, the quieter one of the two, adds.

People didn't always understand the couple's decision to try a new path. But attitudes have changed, she admits, and there is now more interest in their products and the way they market them.

"[The trend of] buying local has really increased the profile of what we do," Melanie says.

The Boldts' faith plays a big part in how they approach the business, and many of their ideas have come through concepts encountered in their church, Osler Mennonite. Teaching on creation care and farming conferences, such as "Making peace with the land," have also helped shape their philosophy.

Concern for others has given them a desire to pay other producers a fair wage, bringing production costs and profit margins into account.

"We're not going to make a profit on the backs of other people," Melanie stresses. Although she wasn't raised on a farm, she came into the marriage with a commerce degree and has helped to shape the direction of Pine View Farms.

Concern for what goes on people's plates prompted the couple to raise their animals in the healthiest way possible. Their animals are fed grain and raised without the aid of growth hormones or animal products. They

choose to purchase soybean meal from local farms, rather than trucking in organic soybean meal from 2,400 kilometres away, which means Pine View cannot market its meat using the "organic" label. But that doesn't matter to them.

"We focus on regional and local markets, rather than a certain tag," Kevin says. The "certified organic" label is important if the farmer is shipping products across the country, he explains, saying that in such cases consumers naturally look for a governing body to vouch for the producer's claims.

"We are in a local market," he says. "Our third-party verification [is] our customers."

Concern for others has also led the farm family to focus on educating the public about what lies behind the production of food.

"People don't think about what's behind the food they buy," notes Melanie. "Our business is about staying close to the customer, but also creating that connection so that people know where their food is coming from."

The public is invited to drive out to the farm to see how the animals are raised, and to purchase meat that is for sale right on the premises. But as keen observers of market trends, the Boldts see that many people are time-strapped but cash-rich, and are looking for quick, easy solutions to meal preparation. Busy lives also mean customers are less willing to drive out to the farm to purchase the meat.

Enter Souleio Foods Inc., their newest venture in downtown Saskatoon. According to its website (souleio.com), "Souleio Foods was spawned in 2004 [when] Remi and Janis Cousyn, owners of Calories Bakery and Restaurant, with friends Kevin and Melanie Boldt, owners of Pine View Farms All Natural Meats, discussed the idea of joining forces to create an urban food market offering artisanal, sustainably produced foods both from local sources and around the world. Combining the culinary skills of Calories with the agricultural roots of Pine View Farms, this new business would be truly 'farm to fork.'"

"Souleio gives us access to a market we can't reach out here" on the farm, says Melanie happily. ☿



Concepts they learned at Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., have helped Kevin and Melanie Boldt form the basis of their Pine View Farms All Natural Meats operation.

Alternative service website inspires student

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada Release

A website sharing the story of conscientious objectors (COs) in World War II helped to inspire Abby Landon to re-examine her own beliefs and connect with her family's Mennonite faith heritage.

Landon, who attends an Evangelical Missionary Church in Red Deer, Alta., discovered the alternative service website—an award-winning project of Mennonite Church Canada's Heritage Centre—in her quest for information for a social studies term paper.

"I decided to write about conscientious objectors at the suggestion of my grandma, who is a Mennonite," Landon said in a telephone interview.

Landon's maternal grandmother, Dolores Naumenko, was a young child living in Waldheim, Sask., during World War II. Naumenko recalled that her father remained at home on the farm during the war and that her uncle, a dairy farmer, gave the government a portion of his weekly income, indicators that the two men may have sought exemption from military service. She also remembered that just before Christmas one year, a family in Waldheim, Sask., lost a son who had engaged in alternative service as a medic overseas. Conscientious objection to war and its implications left an impression on Naumenko.

Landon began her research with a number of heavily detailed books. "I was having trouble getting an overall view," she said, when her mother offered to help and discovered the alternativeservice.ca website. "The vast number of sources [on the site] was incredible," she said. "Seeing the

original articles, letters and pictures really helped me in writing my paper."

Before starting the project, Landon had never heard of COs. "I think the biggest thing [that impressed me] is the Mennonites' willingness to just completely separate from the rest of society . . . from worldly values," she said.

Before they were assigned to alternative service, those claiming CO status had to appear before a judge, who would determine the legitimacy of their declaration. Landon was intrigued by the website's wide range of CO testimonies about that experience. "They showed the different extents to which they were willing to go," she said. "Some would go to war as medics, while others wouldn't even wear uniforms."

Landon was so inspired by the website that she sent an e-mail of thanks to heritage centre archivist Conrad Stoesz, who is responsible for the website. "I found it very encouraging to hear how the Mennonites, my relatives, pursued a Christ-like life even when it was extremely difficult," she wrote. "It has made me consider the dedication of my actions for Jesus and my 'separation' from the influential aspects of this world, as well as the importance of having support and encouragement around me."

"I was very happy to receive Abby's email. It made my week," said Stoesz. "We usually do not get such personal notes of thanks for the site out of the blue. . . . It was humbling to learn that the site helped her examine her own faith. The stories from the past encouraged her to dig deeper into what she believed and what Jesus means to her. I think this was the highest hope we had for the site, that young people would re-examine their faith in light of the examples of the conscientious objectors."

Stoesz had a later e-mail exchange with Landon concerning violence in the Old Testament: "I told her that God's fullest revelation to humanity was through the person of Jesus, who taught and lived a life of peace." ❧

'I think the biggest thing [that impressed me] is the Mennonites' willingness to just completely separate from the rest of society . . . from worldly values.'
(Abby Landon)

PHOTO BY ALISHA HANRAHAN



Abby Landon, a Grade 12 student from Red Deer, Alta., used the MC Canada Heritage Centre's alternative service website as a source of information for her social studies essay on conscientious objectors.

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ARTBEAT

MUSIC REVIEW

Sophomore CD released to much applause

REVIEWED BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

The Friesen Family Band just keeps getting better! As quickly as the children grow, the seven-member family grows in its music, adding instruments, expertise and new material.

On March 24, the band released its second CD, *Dappled Things*, at a concert at St. Andrews United Church, Edmonton.

The music is fresh and often surprising in its complexity of harmony and variety of instrumentation. Lively lyrics send the ancient words of faith singing into contemporary life. "We do a lot of writing from the Psalms," says father Chris.

"The Windhover" is a highlight from the new CD, featuring 11-year-old Godwin on

piano, 13-year-old Simone on violin, and mother Louise on vocals.

Chris explains how the songwriting came about, saying he had been thinking about writing something based on a Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem when he heard "Godwin playing his piece [a piano piece Godwin composed himself] and Simone practising her violin in another room. . . . The music just fit together somehow and gave me an idea."

Louise's clear, almost Celtic-sounding soprano soars exquisitely above the instruments, evocative of the falcon that is at the centre of the song.

The family obviously has fun making

music. "Abba Cadeff" is a comical tale of a child learning to read. Its performance in Edmonton had the audience laughing along with the band members. The quality of this piece is underlined by its winning a runner-up prize in the children's category of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest in New York City in 2008.

Information about the Friesen Family Band and its two CDs (including 2007's *We Are Seeking*) is available at friesenfamilyband.com. ❧

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld is Canadian Mennonite's Alberta correspondent.



Hallelujah! schöner Morgen presents a set of Mennonite Hymns that were and still are central to the faith expression of many Mennonite congregations.

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Canzona

under the direction of conductor Henry Engbrecht.

CDs may be ordered at info@canzonachoir.com. CD cost is \$20 + \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

CD is also available at iTunes.

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



The Friesen Family Band released its sophomore CD, *Dappled Things*, at a concert in Edmonton in March. Pictured from left to right: Silas 15; Simone 13; Godwin 11; Amos, nine; mother Louise and father Chris. Not pictured: Junia, three, who earlier wowed the crowd with her rendition of "Jesus Loves Me."

Musical

Snapshots

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



Winners of the fifth annual Verna Mae Janzen Vocal Competition for Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students, held March 25 at the university, are pictured from left to right: Melissa Cole of Emerson, Man., graduating this year and going into music education (third); Jorge Hidalgo of Argentina, a conducting major who is graduating and going into a master's program at the University of Manitoba (second); and Katie Sawatzky of Regina, Sask., an English major graduating this year (first).

PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN



Composed of current and former Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students George Dyck III, Josie Guenther, Thomas Krause and Dale Thiessen, newcomer band Alanadale performed at "Injustice Visible," a March 19 benefit concert to raise funds for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), which recently had several pieces of video camera equipment stolen or destroyed. CPT used the equipment to capture acts of injustice on video as a nonviolent alternative to war in various countries. The concert raised \$1,279.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Filling the Kohma

Book blends Dueck family recipes and histories

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

New cookbooks are ubiquitous, and family histories have become popular, but a cookbook that is a family history—or a family history that is a cookbook—is a curious hybrid.

Lisa Heinrichs, who lives in Langley, B.C., loves to cook. She was well into research on her family's history when she realized she could incorporate her culinary passion into her genealogical interests. "My idea was to gather a collection of recipes from my mother's family, both recipes that my grandmother would have made and also favourites within each family unit," she explains.

About a year-and-a-half ago, she sent her extended family members an e-mail that asked for submissions of recipes, stories and photos. One of the e-mail recipients was her cousin, Jane Heinrichs, an art student in London, England.

"I have to admit that I didn't give it much thought at the time. Our family has a tendency to click 'reply all' whenever replying to family e-mails," says Jane. It wasn't until she noticed the flurry of communication triggered by Lisa's request that she took note of the project. "It was the joking banter and general enthusiasm of their replies that really piqued my interest. People would sometimes reply within minutes, back and forth, whether they were living in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario or London," she says. "One person would tell a funny story about this or that, and then another person would add more and

elaborate on the theme, rather like improvisational jazz."

Lisa wanted to make sure that no one was left out of the dialogue and that every family unit would be represented in the book. As she accumulated recipes that were often accompanied with memories and stories, she made sure that they all had "detailed instructions that anyone could follow. Many of my grandma's recipes were merely lists of ingredients, so I needed to either kitchen-test these or ask my aunts for their recollection of how these foods were made," she says.

Family gatherings became a time of comparing recipes and brainstorming.

"Christmas of 2009 saw an uncle and cousin from Edmonton and a cousin from Winnipeg comparing and submitting the same recipe for a pear and goat cheese salad," Jane recalls.

Mixed in with the recipes is the extensive research Lisa has done on her Russian Mennonite family background and the collection of family stories.

Jane, who was shortlisted for "best illustrated book" at the Manitoba Book Awards in 2009, volunteered to design the book. "I wanted to make it as beautiful and user-friendly as possible," she says. "I knew we needed something cohesive to tie the whole design together; otherwise, the eclectic mix



Lisa Heinrichs of B.C. is pictured with her cookbook and family history that she wrote. Inset: Jane Heinrichs of London, England, helped design and illustrate the book.

of recipes wouldn't flow well. Our grandmother had a yellow gingham apron that everyone loved. She wore it all the time because she often forgot to take it off. I used yellow and/or yellow gingham wherever I could, to tie the book together."

"In addition to our fast and furious e-mailing, we also were collecting pictures of our family and food," adds Jane. "At one point I think Lisa had everyone searching their family albums for a photo of my grandmother in her yellow apron!"

"Often memories centred around Grandma's *Kohma* (Low German for "pantry"), and this is reflected in the title of the book [*Filling the Kohma*]," explains Lisa. "It was a wonderful way to bring family together and stir up old memories. Hopefully, this family history book will be one that can be used again and again, rather than gather dust on some shelf, as is the fate of so many family histories."

Anyone inspired to attempt such a self-published book, but needs ideas or information, is invited to e-mail Jane at jane.heinrichs@googlemail.com. ☞

'One person would tell a funny story about this or that, and then another person would add more and elaborate on the theme, rather like improvisational jazz.'
(Jane Heinrichs)

PHOTO COURTESY OF JANE HEINRICHS

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEW

Early Anabaptist leader's life uncovered

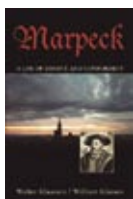
Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity.

Walter Klaassen and William Klassen. Herald Press, 2008, 423 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

Pilgram Marpeck lived during a time of great political and religious upheaval and change. As a civil engineer and an Anabaptist of the 16th century, he found himself in a world of great uncertainty. With his faith rooted deeply in Christ, in the biblical text and in the church, he was able to provide leadership for scattered groups of Anabaptists in southern Germany and Austria.

For centuries little was known about Marpeck, but in the 1950s a collection of letters, including many by Marpeck, were discovered in Switzerland. Walter Klaassen and William Klassen were students when the new material became available and they used it in their work. In 1978, they translated and prepared for publication a collection of Marpeck's writings. Now as



retired professors, these two have prepared a biography of this little-known Anabaptist leader.

Marpeck was from Austria and joined the Anabaptists in 1528, probably shortly after the death of his first wife. He fled to Strasbourg, France, where he lived for several

years before moving to Switzerland and eventually to Augsburg, an independent city in southern Germany. During these years he frequently worked for the local government as a civil engineer while serving as an Anabaptist leader. Marpeck was willing to respect civil authority, but he insisted a Christian's highest allegiance must be to Christ's kingdom. Marpeck not only preached to Anabaptist gatherings, he also spread his beliefs through his writings.

While living in Augsburg, Marpeck was

repeatedly warned about his Anabaptist affiliation, but somehow he managed to live and work there without being exiled or killed. Although he had a vision of an urban Anabaptist community, persecution pushed the movement into remote rural areas.

Klaassen and Klassen suggest that the community under Marpeck's leadership eventually disappeared because there was a major dispute over how legalistic the church should be about discipline. Marpeck was not a legalist and encouraged Anabaptists not to be rigidly exclusive. There is evidence that his writings were influential in Swiss Anabaptist circles in the late 16th century.

This biography of Marpeck is written for ordinary readers and does not use complicated theological language. There are periods of Marpeck's life where there is no information and so the authors used their understanding of the political, religious and economic situation of the time to imagine what was probably happening. This book is a valuable addition to Anabaptist history. ❧

Barb Draper is the editor of Canadian Mennonite's semi-annual Focus on Books & Resources special sections.

Marpeck was not a legalist and encouraged Anabaptists not to be rigidly exclusive.

PHOTO BY JONATHAN SEILING



The editors of *On Spirituality*, a new release on the topic of Mennonite-Muslim dialogue from Pandora Press, are pictured at the book's launch hosted by the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre on April 14. From left to right: A. James Reimer, Darrol Bryant and Susan Kennel Harrison.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Lost book of Anabaptist writings now available in English

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Release

ELKHART, IND.

The *Kunstabuch*, a collection of writings from early Anabaptists, was hidden in Swiss archives for centuries, but now has been released in English as *Jörg Maler's Kunstabuch: Writings of the Pilgram Marpeck Circle*. The six-year project was edited by John Rempel, professor of theology and Anabaptist studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), and published by Pandora Press, Kitchener, Ont.

The *Kunstabuch* contained letters and other documents written in the 1500s by members of the Swiss and South German Anabaptist communities, including Pilgram Marpeck, an early Anabaptist leader in that region. Jörg Maler, whose name reflects his profession as a painter, gathered together a variety of documents that the scattered Anabaptist congregations had found life-giving.

As he rewrote them into one manuscript, he added his own artistic illuminations to the text. This manuscript circulated among the Swiss Anabaptist congregations, and at the end of the 17th century it ended up in the Berne city archive. Rempel surmises it was held initially as evidence against the Anabaptists.

The book clearly documents the influence of Marpeck as a leader of the Anabaptists in that region. Sixteen of Marpeck's pastoral letters are included, and several other items were written by close colleagues of his. Because he was not as authoritative a leader as Menno Simons, his influence had not been as easy to identify prior to the discovery of this manuscript.

Based on the table of contents, the manuscript German historian Heinold Fast discovered in the archives is only

half of the original, yet it adds up to more than 700 pages in the English version.

Mennonite scholars had begun using some of the material already in the 1960s. William Klassen's doctoral dissertation in 1968 was based on Pilgram Marpeck's writings, and Walter Klaassen and Klassen edited *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, published in 1978 in the Classics of the Radical Reformation series by the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

In 2004, Rempel began overseeing the English translation and editing of all the available *Kunstabuch* material. "What excited me about the project," Rempel explains, "is that because there was already a modern critical version published in German in 2007, we could make this English translation more accessible to a larger audience. We aimed for 'literate but popular English,' sometimes choosing simpler terms than if we were translating for a scholarly audience."

The book contains meditations on God's provision for people who lived a very insecure existence. It also includes theological treatises by Marpeck and pastoral letters with counsel to congregations about church discipline and the threat of persecution. Also included are personal confessions of faith, pieces by three Anabaptist mystics and poems.

"What attracted me to these writings is that these Anabaptists were able to take what was good from other movements,"



Rempel

Rempel reflects. "It seems that the Marpeck circle grappled with the question of unity, but had only a few defining doctrinal points. They placed more emphasis on a personal experience of Christ, and then had more tolerance for differences of practices than other Anabaptist groups had."

Rempel believes this book has significance beyond the historical record of the early Anabaptist theology and practice. "These are believable people living precariously, having a depth of faith I would like to emulate. These writings can be lessons for people today who want models for holy living that are within reach." ❧

The Bookshop
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One stop shopping for Mennonite authors

STUART MURRAY
The Naked Anabaptist
Herald Press

JOHN D. REMPEL
Jörg Maler's Kunstabuch
Pandora Press

J. NELSON KRAYBILL
Apocalypse and Allegiance
Brazos Press

A. JAMES REIMER, ET AL.
On Spirituality
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'These are believable people living precariously, having a depth of faith I would like to emulate.'

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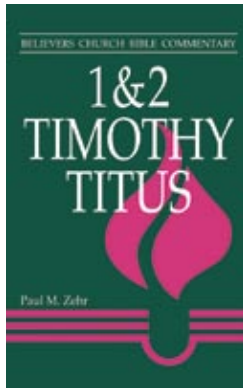
Spring 2010 List of Books & Resources

England, provides thoughtful reflections about planting churches in a post-modern environment. His comments are not specific to any denomination or country, and his experience allows him to offer some very practical advice. Each of the eight chapters has questions for reflection.

Theology

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus. Paul M. Zehr. Herald Press, 2010, 406 pages.

This is the 22nd volume of the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series. Zehr has many years of experience as a pastor and teacher, including at Eastern Mennonite Seminary.



The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith. Stuart Murray. Herald Press, 2010, 191 pages.

Murray explores Anabaptist beliefs without the “clothes” of Mennonite or Amish tradition. Using the seven core convictions of the Anabaptist Network, he explains how the Anabaptist vision has played out in history. Murray, who lives in London, England, does not see himself as Mennonite, but he believes Anabaptism has important principles for the modern world, including modern Mennonites.

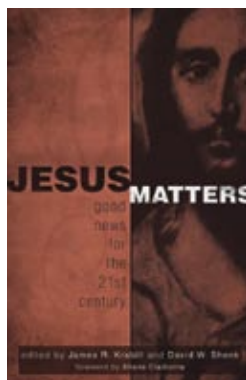
Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation. J. Nelson Kraybill. Brazos Press, 2010, 224 pages.

Using uncomplicated language, Kraybill explains what the book of Revelation meant to Christians of the first century and how they would have interpreted its many symbols. He also relates these symbols to the 21st century. Each of the 12 chapters has questions for reflection.



New Perspectives in Believers Church Ecclesiology. Abe Dueck, Helmut Harder and Karl Koop, eds. CMU Press, 2010, 325 pages.

The papers of this collection were presented at the 16th Believers Church Conference, held in 2008 at Canadian Mennonite University. Among the many topics addressed are the rise of Mennonite denominations in Manitoba, the role of women in the Mennonite Brethren Church and the role of communion and baptism in today’s Mennonite churches.



Jesus Matters: Good News for the 21st Century. James R. Krabill and David W. Shenk, eds. Herald Press, 2009, 259 pages.

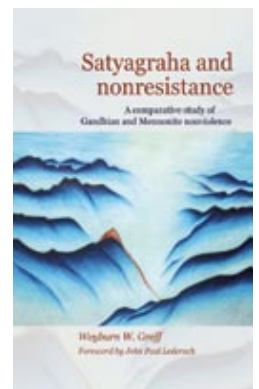
Familiar Mennonite teachers and theologians, along with one or more young adults, wrote these chapters about various aspects of Jesus. Each of the 16 chapters includes questions for discussion.

Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and New Ideas for Creating Congregations. Stuart Murray. Herald Press, 2010, 227 pages.

Murray, an urban church planter in

Satyagraha and Nonresistance: A Comparative Study of Gandhian and Mennonite Nonviolence. Weyburn Groff. AMBS Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2009, 210 pages.

Groff spent many years in India under the Mennonite Board of Missions. This is his doctoral dissertation, written in 1963, which compares the ideas of Gandhi to Mennonite beliefs about nonviolence.



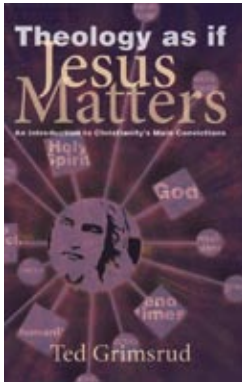
Science and Origins: Probing the Deeper Questions. Holmes Rolston III, Carl S. Helrich, eds. Pandora Press, 2009, 174 pages.

This book contains the lectures and discussion from the 2008 Goshen College Conference on Religion and Science. Rolston, a professor of philosophy, probes various scientific questions about the origins of life, including whether human self-awareness makes humans different from other species.

Theology as if Jesus Matters: An Introduction to Christianity’s Main Convictions. Ted Grimsrud. Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2009, 230 pages.

Writing in a practical, down-to-earth way, using lots of personal anecdotes, Grimsrud examines Christianity’s beliefs: God, Jesus, the Bible, the church, end times and more. He believes that Jesus’ teachings

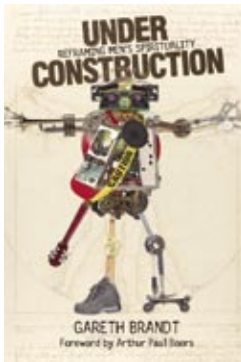
FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES



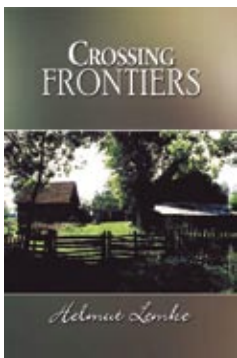
need to be central to Christianity's main convictions. Grimsrud is a professor of theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University. This book could be useful for discussion groups.

Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality.

Gareth Brandt. Herald Press, 2009, 225 pages. Brandt explores male spirituality, using the stories of Joseph as a jumping-off point. He began this project because he was dissatisfied with other resources available. The appendix includes several questions for each of the 13 chapters so that this book could be used for discussion groups.



History



Crossing Frontiers. Helmut Lemke. Author-house Publishing, 2009, 284 pages.

In this autobiography, Lemke describes his life as a Mennonite in West Prussia before and during World War II. He is appreciative

of the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) after the war in supporting refugees and assisting Mennonite congregations.

In the Wilds of Turkestan. Hermann Jantzen, translated by Erica Jantzen. Waterloo: Waterpark Publishing, 2009, 207 pages.

Hermann Jantzen (1866-1959) was part of the Great Trek of Mennonites from Ukraine to Central Asia in 1880. Before the Russian Revolution he served as a translator, forester and missionary in Turkestan. His autobiography, *Im Wilden Turkestan*, was published in German in 1988. The translation is available by calling 519-883-0217.

Minnesota Meanderings: The Amish Mennonite Settlement in Nobles County, Minnesota, 1891-1910. Earl Meyers et al, privately published, 2010.

In the early 1890s several Amish Mennonite families from Ontario began a community in southwestern Minnesota. The book includes genealogical information and a history of this settlement that lasted 20 years. It is available by e-mail at ce.myers@yahoo.ca.

A School on the Prairie: A Centennial History of Hesston College, 1909-2009. John E. Sharp. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2009, 503 pages.

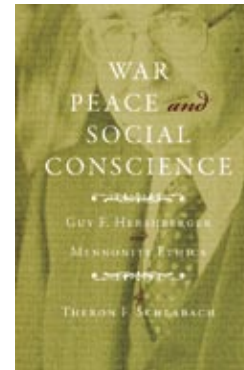
Sharp's history of Hesston College is a well-told story of the people who worked together to make Hesston a viable Mennonite school. He highlights the various personalities of campus life, but also sets his vignettes within the ongoing trends of the Mennonite church and society.

Susanne Remembers: A Mennonite Childhood in Revolutionary Russia.

Susanne Willms Thielman. Judson Lake House Publications, Abbotsford, B.C., 2009, 166 pages.

With lots of drawings and photographs, this hardcover book with glossy pages presents the story of a young girl's life in Molotschna Colony in Russia in the 1920s. Excerpts from the writings of Susanne's father, H. J. Willms, add an adult perspective to the years of the Russian Revolution

and the escape from Soviet Russia in 1929.



War, Peace and Social Conscience: Guy F. Hershberger and Mennonite Ethics. Theron F. Schlabach. Herald Press, 2009, 726 pages.

This thorough and perceptive biography of Guy Hershberger (1896-1989), a prominent leader of the Mennonite church in the mid-20th century, also provides good analysis of the Mennonite church of that era. The author taught American Mennonite history at Goshen College for many years.

Women in Early Austrian Anabaptism: Their Days, Their Stories. Linda A. Huebert Hecht. Pandora Press, 2009, 290 pages.

Hecht has translated court records from the 1500s to tell stories of Anabaptist women in Austria, many of who were martyred. These are new stories that are not found in other sources. Hecht also provides historical context for these Anabaptists in Austria.

Other Books

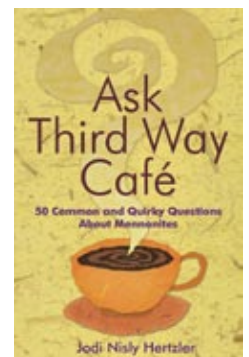
Affluenza Interrupted: Stories of Hope from the Suburbs. Doreen and Hugo Neufeld. Sunrise Publishing, 2009.

Using short stories, Doreen and Hugo Neufeld reflect on their experience of moving to the suburbs after having served in a poor inner-city neighbourhood. The book is available through Herald Press.

Ask Third Way Café: 50 Common and Quirky Questions About Mennonites. Jodi Nisly Hertzler.

Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2009, 82 pages.

Hertzler has put



FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

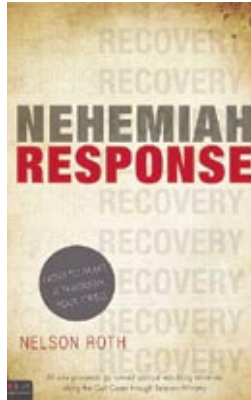
together 50 questions and answers that have been posed to the Third Way Café website from all over the world. The range of topics is wide, from theological beliefs and dress to what is an appropriate wedding gift for a Mennonite.

Miracle Temple. Esther Yoder Stenson. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2009, 120 pages.

This collection of poems includes many with the voice of an Amish young woman, some reaching back to the early 20th century.

Nehemiah Response: How to Make it Through Your Crisis. Nelson Roth. Tate Publishing, 2009.

Roth, a Mennonite pastor, experienced the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and organized a



ministry responding to needs in his community. The book includes many stories from this ministry and provides a plan for any church responding to a crisis. It is also available in e-book or audio book formats.



Timna. Lucille Travis. Herald Press, 2009, 167 pages.

In this story, designed for young readers, Timna, the wife of one of Noah's sons, finds herself in an adventurous situation.

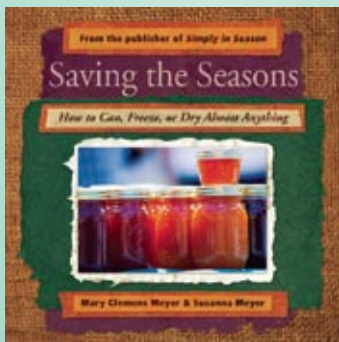
Together We Can: Our Seven-Month Journey with the MCC Mobile Meat Canner, 2008-2009. Wanda L. Yoder. Masthof Press, 2010, 110 pages.

Wanda and Loren Yoder travelled with the MCC meat canner to 37 different sites where meat was canned for relief. Wanda also collected a quilt block at each site. The book has many delightful pictures.

Woldemar Neufeld's Canada: A Mennonite Artist in the Canadian Landscape, 1925-1995. Laurence Neufeld and Monica McKillen, eds.; Hildi Froese Tiessen and Paul Tiessen, text. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010, 146 pages.

This large hardcover book includes 241 plates of Woldemar Neufeld's paintings and block prints, as well as the story of his life and the development of his art. Neufeld emigrated from Ukraine to Canada in 1924 at the age of 14 and his artwork includes many scenes from his years in Waterloo Region.

—Compiled by Barb Draper, Books & Resources editor.



New From Herald Press

Saving the Seasons

How to Can, Freeze, or Dry Almost Anything

You can't get much closer to the source of your food than canning or preserving it yourself, and *Saving the Seasons* shows you how! Loaded with helpful tips, charts and

user-friendly recipes for beginners and experts alike, it will help you enjoy the season's bounty all year long.

Compiled by the mother-daughter team of **Mary Clemens Meyer** and **Susanna Meyer**, *Saving the Seasons* is a follow-up to *Simply In Season*, the best-selling cookbook that celebrates cooking and eating locally-produced seasonal food.

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Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Church planting 'not just about numbers'

New book aims to help people avoid mistakes of the past

By JOHN LONGHURST

Mennonite Publishing Network Release

In 1992, churches in Great Britain launched a plan to plant 20,000 new churches by 2000. There was some success; several hundred new churches did result. But it was not the thousands that were hoped for. Of those churches that were planted, many struggled and some closed after a few years. Others persisted, but did

not thrive. Few inroads were made into the communities they wanted to serve.

Looking back, veteran British church planter Stuart Murray wondered what went wrong—and what could be done to avoid repeating those mistakes. *Planting Churches in the 21st Century: A Guide for Those Who Want Fresh Perspectives and*

New Ideas for Creating Congregations (Herald Press) is the result.

"I think the main problem was that people focused on speed and quantity, rather than quality," says Murray, who helps direct the Anabaptist Network in Great Britain. "We were more interested in how many churches we could plant, not what kind of church various communities needed."



Ministry 'realities' in the 21st century

By ROSS W. MUIR

Managing Editor

"The gospel can meet all human needs, but we need to listen carefully to our postmodern and post-Christendom culture to learn what they are," says veteran British church planter Stuart Murray, adding, "We don't want to give out answers to questions nobody is asking."

So just what are some of the postmodern needs and questions that the church of today and into the future must be ready to respond to? In an unpublished review of last year's popular "zombie comedy" film, *Zombieland*, Joe Heikman, associate pastor of First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, provides some answers.

After an out-of-control virus has ravaged the world, turning most humans into slobbering, flesh-eating zombies, four human survivors—Columbus, Tallahassee, Wichita and Little Rock (called by their intended destinations, rather than personal names, lest they get too attached to each other)—make their way towards Pacific Playland, the mythical zombie-free refuge of their dreams. Of course, the haven doesn't actually exist, so along the way they seek to find their own salvation, often in graphic and brutal fashion.

Zombieland, Heikman suggests, offers a peek into the

worldview of many postmodern young people:

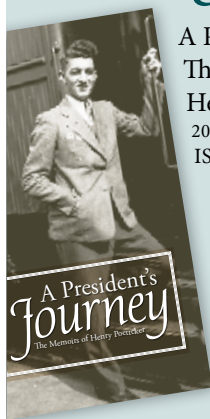
- **LIFE IS FULL OF ZOMBIES:** The world is gone crazy. Most people just want to use you to fill their own needs, so abandon your dreams of a pain-free existence, trust no one, and you just might survive.
- **WISDOM IS EXPERIENCE:** Columbus, one of the humans, stays alive by following his personal set of rules, based solely on his encounters in *Zombieland* so far. Forget the advice of a parent, a book or an expert; the only lessons you can trust are those that you've owned through experience.
- **FAMILY IS BELONGING:** Everybody's an orphan in *Zombieland*. Traditional families are a distant memory. Your chances of finding someone just like you, or who really understands you, are slim. But if you can look beyond the pain of loss, if you can somehow risk opening yourself up to love again, it's totally worth it.
- **SALVATION IS NOW:** The world is seriously messed up. The zombies aren't going away. The heaven of Pacific Playland doesn't exist. But you can still find meaning—in the strange beauty of destruction, in the loyalty of friends, or in the chasing after the fleeting sweetness of a Twinkie. Columbus's Rule No. 32 is "Enjoy the little things." While not quite as poetic as Ecclesiastes, the message is the same, Heikman suggests.



FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES



Biography



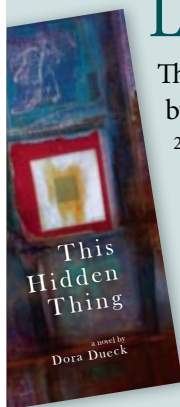
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Theology



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Church planting “isn’t just about numbers,” he says. “It’s about the renewal of the church and the development of new ways of being the church that are biblically rooted and contextually appropriate.” Not all church plants will succeed, he points out. But whether they grow or fail, “there are lessons to be learned.”

One of those lessons is that Christianity has to be presented differently today.

“In the past, we could assume that people we wanted to reach with the gospel knew the story,” he says. “But we cannot make such an assumption today. Here in Britain, the cut-off point for knowing the Christian story is about 35 or 40 years of age. I assume that something similar might be occurring in parts of North America.”

include alienation, loneliness, a search for meaning and purpose, interest in spirituality, and ways to live meaningfully with purpose in this life.

“The gospel can meet all human needs, but we need to listen carefully to our post-modern and post-Christendom culture to learn what they are,” he says. “We don’t want to give out answers to questions nobody is asking.”

As for Anabaptism, Murray believes it brings a special gift to the church-planting enterprise. “Anabaptism has historically emphasized the importance of telling the story, of community and the centrality of Jesus, along with the importance of following Christ in life,” he shares. “Many people today want to know how they

*‘[M]any people today don’t feel guilty, and many are not particularly interested in life after death. It’s no longer a starting point for a conversation about faith.’
(Stuart Murray)*

Another lesson, he notes, is that living faithfully—in the hope that others will notice and then want to know more about Jesus—only works if people are familiar with the Christian story.

“Many Mennonite church leaders in Europe and North America have told me their members are more comfortable living faithfully and distinctively in the hope that others will be challenged by their example and drawn towards faith,” he says. “While there is much in this that I affirm, living out faith only works where people actually know what that faith is actually all about.”

A third lesson for church planters is the importance of discovering “what aspects of the gospel connect with people today,” he adds. For a long time “evangelists used guilt and death to connect with people, with forgiveness and the hope of eternal life as the good news,” he says. “But many people today don’t feel guilty, and many are not particularly interested in life after death. It’s no longer a starting point for a conversation about faith.”

For Murray, starting points that might work for conversations about faith today


can make a difference and be fulfilled in this life—not just in the life to come. The Anabaptist emphasis on service and living the life of faith may prove to be an effective starting point.”

Yellow Page Business Directory

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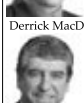
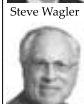
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Calendar

British Columbia

May 28: Fundraising dessert evening for Communitas Supportive Care Society, at Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m. Featuring Father's Daughter. For more information, call 604-850-6608.

Alberta

May 25-27: Summer Training Institute for Church Leaders presents "Holy conversations: Strategic planning as a spiritual practice for congregations," with keynote speaker Gil Rendle; at Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton. For more information, visit conciliationservices.ca.

June 9: Annual heritage retreat at Camp Valaqua. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld will share biblical reflections and stories from an MCC trip to southern Sudan. For more information, call Erna Goertzen at 403-335-8414, Annemary Buhler at 403-246-5480, or Kurt Janz at 403-271-7477.

June 12: Hike-a-thon at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Jeff Schellenberg at 403-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

May 25-28: MC Saskatchewan continuing education event at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. Speaker: Wilma Bailey. Topic: "Laments of ancient Israel."

June 5-6: Aberdeen Mennonite Church centennial celebration.

June 6: Shekinah Retreat Centre fundraising concert with House of Doc.

June 11-12: MCC Relief Sale at Prairieland Exhibition, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

May 15, 16: Faith and Life Choirs spring concerts with guest violinist Rosemary Siemens; Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 7 p.m. (15); Steinbach Mennonite Church, 3 p.m. (16).

May 22-24: Camp Moose Lake workday weekend.

May 28-30: Birding retreat at Camp Koinonia.

June 15: CMU ninth annual President's Golf Classic, at Kingswood Golf and Country Club, LaSalle. Tee-off at 12:30

p.m. For more information, visit cmu.ca/events.

Until June 19: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg is featuring "Sense of Place," an exhibition by Altona artists.

June 19: Camp Koinonia golf tournament fundraiser.

Ontario

May 10: Seniors spring retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Theme: "Volunteering: Making a difference." Speakers: Erla and Lloyd Koch and Ray Schlegel. For more information, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

May 12: Solar energy information night hosted by MCC Ontario and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit ontario.mcc.org/mise.

May 15: Annual "Paddle the Grand River" event for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. For more information, visit slmc.on.ca.

May 15, June 13: Menno Singers, with Mennonite Mass Choir and soloists, present Haydn's *Creation*, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. (May 13); Riverstone Retreat Centre, Durham (June 13). For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

May 22, 23: Brussels Mennonite Fellowship 30th anniversary. Potluck wiener roast at Martin's Landing, 5 p.m. (22); Sunday worship, 10 a.m., at church, followed by a potluck dinner.

May 25: Solar energy information night hosted by MCC Ontario and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit ontario.mcc.org/mise.

May 25-29: View "Quilts for the world" at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church—part of the Quilt & Fibre Art Festival: Waterloo Region & Beyond. View the work of talented local quilters, daily demonstrations and a gift boutique. Proceeds to MCC. For more information, visit stjacobs.com or call toll-free 1-800-265-3353.

May 26: Annual retreat for retired ministers at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Theme: "Finding fulfillment in retirement."

Speaker: Eleanor Epp Stobbe.

May 28, 29: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale at the fairgrounds; 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. (28), 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. (29). All proceeds to Mennonite Central Committee. For more information, visit nhmrs.com.

June 3: Solar energy information night hosted by MCC Ontario and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, at South Ridge Community Centre, St. Catharines, at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit ontario.mcc.org/mise.

June 4-6: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter weekend, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Begins at 7 p.m. (4) and ends at 3 p.m. (6). For more information, call 519-669-8667.

June 6: Fourth annual Shaped Note Singing event from the *Harmonia Sacra*, at 1855 Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

June 15-17: Summer Training Institute for Church Leaders presents "Governance and ministry: Building effective partnerships among the leaders of the church" with Dan Hotchkiss of the Alban Institute; at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. For more information, visit conciliationservices.ca.

June 17-19: The Word Guild invites Canadian writers and editors who are Christian to its annual Write! Canada writers conference, Guelph, Ont. Keynote speaker: Joel A. Freeman, author of *If Nobody Loves You, Create the Demand*. For more information, visit writecanada.org.

U.S.

June 13-14: "A table of sharing: MCC and the expanding networks of Mennonite identity" academic conference in conjunction with MCC's 90th anniversary; at MCC's Welcoming Place, Akron, Pa. Free and open to the public, but please register your intention to attend at mcc.org/ATableOfSharing.

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

Classifieds

Announcements

Cassel Mennonite Church of Tavistock, Ont., will be having a 75th Anniversary Celebration - **From the Past Will Come the Future** - on May 7, 8 & 9, 2010. Come and enjoy a weekend of music, speakers, memories and food. For more information, contact: Duane and Nicole Swartzentruber at swartzhomefarms@execulink.com; Cassel Church at 519-462-2251 or casselmc@execulink.com; or check out our website at www.casselmc.com.

Celebration: To glorify God's faithfulness and multiple blessings, **Laird Mennonite Church** requests your presence at its **100th Anniversary Celebration**. The happy occasion is planned for Saturday, Aug. 28 with registration at 2 p.m., a catered supper at 5, followed by a variety program. On Sunday, Aug. 29, the worship service will start at 10 a.m. followed by a noon meal. Inquire about accommodations at jepsenmartensl@gmail.com or call 306-223-4395 or 306-223-4368. Pre-register by Aug. 1.

Salem Mennonite Church of Tofield, Alberta is **celebrating 100 years** as a congregation on July 24 & 25, 2010. We would love to have you help us celebrate this historic and joyous event. Pre-registration by May 31, 2010 is imperative so we can properly plan for our time together. For further information and/or to pre-register contact Joe & Elaine Kauffman by mail: Box 212, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0, by telephone: 780-662-2344, or by e-mail: jolane72@gmail.com.

ZOAR MENNONITE Church (Waldheim) 100th Anniversary Celebration. Friday, July 2 - open house, barbecue supper and concert. Saturday, July 3 - late morning brunch and official Celebration Service. A catered supper, including reminiscing, will be open to all (small charge to cover costs). Former residents and the local community are invited to participate. If you plan to attend, please advise the office before June 1. Mail: P.O. Box 368, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0; e-mail: zoarwaldheim@sasktel.net; or phone: 306-945-2271.

Housing Wanted

Housing: Returning MCC family of five looking for housing (3 bedroom) near the University of Waterloo starting in August. Please contact Kurtis Unger at kunger@tanzania.mcc.org.

For Rent

Retreat cottage on the Little Mississippi River for rent, **Bancroft area**. Daily or weekly. Call 519-471-3309 or e-mail kaecee@rogers.com.

Employment Opportunities**PASTOR FOR WORSHIP & FAMILY MINISTRIES**

The **Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church** is seeking applicants for the position of PASTOR FOR WORSHIP & FAMILY MINISTRIES. The town of Altona is located in southern Manitoba (approximately 1 hour south of Winnipeg) and we are a congregation of 400 members. We are currently served by a pastoral team consisting of 3.5 persons that is committed to the *MC Canada Confession of Faith*.

The primary responsibility of the work would involve providing leadership for a dynamic and blended worship service. This position includes a pastoral responsibility to our younger families within the congregation through spiritual care and nurture, small groups, and the coordination of lay leadership within this age group. Leading worship, musical ability, and a gift for drama would be considered assets. The successful candidate should have pastoral experience and biblical training within a Mennonite/Anabaptist setting and be willing to work together within a team.

Candidates must be committed to Jesus Christ in their faith and discipleship, and have a commitment to the church. They should be good communicators and listeners, as well as have good organizational skills.

Please direct resumes by June 8, 2010, to: Search Committee Chair, Box 90, Altona, MB R0G 0B0, or e-mail: rgvoth@hotmail.com.

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Have you seen our lead pastor? He's too busy to read this ad, so we need your help in locating him.

He may be wearing jeans and a casual shirt, loves Jesus and all people. He relates well to young and old, traditional and contemporary, educated and not so much—so you probably liked him the first time you met him. He recognizes the shifts in society and adjusts his approach to demonstrate Jesus' relevance. He prefers to work collaboratively whether he is the team leader or a lowly team member. Despite all these obvious gifts, he takes constructive criticism well because he is surprisingly humble. Sometimes you'll find him setting up tables or doing dishes, just so he can be with the people on the ground. He loves our diverse church of 500+ regular attendees (half aren't even age 30 yet) and his team of 4 full-time staff. He gets excited at the prospect of planting creative new congregations to reach the needs in our community. He is an Anabaptist at heart, and we love him.

If you've seen him, connect him with us in Southern Ontario through serve@aemmc.ca. We'll keep looking until we find him, but if you can hook us up by the end of May 2010, we'll be especially thankful. (We are accepting female applicants. Unfortunately English is not gender neutral.)

www.aemmc.ca

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The Board of UMEI Christian invites applications for the position of **Principal**. As a leader with vision and commitment to the mission of the school, the successful applicant will participate in the continuing growth and development of the school, as well as supervise the school program. Duties to commence Sept. 1, 2010. Applications should be sent to:

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Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
May 31	May 18
<i>Focus on Seniors</i>	
June 14	June 1

Eastern Canada Snapshots

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Muslims Zainab Ramahi, left, and Fran Pappert-Shannon, right, join Susan Johnson of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., at a comforter-tying event for Haitian earthquake survivors. Spawned by a breakfast discussion group of Muslim and Mennonite leaders in the Waterloo Region, the monthly group—composed mainly of lay people—has also packed kits for Palestinian refugees in Iraq and H1N1 kits for Canadian First Nations. Overseen by Janet Howett of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCC), this endeavour is part of MCC's interfaith bridge-building initiative.

PHOTO BY RICHARD ALBRECHT



Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church held its 10th annual Palm Sunday Peace Walk through the streets of downtown Kitchener, Ont., on March 28. Tied into the church's worship series on prayer, this year the walk left from the morning worship service so parishioners could pray with their feet and display banners of peace in the public square. After the public peace witness, the walkers returned to the church for a meal of hearty soup.

MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP CANADA PHOTO



Dave and Robin Metcalfe were commissioned by their home church, Community Mennonite Fellowship, Drayton, Ont., on March 14, to serve a second two-year term with Mission Aviation Fellowship Canada (MAFC). Dave, a retired Air Canada pilot, will train new mission pilots at Prairie School of Mission Aviation at Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alta., using a twin-engine Piper Seneca and the school's new Red Bird full-motion flight simulator, with his support funded through MAFC.