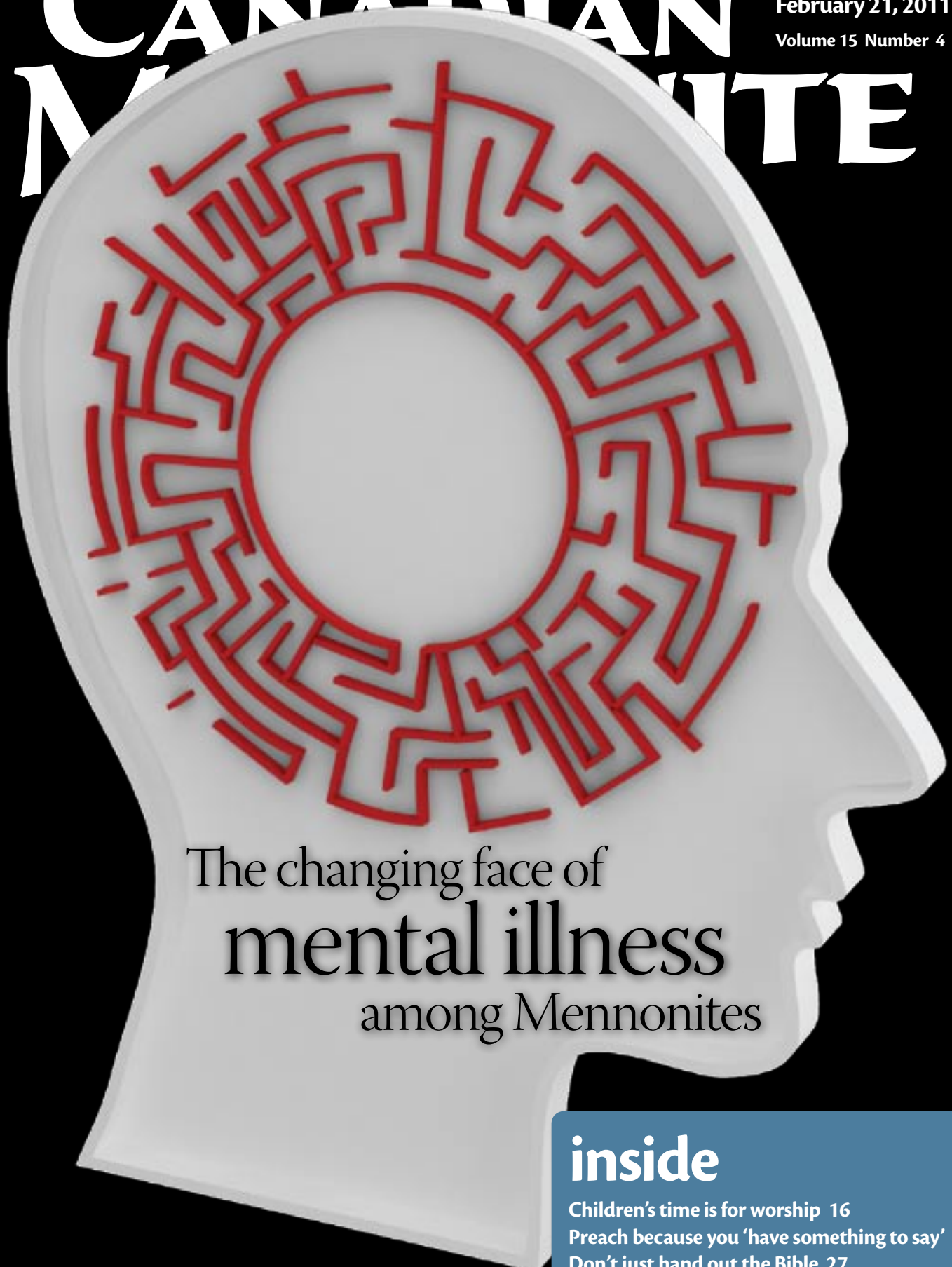


CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 21, 2011

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EDITORIAL

Is Egypt changing our worldview?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

It's been some week. As I write this several days after a stubborn dictator, Hosni Mubarak, has finally stepped down in Egypt, there is a feeling of relief even though the event has transformed an oppressed country half a world away.

Jim Wallis, called "a Christian leader for social change" by the *Huffington Post*, says the Egyptian people have changed the world. What the new generation of Egyptians represents, he declares, is not only a victory for democracy, but a "new leadership, a new hope for the future, new voices for the establishments, in both their country and ours."

Such a sweeping statement—a prophetic word, perhaps—not only implies a new political order in Egypt, but here in North America as well. Too often, we who profess allegiance to a different kingdom buy into the "lazy stereotype" of Arab countries being inhospitable for democracy, as *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof calls it. "It is time to stop treating Islamic fundamentalism as a bogeyman," he writes. "[North] American paranoia about Islamism has done as much damage as Muslim fundamentalism itself."

In reflecting on the fast-moving events of the so-called revolution in Egypt, it is more important to note that it was led by their young people (two-thirds of Egypt's population is under age 30) than that the

total population is 90 percent Muslim and only 10 percent Christian.

Rather than buy into the media- and sometimes western government-driven narrative portraying the Arab world as one big oil field dominated by dictators and Islamic extremists, we should take our cues from our own Mennonite Central Committee workers on the ground, such as Tom and Judith Snowdon, who spoke with me from their temporary home in Strasbourg, France.

The Snowdons, from Saint-Joseph-De-Kent, N.B., are far more concerned about the destructive dynamics resulting from an obvious rich-poor gap in Cairo and the surrounding countryside. They encounter it every day with their partners in peacebuilding as they attempt to lift the Egyptian people out of poverty through literacy and English language programs, HIV education and clean water projects, to name a few of their activities with 11 of their national co-workers.

It was the insidious hoarding of wealth, as is now being exposed with the departure of Mubarak, who, while acting with impunity as the broker of peace in the Middle East, was able—through a tightly knit circle of family and a cartel of business-associates-named-government ministers—to amass a personal fortune of billions while most of his people lived on \$2 a day.



What the Snowdons are experiencing in a setting of upheaval half a world away is more than symbolic. It should instruct us as to how our world is changing—a world that does not fit comfortably into our stereotypes.

Let us honour the Snowdons' request to pray for "better times for the Egyptian people." For it is the Egyptians who will have to use all of the ingenuity and resources they can muster to see themselves through this new uncertain, perhaps treacherous terrain.

Please tell us!

In this issue, we are soliciting your feedback on how we are doing as a denominational publication. Please take the time to fill out the questionnaire on pages 29 and 30, and either mail it back to us or go online and complete it electronically. We would like your feedback no later than March 25.

It has been 10 years since we last did a readership survey. In a fast-moving media age, that is a lifetime! Using newsprint and ink, and a sometimes unreliable postal system, to deliver our product has served us well up until now. But we may, like in Egypt, be undergoing a transformation in the way you, as our readers, consume and use the publication. It is hard to measure the impact of the electronic age and the heavy use of social media.

We hope it is not as tumultuous. Rather, we want you, the reader, like the generation of young Egyptians, to tell us how we are doing. Are we discussing issues that address your day-to-day living? Are we adequately covering the news from your area? How much do you read our website?

The answers to these important questions will help guide our work and mission in the future.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Like the front cover illustrates, the face of mental illness among Mennonites can seem like a maze. However, beginning on page 4, read about the clear call of Mennonites across the centuries to minister to those facing serious mental health issues.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK

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Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

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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.

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Head Office Staff:

Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising Manager: **Lisa Metzger,** advert@canadianmennonite.org, toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Rachel Bergen, National Correspondent, ca@canadianmennonite.org, 204-885-2565 ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman,** B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org,

604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld,** Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org, 780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau,** Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org, 306-933-4209;

Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org, 204-745-2208; **Dave Rogalsky,** Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org, 519-579-7258.



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Top secret: **CHERYL WOELK**

The changing face among

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

*'[Pilgram Marpeck] saw the one primary role of the church as that of a hospital in which people bring their illnesses. The most important thing the church gives to people is forgiveness and joy.'
(William Klassen)*

American Mennonite conscientious objectors (COs) working in mental hospitals during World War II decried the deplorable and inhumane treatment of patients. One symbolically powerful way they objected—and advocated for better treatment—was to unshackle the patients, collect the iron chains and cuffs, and melt them down into one enormous bell.

That bell, which states, “Cast from the shackles which bound them, this bell shall ring out hope for the mentally ill and victory over mental illness,” now serves as the logo for Mental Health America.

Canadian Mennonite COs who served in mental hospitals during the same war also played a role in reforming mental health care in Canada. Their experiences led to the eventual establishment of the Eden Mental Health Centre in Winkler, Man. Nearly 100 COs in Manitoba served in hospitals, most of them mental health institutions.

The Alternative Service website states, “For the COs who served in mental hospitals during the Second World War, the experience opened their eyes to a world they could never have imagined.”

MENNONITE HERITAGE CENTRE ARCHIVES PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION



Bethania Mental Health Institute, from an old postcard of the Salem men's ward, circa 1911.

EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES PHOTO



Eden Health Care Services' head office in Winkler, Man.

of mental illness Mennonites

After the war ended the COs who served in the mental hospitals moved on to other jobs, but the need for improved mental health services remained. Some of the COs had seen things which disturbed them and which they knew should be improved. It was as they related these experiences to the wider Mennonite community that churches became inspired to build Eden, which eventually opened in 1967.

Symposium sheds light on Mennonites and mental health

Mennonites in Russia in the early 1900s were concerned about the needs of those in their midst suffering from mental illnesses, feeling they had been neglected for too long. In 1910, they built Bethania Mental Hospital, “the first and only mental health institute established by Mennonites in Russia, and even all of Europe,” noted Ken Reddig, director of the Eden Foundation, at the Mennonites,



Reddig

Melancholy and Mental Health Conference at the University of Winnipeg, Man., last fall, as he presented a paper written by Helmut Huebert.

Responsibility for the development of the institution in what is now

Ukraine was handed over to the General Conference Mennonite churches; it was financed by donations and special offerings in the churches twice a year.

People of all faiths were admitted, but Mennonites were given preference. The doctors worked in conjunction with the principles of the Mennonite faith and with Mennonite church leaders. “There were strict orders never to strike a patient or to lock them in individual cells. Occupational therapy in the bakery, garden and farm was offered. Some schooling was provided,” Huebert’s paper stated.

World War I interrupted the development of Bethania and in 1927 the government closed it to make way for the development of a power dam. Until its closure, Bethania offered care for nearly a thousand patients. The Mennonites tried to persuade the government to transfer Bethania to Halbstadt, where there was a medical school, but this did not happen. It was with heavy hearts that they saw the facility disappear.

William Klassen looked further back into Mennonite history as it relates to mental illness. “The early Anabaptist leader, Pilgram Marpeck, knew the problem of melancholia was very real among his people in his time [the 16th century],” Klassen said. “He saw the one primary role of the church as that of a hospital in which people bring their illnesses. The most important thing the church gives to people is forgiveness and joy.” This was in direct contrast to the wider society at that

time, he said, which persecuted “witches” and the “possessed.”

Ellen Paulley, a University of Winnipeg student, shared some of her research on “Mental illness in the *MB Herald*, *Canadian Mennonite* and *Mennonite Mirror*.” She noted that over five decades the portrayal of mental illness moved from spiritual categories like

“unconfessed sin” to an increasingly holistic approach that includes biological and emotional factors, as well as spiritual.

But John D. Friesen of the University of British Columbia, stated in his presentation that Mennonites “in general . . . have done little to articulate an understanding of the relationship between faith and mental illness. . . . The question of the

intersection between faith and depression continues to haunt us.”

“The rift between social/psychological/spiritual explanations and biomedical explanations is beginning to be addressed with more integrative understandings,” he said, but this road towards a more holistic approach has been slow to develop in the Mennonite setting. “I well

PERSONAL REFLECTION

A crash course in grace

BY BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Every one of us deals with mental health challenges. Whether we’re losing sleep about the math exam tomorrow or are hospitalized for schizophrenia, whether we’re on medication for depression or battling obsessive regrets over how we’ve raised our children—we each have been dealt a unique set of cards.

For almost 20 years my hand has included mild depression, which I’ve dealt with through counselling, and at one point, medication. Last July it also included a surprise episode of extreme anxiety that sent me to hospital for a night. Both of these interrelated challenges are rooted in a cocktail of genetics, chemical imbalances in my brain, personality, circumstances and lifestyle choices.

They are not, I have come to learn, some divine punishment for personal sin, whether mine or someone else’s. That’s what Jesus’ disciples thought of the man born blind (John 9). They needed to know whose fault the disability was. Jesus asked a more fruitful question: “How can God be glorified?” In other words, wherever we are on the spectrum of physical or mental health, what health and joy will come as we play the cards we have been dealt?

Mental health challenges are not fun to deal with. But strangely, if it weren’t for them I’d know a lot less about love and life. That became clear last summer when I experienced my debilitating psychological crash. Life had been good leading up to the experience. I enjoyed my work, and relationships with God and people seemed fine.

Then I found myself in Europe on a writing assignment that I had much anticipated. I was pumped for this project—but that also turned out to be part of the



problem. I had set up huge expectations for myself, and for a perfectionist, that’s dangerous.

Once into the project I became obsessive about it. I began to neglect rest, exercise and even eating. At 3 o’clock one morning, as I sat at my laptop trying fruitlessly to coax words out of my spinning brain, I suddenly felt an overwhelming

sense of doom and failure. I cried out in pain—mental pain. Breath was short, and I couldn’t think. Like an engine dry of oil, I had seized up.

Thankfully I knew enough to reach out to others before I did anything stupid or self-destructive. Over the next day, when the attacks didn’t abate, my colleagues, in consultation with my spouse back in Winnipeg, helped me check into a hospital for observation and, finally, sleep. The next day I flew home to get the help I needed.

After visits to the doctor and to a psychologist I stabilized within days. Given the episodic nature of my experience I worked at my health through cognitive-behavioural approaches. If my anxiety had turned out to be ongoing and chronic, medication would have been an option.

Since July I have become more vigilant in following three life rules which I already knew (partly from my earlier experience of depression) but obviously had yet to master:

1. I MAKE REST AND EXERCISE A PRIORITY. I swim laps in the morning. I don’t work through meals. I don’t let myself do desk work just before bedtime or in the middle of the night—the constant temptation for people like me who work out of a home office and love their work.

Pediatrician Mark Vonnegut says it so well in his

recall several experiences in the 1980s when addressing Christian pastors and Christian leaders on the psychological underpinnings of addictions, several pastors challenged my psychological perspectives and considered my viewpoints lacking biblical foundations.”

Today mental illness is reported with increasing frequency. “Depression is as

much as 10 times more common than it was two generations ago,” Friesen told the conference. Quoting from Great West Life statistics, he said, “Mental health claims [especially depression and anxiety] have taken over cardiovascular disease as the fastest growing category of disability costs in Canada. It is estimated that 10 percent of the Canadian working

population has a diagnosable mental illness. The Canadian economy loses an estimated \$30 billion a year in productivity due to mental illness and addiction problems.”

Nobody is immune. Mental illness affects people in all occupations, educational and income levels, and cultures. Chris Summerville of the

memoir about his own mental illness: “If you take good care of any disease by eating well, sleeping well, being aware of your health, consciously wanting to be well, not smoking, etc., you are doing all the same things you should be doing anyway, but somehow having a disease makes them easier to do.”

2. I CHOOSE TO LIVE BY GRACE. Blame it on genetics, personality or the kind of work I do, I tend to be a perfectionist. My perfectionism can help me do good work, but as my July episode reminded me it can feed anxiety and depression. Setting unrealistic goals and exaggerating how much other people care about what I do can be deadly.

play creatively with the cards we’re dealt. The game is all about God’s work in the world, not ours—so we can relax.

3. I ALLOW MYSELF TO TALK ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE, rather than hide it. I didn’t want to brag about my experience last July, but when people asked how my summer went I told them about my crisis. I was amazed at how many friends and neighbours then spoke of similar experiences—their own, or a loved one’s. A bond formed as we shared our common experience of human frailty.

Hiding one’s experience from others—and even ourselves—is often part of our mental health problems. I knew this even before last summer, and that is why, four

When I’m tempted to beat myself up for being less than perfect, I try to say, ‘Oh well, God loves me anyway,’ or, ‘So what? Will the world really end as a result of my failure?’

The Apostle Paul speaks a wonderful paradox at the heart of the Christian life: God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness (II Corinthians 12:9). It doesn’t mean we don’t shoot for excellence; it just means that we can rest in the fact that we’re defined by God’s love, not by our achievement. That’s grace.

Grace is at the heart of the self-talk that I am teaching myself. When I’m tempted to beat myself up for being less than perfect, I try to say, “Oh well, God loves me anyway,” or, “So what? Will the world really end as a result of my failure?” These phrases may not be appropriate for everyone, but for overachievers like me they may fend off the next anxiety attack.

Much relates to my image of God. A God who is nothing but a scorekeeper who rewards achievement and punishes human failure is an abusive God. The gospel points out that our God always loves us and calls us to

years ago, I offered to help create and edit Mennonite Publishing Network’s Close to Home series of pamphlets on issues that we avoid talking about at church: mental health, addictions and abuse. (Ironically, I even commissioned and edited one on anxiety!) One of the main purposes of the series is to facilitate conversation with each other, in our families, and, where necessary, with professional caregivers.

With God’s grace and some good choices I can manage depression and anxiety, but I can’t guarantee that they’ll never rear their heads again. Like physical illness, they are simply there. But if I allow it, God can turn them into windows of grace and healing.

Byron Rempel-Burkholder is an editor with Mennonite Publishing Network and with Mennonite World Conference. He lives and works in Winnipeg, Man.

Manitoba Schizophrenic Society said, “Approximately 20 percent of individuals will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, and the remaining 80 percent will be affected by an illness in family members, friends or colleagues. . . . Receiving and complying with effective treatment and having the security of a string of supports, adequate housing and educational opportunities are essential elements in minimizing the impact of mental illness,” said Summerville.

The situation today

The compassion of Mennonites for the mentally ill is evident in their history, but stigmas and difficulties around mental illness still abound.

Ingrid Peters Fransen, who was

diagnosed with bipolar disorder after years of misdiagnoses and a smorgasbord of treatments, has on occasion shared her story with her congregation. “What I would like is a response from the church during the week, not just after church,” she says. “I didn’t share all the time, but when I shared it was when I wasn’t in a good place. Sometimes people offered to bring a meal, but it would have been more helpful to be invited over for a meal. I didn’t want to explain that my house was in complete chaos.”

Peters Fransen, whose story is featured in the Mennonite Publishing Network’s *Close to Home* pamphlet series, can understand the hesitation to become involved. “You don’t know how long someone will not be able to function,”

she says. “It would have been easy for me at times to latch on to someone. But a pastoral visit or a phone call every time I shared, that would have been helpful.”

It is not helpful being told, “We all feel depressed sometimes,” she says, adding, “Pull up your socks; ‘There’s nothing wrong in your life; and, ‘What is your problem?’” are all comments someone with a mental illness doesn’t need to hear. “You’ve already said them to yourself. You don’t need others to say them to you as well.”

Peters Fransen continually strives to erase the stigma of mental illness. “I use physical illness as a marker,” she says. “If I were chronically physically sick, it isn’t the first thing I would talk about, but if it comes up in a conversation I would

Creating a new culture for recovery

BY KEN REDDIG

EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Dr. Mark Ragins, a well-known American psychiatrist who has dedicated his life and practice to recreating, improving and sustaining mental health recovery programs, spoke to 200 people who attended the second annual lecture series of Eden Health Care Services in Winkler last fall.



Ragins

Ragins began by noting that there is a revolution in working with people with mental illness. It is the people who live with mental illness that are changing the perception of mental illness and the way it is treated, he said, adding that in the past mental illness was associated with hopelessness, but the focus has changed to recovery, with the attainable goal of a better life.

The revolution consists of empowering individuals to take charge of their recovery and become the kind of person they want to be. Treatment is directed towards the person, Ragins said, and recovery is what the individual experiences. He calls it “person-centred recovery.”

Important to this model is the new concept that recovery is focused on assisting individuals to make gains in all areas of their lives, rather than just treating their illness. Medications, where necessary, are directed to improving the quality of life of the person, instead of

simply relieving the symptoms.

Throughout his lectures Ragins emphasized that not just professionals—but family, friends, church and community—play a key role in recovery. It is the community surrounding the person that is important if recovery is to take place, he said. “The more we take care of [institutionalize] persons with mental illness, the more they become crippled,” Ragins noted.

Recovery is countercultural, according to Ragins. It is welcoming, engaging, accepting and emotionally connecting to the very people that society tends to reject. The recovery model asks everyone to serve the people who are unserved or underserved.

For many with mental illness, faith in God is a part of their emotional and spiritual healing. A community of “shared faith” must be promoted by acceptance and blessing, Ragins said, explaining that the blessing may come from the fact that the person has received a gift from the illness that can be shared and be helpful within the faith community. Those with mental illness may come to realize that they are renewed and are a new creation by having gone through their suffering, finding meaning and reason for the suffering that has opened their hearts and brought them and their communities closer to God. ☸

address it. So it is with my mental illness.”

Lois Edmund, a psychologist and instructor at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, says the church is called to be compassionate and welcoming to all. “The sad part is, if we are not compassionate, people will go elsewhere, like turning to alcohol, for example, for help. People with mental illness sometimes feel cut off from friends, family and church, and, as a result, from God. The church needs to be compassionate in its response and let them know that God has not turned his back on them.”

Edmund sees a need for the training of leaders and others in the church in understanding and learning how to respond to mental illness. “As churches, we need to become informed,” she says. “It is crucial.”

Carman Mennonite Church congregants felt the need to build that awareness and understanding in themselves last fall. Recognizing that everyone suffers from some level of mental strain and illness at some point in their lives, the congregation wanted to learn how they could be more accepting and supportive of each other. A four-part adult Sunday school series was offered, covering a range of topics, from depression and abuse, to addictions, stress and anxiety. Professionals were brought in to address these issues from a faith-based perspective. Attendance mushroomed during these sessions. A support group has grown out of the series.

“It was refreshing to be able to have these discussions in a church setting and not have to talk in hushed tones,” says a participant.

“What Carman Mennonite did is a very good model of how to ease some of the stigma and pave the way for more understanding,” says the Eden Foundation’s Ken Reddig. “I hope we can replicate that in other churches.”

At Pinawa Christian Fellowship, the multi-denominational congregation in rural Manitoba has decided to forego building a church structure on land that it has owned for more than two decades. Instead, it will continue to meet in the school and use the land to build housing for people struggling with mental illness.

‘What Carman Mennonite did is a very good model of how to ease some of the stigma and pave the way for more understanding. I hope we can replicate that in other churches.’

(Ken Reddig, Eden Foundation director)

“There is very little available in the way of housing that is accessible and appropriate for them in rural areas,” says Pastor Robert Murray. This congregation, which belongs to the Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches, as well as Mennonite Church Manitoba, is in the process of submitting an application to Manitoba Housing. The plan includes a two-storey, 12-unit apartment building in which half the units will be reserved for people who qualify for the housing supplement. “We learned from Eden Mental Health Services that it is preferable to have a mixed population in these settings,” Murray explains.

The church invited Summerville from the provincial schizophrenic society to speak at a worship service and at a larger community event. “We need to build awareness in order to develop acceptance and support of the idea in the community,” says Murray. “We put an article in the local paper. So far, the response has been very positive.”

The plans also include a common space, as well as storage and office space.

“There is a real dearth of space in our community for support groups to meet,” Murray says. “Hopefully, the church will be able to have a role in providing social outlets and connections, so the people won’t feel isolated.”

Dr. Michael Dyck, psychiatrist at the Eden Mental Health Centre, sees an encouraging shift in how the church is responding to mental illness. “In the past, the church saw its role through the institution,” he says. “Their involvement was through the board and by referring people with mental health issues to Eden. Increasingly the church is now asking how these individuals can become a part of the life of the congregation.

“In the 1960s the church had to make the case for the need of an institution to the government,” Dyck says. “Now the church is asking what the role of the community is in recovery and in including them in the church.”



Dyck

/// For discussion

1. What experiences have you had with friends or family members who struggle with poor mental health? What resources or support services are available in your community? Has your attitude towards mental illness changed over the years?
2. John Friesen reports that depression is 10 times more common than it was two generations ago. Do you find that surprising? What factors may be leading to a higher rate of diagnosis? How healthy is this high level of diagnosis?
3. What is the relationship between faith and depression or anxiety? Do these disorders show a lack of faith or are they merely biological disorders? What role can a pastor or church play in mental health issues? What are the advantages of having faith-based community counselling services?
4. What are the challenges in dealing with friends or family members who struggle with mental illness? How could your congregation improve its support for members who suffer from mental health issues?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked “Attn: Readers Write” (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author’s contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ Pastor’s changing beliefs a cause for worry

RE: “THE ART of believing,” Jan. 10, page 11.

This article points out the importance of understanding fully what our beliefs are. That’s a good thing.

However, I get the impression when reading this article that the Bible is viewed with scepticism and as a source of irritation, instead of inspiration. This article uses sources from secular philosophy over Scripture. The Christian church was built by leaders of unyielding faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

I would be worried if my pastor changed his beliefs every five years.

GERHARD TAVES, WHEATLEY, ONT.

✉ Be practical . . . and celebrate what you have

YIKES. THE FIRST thing we should do for Aiden Enns (“Subverting our bourgeois tendencies,” Jan. 24, page 12) is dispatch him an extra measure of grace. All this guilt and regret about his education, clothes and landholdings can’t be that healthy, and may not be that helpful.

I don’t really think that “blessed are the poor” was intended to mean how wonderful it is to be food insecure, cold, unhealthy and homeless. Surely not!

We have about seven billion people on the planet who are interested in at least having their basic needs met, and even enjoying a modest measure of prosperity. All of these seven billion survive, live and prosper through producing some goods or services which we exchange in some form of marketplace for the goods and services produced by others in the global

community. All of us are necessarily producers and consumers. Fundamentally, if we were to stop consuming en masse, we would negatively impact all those who used to produce what we now claim to not want. We should celebrate both our production and consumption in the context of a global community where everyone deserves opportunity.

We have so much evidence that secure land tenure in developing countries results in improved agricultural productivity for smallholder farmers. We have so much evidence that providing education to girls improves their health, nutrition and livelihoods. It is more practical than it is bourgeois to celebrate what we have.

The real issue for us is less about what we have earned or inherited, and a lot more about what we do with those assets. In that sense, Enns’s suggestions about sharing are interesting. If you are fortunate enough to own or control some assets, put them to work for goodness sake! The parable of the talents should be instructive here. The manager judged the harshest was not the fortunate fellow who had 10 talents and put them to some productive work, but the poor fellow who had only one talent and decided to just bury it.

What exactly have we done with the investments we are fortunate enough to have? Looking at that would be more useful than how much angst we can self-generate.

At International Development Enterprises (IDE) Canada, we often speak of “enabling rural prosperity” as we think about the smallholder farmers we work with. We think of them not in a benefactor-beneficiary relationship, but as fellow investors trying to improve their lives modestly but significantly—as people who need some investment-minded partners.

AL DOERKSEN, WINNIPEG, MAN.

Al Doerksen is chief executive officer of IDE Canada.

✉ Eat paska together and be glad: Mennonite is eaten here

RE: “‘MENNONITE’ NOT eaten here,” Jan. 24, page 13.

There is a natural connection between culture and being Mennonite, and rather than grieve this connection, we should celebrate it. The beauty of Christianity is not that it destroys the significance of culture, but rather that different communities of Christians from around the world can work to be the people of God on the strength of their culture and history.

Mennonites, perhaps more than most, have been aware of the need for our beliefs to find life and meaning in how we live. From the beginning, Anabaptists

have said we are a church explicitly based on lived community. If that is right, then how we work, what we spend our money on, the TV shows we watch, the books we read, and what and how we eat are all part of the vast mosaic of being Mennonite. And this is true no matter where in the world you happen to be.

If we deny this connection, don't we also deny an essential component to what has made our faith sustainable over the years? Isn't the denial of the cultural significance of religion simply an expression of the modern western secular striving to make faith

irrelevant to life?

It has been many years since I had the pleasure of eating my Oma's *pershkie* (meat buns) since she passed away some time ago, but I have recently taught myself how to make them. And in doing so I recall my Oma, the struggles she had in Russia in the 1920s, the journey to a new life in Canada and my memories of her. In so doing, I am connecting with my past in a way that an abstract theological identity can never accomplish. That food is a bond, is something the church has always known.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Skating in another's sledge

PHIL WAGLER

Where were you on Feb. 28, 2010? For Canadians, that was the glorious day of the golden goal: St. Sidney's slick shot that eluded American goaltender Ryan Miller. Not only did Canadian water consumption ebb and flow with the intermissions of that game as fans left Sidney, Roberto, et al to visit "John," but the day showed again that Canadian culture is increasingly entwined with the new myth of hockey.

Eighty percent of Canadians watched some part of that gold medal game. We were dragged willingly into the meta-narrative of a

new patriotism, as the vast majority of us wanted to be identified with this moment of national self-definition.

Where were you on March 19, 2010? Unless it's your birthday, chances are you can't remember. That was the day Canada's sledge hockey team lost the bronze medal game to Norway at the Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver. It passed almost totally unnoticed and without the angst that would have filled the airwaves had Canada's other Olympic men's hockey team had to settle for silver. We are selective in our devotion and

prejudiced in our "religious" affiliation.

Until a couple years ago I played hockey regularly and loved it. Then life with a quiver full of little people caught up to me, and mustering the time, energy and money to get out with the guys became a challenge. As it's been over two years since I've laced them up, that makes me a Canadian backslider of post-biblical proportions.

But in this new year, my son and I decided to return to the ice. We wanted



We have chosen to do this, but this is life as they know it. The experience has become a great teacher.

to do it together, but it's difficult finding a place where a teenager and 38-year-old can play together—until we found sledge hockey. Once a week we strap on the pads and slide our heinies into a sledge and "skate" with people of various ages who see the world from a completely different angle. The vast majority of participants are disabled.

We have chosen to do this, but this is life as they know it. The experience has become a great teacher. Not only am I keenly aware of new parts of my behind that can go numb, I am also newly aware

that life as I see it—even from a mere 172 centimetres (5'8")—is not the be all and end all.

As I bomb around the ice knowing I can get up and walk away, I see able-bodied people watching me like I'm from another planet. I am an anomaly to them, an alien, a peculiarity. They gawk and leave, wondering at this strange sight. I overhear conversations between parents and their kids: "Just be glad you can walk!"

Then the missiologist in me kicks in and I realize many Christians look at their world this way. "Be glad you're not like them," we say, whoever "them" is. Or we just stare, bewildered by strangers and their strange ways.

I am learning once again the need to leave the world as I know and want it, to engage the world from an unfamiliar angle. Is this not the essence of the incar-

nation that has wrought my salvation? Have we forgotten that this way of life is not only a command—"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21)—but also what has made Christians of every age strange? Maybe that's what Peter means when he reminds us we are a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9). Perhaps, saved by grace, we are to skate that grace in another's sledge.

Phil Wagler has sore arms and a renewed heart from pushing in a new direction. Reach him at phil_wagler@yahoo.ca.

Finally, David Martin claims that *The Naked Anabaptist* rightly identifies the core principles of Anabaptism and disregards any aspect of Mennonite culture as irrelevant, and that by focusing on the core, Anabaptism will be more accessible to outsiders. The worry, however, is that the accessibility the book seeks

is one empty of content. Anabaptists have always understood that to be a Christian is not a matter of abstract theological commitments, but rather to work out together what it means to live one's day-to-day life in accordance with the will of God. Such working out by a community will necessarily develop into a set

NEW ORDER VOICE

Was Jesus tough on crime?

WILL BRAUN

Our government's attitude towards offenders is clear. It wants to see them punished. It wants tougher laws, longer sentences and bigger prisons. Ottawa recently announced 3,000 new corrections staff as part of a \$2 billion plan to expand prisons.

But the main champions of this approach, Britain and the U.S., are now changing their "tough on crime" course. "The Canadian government is going down a path that has been discredited and abandoned by its two main proponents," says John Hutton, head of the John Howard Society of Manitoba, which works for the rehabilitation of offenders. In both countries, Hutton says, an approach that stresses punishment over rehabilitation has proven as ineffective as it is costly.

In the Jan. 7 *Washington Post*, hard-nosed Republican Newt Gingrich advocated "intelligently reducing . . . prison populations." He noted that in 2007 Texas decided not to build more prisons, but to funnel money into treatment of mental illness and addictions instead. As a result, the state—whose crime rate is the lowest it has been since 1973—will reduce its prison population by 15,000 between 2007 and 2012, at a savings of \$2 billion.

Getting tough on crime doesn't work, but our government seems oblivious to what Gingrich calls a "seismic shift in the

legislative landscape." Why?

Hutton points to a "political motive." He says the Conservative's tough measures "appeal to their base."

I admit that I can relate to this appeal. I live in a tough neighbourhood. I once saw two men kicking a fallen man in the head. I ran towards them, my gut desire being to inflict physical punishment on the thugs.

My presence scared them off. After checking on the victim, I shouted at the retreating perpetrators, suggesting that if they had any respect for themselves they would show respect for others. I suppose I wanted to shame them.

The response immediately turned my anger to sorrow. "What do I have to live for?" one of them asked, his shoulders shrugged in defeat.

I had no tough comeback. He didn't need Public Safety Minister Vic Toews



He didn't need Public Safety Minister Vic Toews breathing down his neck with threatening laws.

breathing down his neck with threatening laws. He needed some measure of wholeness in his life. Consequences could be part of that, but concern, and perhaps treatment programs, would probably have been the best way to prevent him from endangering others.

Jesus' attitude towards offenders was clear: "I was in prison and you visited me."

He identified directly with them.

Our government is incarcerating Jesus. To be clear, Jesus didn't say no one should be imprisoned—certain people require physical confinement—but he was clear about what attitude we should have towards prisoners, an attitude that would make us inclined to visit, understand and forgive them.

Many Mennonites do exactly that via the visitation programs run by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and others. They touch the heart of Christ when they do so. They are choosing love instead of the fear our government fuels and feeds on.

We Mennonites are on both ends of this punitive-rehabilitative spectrum. Toews is a Mennonite, elected by a largely Mennonite constituency. On the other end are Hutton (also a Mennonite); thinkers like Howard Zehr who have led the push for alternatives to the punitive approach; mediation programs that seek restoration instead of retribution; and Circles of Support and Accountability, a program that bravely helps oft-demonized sex offenders reintegrate after their release.

I hope we as Mennonites will have the courage to support rehabilitative approaches to offenders, approaches that make sense biblically and practically, rather than fear-based, dead-end toughness.

Will Braun can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com.

of traditions and a culture. If we seek accessibility by removing the significance of day-to-day life, we gain it only at the cost of subverting the gospel.

RAMON REMPEL, KITCHENER, ONT.

(A fuller version is available online at canadianmennonite.org/articles/Mennonite-not-eaten-here.)

✉ Generations thrift shop meets a need in Waterloo

IN THE KITCHENER, Ont., area there is a buzz among loyal Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) people regarding the construction of a new thrift shop. There is really no argument that the new store will be more attractive, show greater financial profit (to assist in the worldwide work of MCC), and have many more volunteers than the two smaller local thrift stores whose sale will provide part of the monies needed for the new store.

Generations in Waterloo, Ont., is one of these two thriving stores. With a bit of risk, the doors of the store

were opened some 13 years ago. Since this beginning, the store has amazed the MCC staff and board with its yield. Located in a poorer area—although these streets are now experiencing gentrification—store space and parking are now limiting.

Another motivation to move is nighttime thievery from the Generations property.

All planning affirms that a move to a new location, about five kilometres south, is practical, proper and pleasant. I wonder, though, whether we have done all the homework.

Have we fully considered our calling as followers of Jesus? What of the poor who will no longer have access to Generations' goods? What of this location, this place for social interaction with and for the poor?

Furthermore, is this not a ripe opportunity for the Waterloo Mennonite churches to do a more direct spiritual ministry among the area's poor and lonely? Could we not place a Christian worker at Generations to identify with these people by initially working in the store, getting to know and understand them, then meet with them because of Jesus' love?

Paraguayan Mennonite businesspeople have caught this vision. We might learn from them.

FROM OUR LEADERS

What are we afraid of?

JERRY BUHLER

I am increasingly convinced that most unsavoury behaviour in our world, particularly unkind and violent behaviour, can be traced back to fear. It is not surprising that biblical literature contains much instruction not to fear. This counsel is important in every aspect of life.

At each level of church structure we frequently find ourselves expressing fear.

Anxiously we worry about our future together: What will become of our children, our attendance, our budgets, our committees, our worship, indeed, our very denomination and even our faith?

A simple yet helpful question to ask and contemplate honestly is, "What are we afraid of?"



Certainly there are normal things in life that cause understandable fear, such as pain, loss and difficulty in life. We fear these even though we don't realistically expect to avoid them. We learn to live with these and even gain character from them.

If we believe that the church is built by God and belongs to God, then how do we address our fears about the church?

Perhaps the larger fear that stalks us is the fear that ultimately loss, pain and failure will overwhelm and finally overcome us.

If we believe that the church is built by God and belongs to God, then how do we address our fears about the church? How many of the obstacles and barriers that exist in our churches have a foundation

of fear? And do these cloud our ability to see hope and possibility? Do they result in less than gracious and generous behaviour?

I find the first two verses of Psalm 127 to be comforting and liberating: *"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved."*

I wonder if we might behave differently

if fear were given lower status in our individual and collective lives. Pursuing the practice of letting go of fear could move us to places of unanticipated delight and draw us into the momentum of God's sustained building activity.

Jerry Buhler is area church minister for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Granted, this would be a shift from our middle-class lifestyle. It may also be a new “Wineskins” shift from older MCC practices. At the same time, such a direction might meet a concern of MCC to work more closely with the churches. What an opportunity!

JOHN PETERS, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Poppies only on Remembrance Day, please

AFTER READING THE articles on page 28 of the Dec. 20, 2010, issue, regarding peace and Remembrance Day, I was very confused. We prefer that Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny would not be a part of our two very special and important days, but feel the need to introduce a peace pin and hold peace services on Remembrance Day, Nov. 11. I will continue to wear only a poppy during this period of time.

JEFFREY SHANTZ, WELLESLEY, ONT.

✉ Nurse found display of bodies inspired her awe of God

RE: “TREASURE IN clay jars,” Jan. 10, page 9.

As a newly licensed practical diploma nurse, I had the opportunity to see “Bodies: The Exhibition” at the Mall of America in 2009 that Melissa Miller describes in her column. With the eyes of a newly graduated nurse, I found the exhibit educational, enforcing the anatomy and physiology of the body I had just learned.

I was in awe looking at the complexity of what God

has created in the human body. I also was in amazement of how God has given humans the intelligence to begin to learn how our bodies work and how to invent aides to promote our quality of life.

Yes, it is a very graphic display of the human body and may not interest everyone, but I saw no disrespect to the once-alive people on display, and compared it to organ donations for scientific research.

I come from an average home of Christian upbringing and know many people who have benefited from the aide of human knowledge of the body, be it my mother’s recovery after a stroke or a grandmother’s knee replacement and diabetic medication regime. These people and I are alive because somebody was curious about our bodies and wanted to know more. How God gave us the gift of learning and applying it to daily life amazes me.

This exhibit is certainly not for everyone, but to me it showed the awe of who God is and how incredibly complex the human body is, while reinforcing my passion for the small part I can play as a nurse in assisting others by decreasing their pain and increasing their quality of life.

MARSHA SIEMENS, SASKATOON, SASK.

/// Correction

Jacob Wiebe-Neufeld, who is pictured shovelling snow on the front and back covers of the Feb. 7 issue, was misidentified in the “About the Cover” blurb on page 2. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Boettger—Isaac Kenneth (b. Jan. 16, 2011), to Tiffany and Kevin Boettger, Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

Braun—Hannah Marie (b. Jan. 26, 2011), to Dave and Gena Braun, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Brisbin—Ryan Thomas Konrad (b. Jan. 13, 2011), to Michael Brisbin and Julie Konrad, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Brown—Bowen Preston (b. Dec. 30, 2010), to Stephen and Sandra Brown, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

DeVries—Ethan Charles Rudolph (b. Jan. 22, 2011), to Fred and Trudy DeVries, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Doell—Brayden James (b. Jan. 12, 2011), to Malina and Ron Doell, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Enns—Scarlett Maria (b. Dec. 15, 2010), to Erica and Jonathan Enns, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Giesbrecht—Makayla Lynn (b. Jan. 12, 2011), to Abe and Sara Giesbrecht, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Kroeker—Joshua Braden (b. Dec. 27, 2010), to Paula and James Kroeker, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Leis—Madeline Emma (b. Dec. 20, 2010), to Brandon and Bethany Leis, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Loewen—Jaden Timothy (b. Jan. 17, 2011), to Paul and Jeanette Loewen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Mauer—Anna Katharina (b. Jan. 7, 2011), to Robert and Rosemarie Mauer, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Warkentin—Alexander David (b. Jan. 24, 2011), to Bruce and Maureen Warkentin, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Wilson—Brielle Grace (b. Feb. 1, 2011), to Chantel (Dyck) and Ben Wilson, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Baptisms

Isaac Friesen, Wanda Wall-Bergen, Laura Friesen—Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Jan. 23, 2011.

Marriages

Dueck/Manicom—Kristina Dueck and Adam Manicom, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., in Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 31, 2010.

Lalande/Peters—Danielle Lalande and William Peters, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., Jan. 15, 2011.

Neufeld/Smith—Scott Neufeld (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) and Natalie Smith, at St. Christopher's Church, Christopher Lake, Sask., Jan. 22, 2011.

Deaths

Boldt—Mary, 85 (b. July 26, 1925; d. Dec. 11, 2010), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Bueckert—John, 91 (d. Jan. 10, 2011), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

Buhler—Elizabeth, 111 (b. Feb. 8, 1899; d. Jan. 23, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Dyck—Tina, 74 (d. Jan. 24, 2011), Zion Mennonite Church, Swift Current, Sask.

Ens—Henry, 80 (b. March 14, 1930; d. Jan. 17, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Ewert—Tina, 86 (b. Sept. 3, 1924; d. Jan. 30, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Goertzen—Annie, 90 (b. Jan. 21, 1920; d. Jan. 6, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Hildebrandt—Mary (nee Wiens), 82 (b. March 1, 1928; d. Feb. 3, 2011), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Jantzen—Henry, 77 (b. March 31, 1933; d. Dec. 1, 2010), Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask.

Janz—Mary (nee Friesen), 99 (b. Aug. 8, 1911; d. Jan. 6, 2011), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Jutzi—Grace Kathleen (nee Bast), 83 (b. Aug. 28, 1927; d. Jan. 19, 2011), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Kehler—Elizabeth, 95 (b. Aug. 3, 1915; d. Jan. 12, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Kieling—Elizabeth, 97 (d. Jan. 30, 2011), Zion Mennonite,

Swift Current, Sask.

Krahn—Diedrich, 93 (b. Feb. 5, 1917; d. Jan. 20, 2011), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Krahn—Nettie (nee Froese), 77 (b. Sept. 9, 1933; d. Nov. 12, 2010), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Lepp—Herman, 79 (b. Sept. 3, 1931; d. Jan. 21, 2011), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

Loewen—Henry, 84 (b. March 3, 1926; d. Jan. 1, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Mannell—Cathaine (nee Rempel), 95 (b. Jan. 23, 1915; d. Dec. 28, 2010), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Elizabeth (nee Mathies), 84 (d. Jan. 6, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Paiz—Tulio, 64 (b. May 5, 1946; d. Jan. 22, 2011), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., in Guatemala.

Sawatzky—Katarana J. (Kate), 102 (b. Dec. 28, 1908; d. Jan. 20, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Shellenberg—Agatha (nee Enns), 93 (d. Dec. 28, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Striemer—Ann, 81 (d. Dec. 26, 2010), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

Warkentin—Kathe (nee Driedger), 88 (b. April 24, 1922; d. Feb. 1, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Wiens—Katie (nee Loewen), 82 (b. May 2, 1928; d. Dec. 22, 2010), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Wiens—Sarah (nee Kliewer), 98 (b. Sept. 25, 1912; d. Jan. 20, 2011), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Wurtak—Keith Stuart, 42 (b. Aug. 31, 1968; d. Jan. 28, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, 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



VIEWPOINT

Children's time is for worship, not entertainment

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

The boy on the front step sticks a finger up his nose, a toddler announces what was for breakfast, a little girl flips her skirt up to hide her face from watching eyes. The storyteller's voice is muffled and the congregation can't see the pictures. It's children's story time during Sunday worship. Some in the congregation chuckle, while others tune out to read the bulletin.

Is the point of all this simply to have a token something for children, or is the children's time an important part of a worship service?

At its best, the children's time is integral to worship, highlighting the scriptural theme in simple, engaging ways for the whole congregation. At its worst, it puts children on display, and when it doesn't relate to the service it subtly communicates that "real church"

doesn't include them.

Elsie Rempel, director of Christian nurture for Mennonite Church Canada, says that "the purpose [of children's time] is worship . . . that is child appropriate. . . . It is easier for children to engage with the text and worship if it is connected to their world." When children are appropriately introduced to the worship theme, they grow in faith and connectedness with their church community, she believes.

A good children's time doesn't just happen, though. It takes thoughtful preparation and deliberate connection to the service's theme and biblical text. Sometimes choosing many different story leaders is seen as a way to involve more people from the pews in worship. While a worthy aim, the appropriate skills and willingness to learn them are more important than increased participation; leaders must thoughtfully and prayerfully engage in worship with and for children. And just as not everyone has skills to preach or lead singing, not everyone is able to effectively lead children.

Rudy Baergen, pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Man., says his congregation is trying to be "very intentional about tying the children's time into the worship of the morning." A core group of children's time leaders is identified and provided with guidelines to give continuity to what its members do. "The hope is that people will develop some skills," Baergen says.

According to Rempel, good children's time leaders must "believe they are there communicating the gospel. Their purpose is one of sharing God's Word and

inviting children into worship. . . . It's for the children, and they are your primary target, but you know the adults are looking in. Living with that tension takes a certain amount of confidence and grace. People who are doing it to entertain are doing it for the wrong reason," she says.

Rebecca Seiling of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., is regularly involved in presenting Scripture and stories to children in her congregation. "I prepare for a children's time by reading the biblical text over and over and over again, until I know it. Then I try telling it to myself, often using a few props to remind me of the various parts of the story."

Seiling recommends that storytellers memorize presentations so they can communicate through eye contact and body language. "A woman in our church memorized Psalm 84 and presented it last week, and the children—and adults—were spellbound," she says. "There's something magical about memorization that can bring a text to life."

Tips for the preparation of meaningful children's features

- **RESPECT CHILDREN AS WORSHIPPERS** who need to hear the good news. Know your target age and keep the language at that level. Even challenging topics can be explained with simple words.
- **SPEAK WITH THE PASTOR OR WORSHIP PLANNER** about themes and biblical texts, and connect the children's time with the rest of worship.
- **REHEARSE TO ENSURE SMOOTH DELIVERY** and fit within given time limits.
- **MAKE SURE EVERYONE CAN SEE AND HEAR THE SPEAKER.** Invite children to sit where they are not "on display." Pictures and object lessons can be large.
- **BE CREATIVE.** Consider drama, music,

FILE PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Karen Martens Zimmerly, Mennonite Church Canada denominational minister, speaks to children at the 2010 assembly in Calgary, Alta., about kids and communion practices in the church.

simple props and movement to engage a variety of learning styles.

• **DON'T GIVE CANDY, TOYS OR OTHER TRINKETS** unless they add meaning to the message. Children and their parents know a bribe when they see one.

• **DON'T MORALIZE.** Resist the urge towards overt explanations. If the story is presented in age-appropriate language, children will understand, and

explanations easily become condescending and dull.

For more tips and advice, download "Transforming worship . . . with the children's story," available at mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1471.

"I think that the children's time is an important feature of the worship service, and often adults say that the lessons or

stories from that time are what they take away with them from a service. Everyone loves a good story," Seiling says. ❧

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld is co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, and Alberta correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.

BOOK REVIEW

Making children's ministry 'fit'

Children's Ministry That Fits: Beyond One-Size-Fits-All Approaches to Nurturing Children's Spirituality.

By David M. Csinos. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.

REVIEWED BY ELSIE REMPEL

Listening to children has become a countercultural activity in our fast-paced, media-saturated society, but it is an activity that has much transformative potential.

Children's Ministry That Fits: Beyond One-Size-Fits-All Approaches to Nurturing Children's Spirituality is the result of careful listening and has the potential to transform the church's ministry with its children.

Author David Csinos's research with—rather than just about—children honours their ways of knowing God and recognizes them as fellow spiritual pilgrims on a journey. He is part of what emerging church theologian Brian McLaren describes in the afterword of this book as "a growing movement to reinvent and rediscover ministry among children and youth, to help children become authentic followers of God in the way of Jesus."

And that is what this book is about. "The practice of listening to children is fundamental to seeing them as valuable," Csinos writes.

Children's Ministry That Fits includes chapters that outline the author's understanding of children's spirituality; report on his interviews and other interaction with children from three varied congregations, about their ways of knowing God through word, emotion, symbol and action; and offer a variety of strategies that are important for ministry with children in our current context.

His research with children set out to answer a series of questions:

• Where in your church do you feel closest to God?



- What people in your church help you feel close to God?
- What makes your church's worship different from a school assembly?
- What do you like or dislike about worship in your congregation?
- When and where do you feel safe, comfortable and at peace in your congregation?
- How is worship different when you are mainly with children than when you are with people of all ages?

Csinos also asked them to take photos of places and objects that helped them feel

close to God, and to draw pictures of worship. Then he discussed their pictures with them and asked them where God is, where they are and where they would like to be. Their responses convinced him that children are "faith-filled agents and learners, continually making meaning of the world around them, including the people and places with which they interact."

As one who has been deeply blessed by learning and worshipping with children for several decades, I am greatly encouraged by this new voice in the field of children's spirituality. Listening carefully to the voice of this emerging leader, with his informed passion for integrating children and their ways of knowing God into the worship life of the church, will help transform and equip the church to move into a hope-filled future to which I believe Jesus is calling his church.

Elsie Rempel is director of Christian nurture for Mennonite Church Canada.

YOUNG PROPHETS

Colombian compassion

BY BRANDI FRIESEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

It has been more than six months now since I returned from Colombia. The country continues to be a narrative that infiltrates my dreams, and often my nightmares, too. Travelling around the country with Christian Peacemaker Teams, I was given the opportunity to enter into parts of the Colombian story that were different and deeper than anything I had experienced before.

I was privileged to hear first-hand stories from people who had lost their homes and land by extremely violent means. I sat in the homes of people as they explained to me that the soldiers, those standing just up the road with AK-47s casually slung over their shoulders, had stumbled drunk into their homes just a few weeks ago. Their children were scared.

I walked the streets of a city that had been a war zone a handful of years ago, and listened to a young man's stories of forced military service.

I heard faithful hearts cry out for a strong and broken people, and with them I had faith and was broken also.

Ever present in my mind's eye is an

evening when I was given the opportunity to participate in a memorial vigil. The people in the city of Barrancabermeja gathered together in the Park of Life to mourn the loss of a local union leader who had been assassinated. In a culture of death threats, kidnappings, displacement, military conscription, political corruption and murder, this sadly was not a rare occasion.

This sombre evening that I shared with a particular Colombian community is a night I count sacred. To sit among people who are together weeping, singing, mourning and praying, is to be joined in fellowship. To take communion in such a sacred place is to be bound together deeply in suffering, faith and hope. It was here that I first experienced the meaning of being a compassionate church.

This was a church that understood true compassion. Compassion calls us to suffer with people, not above them. John, too, calls us to *"be compassionate, as our Father is compassionate."* I witnessed a living compassion. We wept for those we did not know. It was not a kindness made

from a position of power or privilege, but from genuine suffering.

There is a choice to be made every day, just as there was the day of this vigil. I look at this sombre day and I see that the choice was made to not be isolated from another's pain. I wonder why it is that it took me leaving my own country to see what a truly compassionate people and a truly compassionate church look like.

Where is the compassionate church in North America? When did we become so removed that we cannot gather together and mourn the death of a man who is unknown, but known to Christ's church? Where is the unity among his people? Has our reflection of Christ become a splintered mirror that we have ceased to look at?

It is time that our church, the people of God, take hold and respond to one another as the compassionate church we were always meant to be. Dear church, take hold of your courage, and fear not your neighbour! Do not be afraid to enter into the brokenness of another!

There is deep blessing that comes when witnessing and participating in genuine brokenness. It is a choice you make deliberately, and in doing so you enter into a deeper relationship with Christ. It was not until I sat weeping with others that a deep, beautiful blessing of hope was given. It remains within still.

Often my dreams are filled with the beauty and the brokenness of all that I witnessed in Colombia, but still I dream of more.

I dream of seeing the church I have been a part of, and witnessed my entire life, growing to be the compassionate church I know it can be. There is a stream of love that runs deeply in the church in North America, and I truly believe we can be this church, the beautifully compassionate church that Christ calls us to be.

The future beckons us. Be blessed and follow in compassionate hope. ☛

Born in Saskatoon, Sask., Brandi Friesen is a fourth-year student majoring in peace and conflict studies at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., a city she currently calls home.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDI FRIESEN



Brandi Friesen, foreground right, takes part in the annual Memorial Day event in Barrancabermeja, Colombia, to stand up for justice and remember those who have been murdered, kidnapped or simply 'disappeared' over the last number of decades. Also out in force are the local military police.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

REFLECTIONS ON CONVERSATIONS IN ASIA

Identity, leadership and Mennonite World Conference

BY ROBERT J. SUDERMAN

Mennonite World Conference

“Our children and young people have no idea what it means to be Anabaptist or Mennonite. What is MWC going to do about that?”

This concern, forthrightly expressed, came from a congregational leader in India during one of dozens of teaching sessions in which I participated last fall in India and Indonesia.

The leader’s challenge was at the heart of why Mennonite World Conference (MWC) member churches in the region had invited me, MWC North American representative Bert Lobe and our wives, on this fraternal visit under MWC’s Global Gift Sharing Project.

Pastors, Bible teachers, evangelists and other church leaders in both countries echoed similar concerns to that of the Indian leader. Their feedback highlighted two important realities:

- In Asia, there is a profound and passionate recognition that church identity actually matters; and
- Church leaders acknowledged that existing energies, gifts, time and expertise have not been harnessed to address this concern as a priority.

The concern for identity often came up when discussing the challenges of leadership and pastoral development. The pastors in one of the synods in Indonesia, for example, had graduated from 43 different seminaries, none of them Anabaptist-related. We understood why the conference leaders spoke of how difficult it is to embrace a common Anabaptist identity.

The flip side, however, was the pure amazement, joy and resonance that leaders expressed when they heard focused and articulate presentations of what the Radical Reformation theological stream has added to the other streams, both in history and

in their present realities. One of the slides I developed was a very simple explanation of the profound shifts in understanding of church and discipleship in the fourth century when the Christian faith became legal and obligatory in the Roman Empire. This was very new to the participants.

A week later, as we visited congregations in the Raipur region of India, the young people who had attended the first workshop had already convened more than 100 other young people to share with them the slide that I had developed. “Now we can see that it makes a difference what we connect to,” they said.

Does churchly and theological identity matter? While we all desire to be “Christian” before we are anything else, the fact is that we are “Christian” according to some identifiable theological foundation. Even those who espouse generic, non-denominational identities have foundations that distinguish them from others. A non-choice is also a clear choice.

“So what is MWC going to do about it?” To the leader in India, I responded with

two points:

- First, MWC member churches have together identified Shared Convictions of Global Anabaptists that address the concern of identity. We have generated written resources to flesh out these convictions further, including *What We Believe Together* by Alfred Neufeld; *From Anabaptist Seed* by Arnold Snyder; and *A Culture of Peace* by Alan and Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja. The Global Gift Sharing Project brings churches into contact with other churches around the world. MWC has also initiated conversations with Catholics, Lutherans and Seventh-Day Adventists to explore the fruit of identity together.

- Second, I said that local leadership must give MWC’s contributions arms, legs and feet—in congregations, conferences, seminaries and Sunday schools. However, MWC staff and board members cannot be present in every home and congregation every day. Ultimately, this responsibility must also be assumed by leaders in the churches and parents in the homes of children and young people. ☿

In 2004, Mennonite Church Canada identified the teaching gift of then general secretary Robert J. Suderman and offered his time to do theological teaching in the global MWC community as part of the Global Gift Sharing Project. Following his retirement last summer, he undertook the India and Indonesia trip. Suderman serves on MWC’s Peace Commission as assistant secretary and as co-secretary of the MWC/Seventh Day Adventist conversations.

MWC PHOTO BY BERT LOBE



Robert J. Suderman, MWC Peace Commission assistant secretary, left, and MWC Executive Committee member Adi Walujo, of the Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (GITJ) Mennonite Synod, share the podium at a teaching session in Indonesia.

Preach because you 'have something to say'

By MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Cleophus LaRue encouraged participants at Pastors Week at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in January to preach because they “have something to say,” rather than because they “have to say something.”

Using the theme, “Preaching with imagination and creativity in the postmodern era,” the Princeton Theological Seminary professor demonstrated imaginative preaching while also exploring ways to develop sermons with integrity and relevance. “The strength of the church lies in the gospel it proclaims,” LaRue insisted, as he began his presentations to the 200 participants.

LaRue described a trend in many churches to enhance the other elements of the worship service at the expense of the sermon. At the same time, he noted that many ministries of the congregation are dependent on getting people to come to church on Sunday morning, and getting people to come to church depends on what they hear from the pulpit.

LaRue first described phases of sermon preparation that invite the imagination into the process. Initial imagination, he said, is when

the pastor takes the freedom to “play with the text,” and to ask questions that come to mind. “Think through limitless possibilities,” he said.

A second phase is informed imagination, in which the preacher explores commentaries and devotional materials based on the text. These check the imaginative ideas to make sure they are valid, while continuing to let the preacher “hear the faint giggle of play” with the text.

The third phase is enhanced imagination. Ideas don't stop coming once the sermon has been preached, LaRue said. So the preacher needs to gather up the new ideas and get input from the congregation to continue enriching sermons in the future.

Sources for ideas that ignite the imagination start with the Bible, LaRue said, and it is important for preachers to understand how the Scripture witnesses to God. Another source for the imagination is lived experience, so that what is preached makes the gospel real for listeners.

LaRue also encouraged Pastors Week participants to rely on the depths of despair as a resource. “Don't preach



LaRue

about the deep places, but help us to see how our struggles are in common,” he explained.

A fourth source is divine initiative. “Some ideas just come to us out of the clear blue,” he acknowledged.

LaRue's final presentation focused on how preachers can become better, saying they need keen insight into the human condition and need the twin powers of imagination and observation. “Good sermons are born from study, wrestling with the text and the people of God who are on your heart at the time,” he said.

“The people in front of you do not expect you to solve the national debt,” he concluded. “They ask only that you speak to them of the God who has spoken to you.”

Recordings of the presentations by LaRue and the worship services will be available on the AMBS iTunesU channel. For information, visit ambs.edu. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Nelson Kraybill named president emeritus of AMBS

ELKHART, IND.—J. Nelson Kraybill, who served as president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) from 1997 to 2009, has been named president emeritus by the AMBS



Kraybill

board at its recent meeting. Kraybill's legacy from his tenure as president at the seminary includes excellent relations with the Mennonite church in the United States and Canada through the integration of the two former Mennonite denominations, a new library on campus, and the emergence of the AMBS Church Leadership Center offering nontraditional theological education programs and varied resources for lifelong support of people in ministry. His latest book, *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*, was published by Brazos Press in 2010.

—AMBS



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Chinese Anabaptist Network seeks regional fellowship

BY GORDON JANZEN
Mennonite Church Canada
HONG KONG

Another Anabaptist network is taking shape, this time in East Asia. The unofficially named Chinese Anabaptist Network joins similar Anabaptist and Mennonite networks and centres in the United Kingdom, France, South Africa and Korea, among others.

Sixteen representatives from Mennonite churches and organizations in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and China, and representatives of North American Mennonite mission bodies, met at Grace Mennonite Church, Hong Kong, last November to explore how to develop stronger relationships. They affirmed Mennonite Church Canada Witness/Mennonite Mission Network workers George and Tobia Veith as facilitators of the new network.

For several decades, Mennonite churches have taken root in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and more recently in Macau, but connections among these churches have been limited. The Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan is the largest Mennonite body in the region, with 21 congregations, followed by the Conference

of Mennonite Churches in Hong Kong, with three churches. The Mennonite Church in Macau is the only Mennonite congregation in that city.

While no identifiable Mennonite church exists in mainland China, Mennonites have had a presence there since the 1980s, building relationships with existing churches and believers through Mennonite Partners in China (MPC).

Chinese language Anabaptist resources topped a list of needs among Mennonite churches in the new network. Participants agreed that a list of available resources, from books and Sunday school items to audio-visual materials, would be shared through a future website. The group expressed a desire for regular interaction and agreed the new network should meet annually.

Alde Wong, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Hong Kong, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet together with her peers. "I learned from the process about how Mennonites from different countries can cooperate," she said.

"I believe an exciting web of possibilities

and connections will emerge," said Tobia Veith.

A similar inter-Mennonite consultation was held in 2006 in Macau. Sheldon Sawatzky, current general secretary of the Taiwanese church organization, noted, "This time we have the advantage of having someone [George and Tobia Veith] available to help coordinate things for our network."

Jeanette Hanson, an MC Canada Witness worker in Chengdu, and Hongtao Yin, MPC's church relations coordinator in Beijing, shared stories about Mennonite connections to a group of pastors that is part of the officially recognized national Chinese church, the Three-Self Church. Hanson reported that these pastors expressed a desire for ongoing and growing connections with Mennonites.

"They are not affiliated with any Western denomination, but you could say that much of their theology and way of doing church is very Anabaptist," Hanson pointed out. ❧

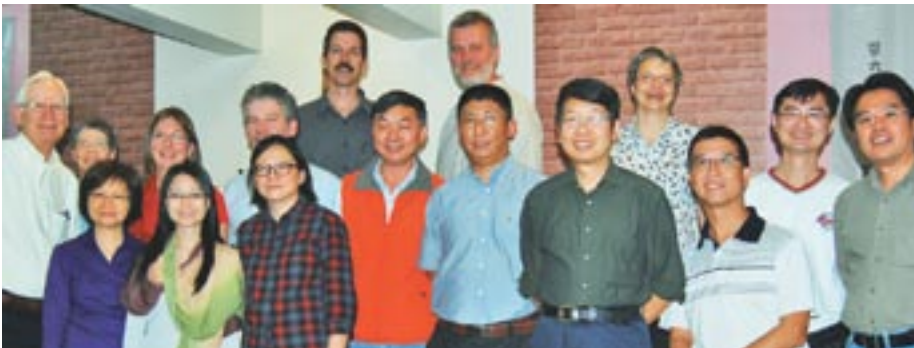
❧ Briefly noted

MC B.C. to update history

An updated history of Mennonite Church B.C. is in the works, to be completed in time for next year's area church 75th anniversary celebration. *Frontier Challenge* by Cornelia Lehn, the previous history of what was then known as the Conference of Mennonites in B.C., was published in 1990. A committee chaired by Bruce Hiebert is working to revise the history of the area church with information from 1990 to the present. Letters are being sent to congregations requesting updated histories. In addition, the committee is planning to do video interviews with key individuals who have been at the heart of various changes congregations have experienced. This will eventually be posted online for viewing. MC B.C. plans the 75th anniversary celebration in conjunction with its annual meeting in February 2012, at a location in the Abbotsford area to be announced.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA



Church leaders meet in Hong Kong to form the unofficially named Chinese Anabaptist Network. Pictured from left to right, front row: Sheldon Sawatzky, Taiwan; Susan Poon, Macau; Crystal Lee, Hong Kong; Treasure Chow, Macau; Bailey Chow, Macau; Ying Hongtao, China; Yao Xiyi, Hong Kong; Jeremiah Choi, Hong Kong; Alde Wong, Hong Kong; and C.K. Fu, Hong Kong; and back row: Marietta Sawatzky, Taiwan; Tobia and George Veith, Macau; Gordon Janzen, Canada; John Lapp, United States; and Jeanette Hanson, China.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Ernie Regehr receives Pearson Peace Medal

Award honours those whose work follows in the footsteps of Canada's Nobel Prize-winning prime minister

BY ELLEN SHENK

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
OTTAWA, ONT.

Ernst Regehr, cofounder of Project Ploughshares and longtime peace advocate, was honoured with the 2010 Pearson Peace Medal at a special ceremony in Ottawa last month.

Established by the United Nations Association (UNA) in Canada, the medal annually honours a Canadian who has personally contributed, through working and volunteer commitments, to the causes that the late Lester B. Pearson, prime minister of Canada from 1963-68, worked for during his career: Aid to the developing world; mediation in situations of armed conflict; aid to refugees and the needy; equal rights and justice for all; and peaceful change through laws and world organization.

As a patron of the UNA-Canada, Governor General David Johnston presented the medal to Regehr, whom he considered a friend, at Rideau Hall on Jan. 21.

Regehr, of Waterloo, Ont., the 26th recipient of this honour, was recognized for his work with Project Ploughshares and his involvement in a number of Government of Canada and United Nations initiatives.

In 1976, he co-founded Project Ploughshares, an ecumenical agency of the Canadian Council of Churches established to implement the churches' call to be peace-makers and to work for a world in which justice will flourish and peace abound. His wife Nancy initially volunteered in administrative and financial matters before fulfilling the same function as a staffer.

In his speech to the assembled body, Johnston cited Regehr as a "worthy heir to Lester Pearson and the other noteworthy Canadians" who have won the award in the past. Departing from his prepared text, the

Governor General reminisced briefly on his years as president of the University of Waterloo, speaking of his friendship with Regehr and his respect for Mennonites and for Conrad Grebel University College, with its emphasis on peace studies.

Nancy Wildgoose, UNA-Canada national president, noted in her introduction that Regehr was a "seasoned and tenacious advocate" for peace, who "represents the best of Canada's international leadership in peace and disarmament."

She especially noted the role that he and Project Ploughshares played in mentoring others and in helping youths to understand

how they can contribute to issues essential to the future communal peace and security of the world.

Wildgoose also quoted from Regehr's writing in a Project Ploughshares annual report: "While we measure our work by meetings held, reports written, presentations made and funds raised, in the end it is our impact on the safety and well-being of people that must be the measure of our success."

Regehr, who adds the Pearson Peace Medal to a list of other prestigious awards that include being made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2003, noted in his remarks that the award celebrates "a collaborative civil society that works with counterparts around the world to expand and support civic engagement," but the engagement "is not simply a matter of recasting convictions into lists of non-negotiable demands."

"To public debate . . . we bring a clear perspective, relevant information and experience, and empathy for the victims of injustice," he said. "The aim is . . . to help mould the compromises and shape the common ground that produce, not perfect, but more equitable solutions." ❧

RIDEAU HALL PHOTO BY SGT. SERGE GOUIN



Ernie Regehr, left, the cofounder of Project Ploughshares and a longtime peace advocate, holds the Pearson Peace Medal he received from Governor General David Johnston during a ceremony at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, Ont., on Jan. 21, while his wife Nancy looks on.

ANALYSIS

MCC revisioning loses connection with people in the pew

BY WILL BRAUN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Sixty-two executive directors, board chairs and senior staff from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and MCC member churches met for a summit in Akron, Pa., on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. The topic of this rare gathering was MCC's New Wineskins revisioning process.

Our leaders talked about four things:

- The proportion of MCC boards that must be made up of church conferences appointees (two-thirds).
- Collaborative Program Management for MCC U.S. and MCC Canada as they take over administration of international programming from MCC Binational.
- The shape of the Joint Ministry Council that will connect the newly expanded MCC Canada and MCC U.S. (a joint standing committee of the two boards).
- An affirmation of MCC's participation in the Global Anabaptist Service Network, an international group of service agencies working towards greater collaboration.

This partially comprehensible list raises a question: How has the \$850,000 Wineskins process—which included broad, accessible and participatory public consultations—narrowed to a process that is only intelligible to senior insiders?

The leaders I've spoken with say the internal re-organization that dominates the Wineskins process in these latter stages need not be of concern to people in the pew. Neither MCC supporters nor recipients of MCC assistance are likely to notice much change, they say, and few of the 2,000-plus people consulted were interested in restructuring. Perhaps that's okay; internal workings can be left to administrators.

But why the consultations then? What did the 2,000 people tell MCC and how is it reflected in the Wineskins outcomes?

I see three links between the consultations and outcomes:

• The first is renewed emphasis on MCC being accountable to overseas stakeholders, although this wasn't really new and it happened largely via a parallel MWC process.

• Second, people told MCC that its Anabaptist and faith roots are essential. As a result, MCC has strengthened ties with its member churches, or at least with administrators of those churches, like those at the summit. Most notably, they will have more control over MCC board appointments via the two-thirds quota.

• Third, Arli Klassen, MCC Binational director, says the re-organization is guided by values expressed in the consultations.

None of these examples show robust links between the grassroots consultations and Wineskins outcomes. The roughly \$400,000 spent on consultants—whose fees hardly fit the more-with-less category—does not seem to have yielded much.

The Wineskins process seems to have been prompted largely by a need to deal with serious internal tensions. Klassen says MCC was “being pulled apart,” and that within 10 years these tensions “could have had a very negative impact.” The agency's Canadian, American and Binational offices each had different planning frameworks and foundational statements, she says, and the trend was towards greater differences.

Member churches had concerns about whether MCC is, to use Klassen's words, “an agency of the church,” or “an agency made up of members from the church.”

Cross-border discord was another one of multiple dynamics at play. “These [national] differences shouldn't matter,” says Herman Bontrager, MCC Binational board chair, but the reality is that part of the Mennonite church is situated within a superpower. Resulting differences, he says, “get into our bone marrow.” Bontrager does not fault one side more than the other.

Klassen says the various national and other tensions have been dealt with. There will be a single MCC strategic plan, a single “brand” and a Joint Ministry Council to hold it together.

These are important developments. Internal matters require effort, and in an organization as exceptionally diverse as MCC, they will require considerable investment. Administrators involved in the process say the restructuring will better enable MCC to carry out its mission. They say the restructuring is very significant, even calling it “exciting.”

But why was a public consultation process awkwardly grafted onto the internal restructuring? What exactly does MCC have to show for the \$850,000 (including travel costs) it spent on Wineskins?

The public element of the Wineskins process could have energized the Mennonite community around the urgent needs facing humanity: ongoing disparity, environmental crises, polarization and violence. The consultations could have probed how we can overcome an energy addiction that harms the earth and the poor. They could have engaged us on the matter of conscientiously objecting to consumption of products that fuel resource wars. Our leaders could have held a summit to talk about new ways to apply the best of our faith traditions to the burning needs of the world.

Then, instead of only them being excited, people in the pews—most of whom have long since tuned out—could also have renewed energy for MCC. And perhaps by focusing on larger issues, some of the internal matters would have fallen into place more easily. ❧

Will Braun is a freelance writer and former MCC service worker. He lives in Winnipeg and can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com.

Peace is possible, rural church discovers

Emmaus Mennonite joins growing peace movement

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Emmaus Mennonite, a small congregation in the tiny town of Wymark, Sask., has joined the movement of encouraging peace in the province with a highway sign.

Members of Emmaus say they began considering the idea of erecting a peace billboard in 2008 after Pastor Ray Friesen, together with member Marvin Wiens, attended the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Winnipeg, Man. What the two men heard there lit a fire in their hearts and offered much food for thought.

It was difficult to get things moving at first. Both were busy with work and neither had a lot of time to devote to the project, which involved a lot of red tape. But they continued to work at it. The path to making their dream a reality put them in contact with the landowners where the sign was to go, the municipality, the Hamlet of Wymark, and the provincial highways department.

Getting all the documents signed wasn't the biggest hurdle they faced, Friesen says. The problems came with government parameters about the words on the sign. Initially the government told them that highway signs are not supposed to include a social message. It was felt the peace message fell into that category. The words on the sign say, "Imagine peace. It is possible."

After their request was turned down once, Friesen noticed other highway signs with social messages, including one inviting people to join a union. When he pointed this out in a second letter sent to their provincial Member of the Legislative Assembly, the highways minister and the premier, officials reconsidered.

Municipal permission was then required to erect the sign where the church wanted. That also meant that other signs could be

installed in the same area, but the landowners did not give permission for other signs to be erected on their land that

borders Highway 4. "The landowners only wanted the Emmaus sign [on their land]," observes the pastor.

The sign, which measures 2.5 metres by 5 metres, cost close to \$3,000 and was erected late last November.

Friesen readily admits that the decision to erect the sign holds an element of risk. "This now holds us accountable," he says.

One man in the community has apparently responded to the sign with anger, reportedly saying, "The only way to peace is to fight for it." ❧

SOUTHWEST BOOSTER PHOTO BY SCOTT ANDERSON



Members of Emmaus Mennonite Church are pictured with the new peace sign they erected near Wymark, Sask.

/// Briefly noted

Grebel alumnus wins binational public speaking contest

John Wray believes he knows what it will take for peace to rule in everyday life all over the world. Wray, a 2010 alumnus of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., articulated his conclusions in a speech that took first place in the 2010 C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest administered by Peace and Justice Ministries of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. His speech was entitled, "Seeing the human in the human." In his speech, Wray, of Kitchener, Ont., and now a student at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, N.S., identified actions that demonstrate for him a lack of seeing the human in the human. He told of a soldier quoted as saying that the person he shot and killed on the battlefield was "just an outline for me," rather than, as Wray said, "a human being who maybe liked poetry and maybe played soccer and maybe had a family." Jami Reimer of Brandon, Man., a student at Canadian Mennonite University, came third for her speech, "Gardeners of Eden: What Christian peacemaking means for God's creation."

—MCC U.S.



Wray

'Let the church do the work of the church'

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Last January, Marv, Brenda and Grace Friesen drove through snow and freezing rain across Quebec on their way to a six-month interim pastorate at the Petitcodiac Mennonite Church in New Brunswick. Marv had just finished a pastorate at the Welcome Inn Church in Hamilton, Ont., they had sold their house and, thanks to a friend's generosity, had stored their belongings in a trailer in the Niagara Region.

Fast-forward to last summer, when they opened the trailer in preparation for another move to State College, Pa., where Marv was to begin a pastorate at University

Mennonite Church.

Unknown to them or their friend in Niagara, the trailer was not entirely weatherproof. Water had seeped in, and significant water and mildew damage rendered upholstered furniture, mattresses and many personal belongings unusable. To make matters worse, they had no insurance coverage on their belongings.

Ross Penner, pastor of Vineland United Mennonite Church, where Marv had grown up, suggested that he contact MAX Canada for the Friesens under its Mutual Aid Ministries Program. Thinking there were people more needy than themselves, they were resistant at first, but became convinced when Penner told them to let "the church to do the work of the church."

Just a few weeks later they received word that MAX would be able to offset a significant amount of their costs. The rest was provided by the generous assistance of family, friends and Vineland United Mennonite.

"We are exceedingly grateful for the loving care and support experienced

during this somewhat challenging time," the Friesens write. "We are also very grateful for the assistance and support we have experienced from the broader church community through the MAX Mutual Aid Ministries Program. In retrospect, Ross was correct in encouraging us to allow 'the church to do the work of the church.' For the generosity expressed and shared within the broader church family, we give thanks to God." ❧

CIDA cuts to Kairos beginning to affect MCC

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent

The ramifications of a \$7.1 million cut in funding by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to Kairos, the Canadian ecumenical peace and justice organization that includes Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada as a member, are now starting to be felt by MCC a year after the fact.

While MCC has its own funding partnership with CIDA that it continues to receive, many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the Kairos umbrella that MCC partners with, "have had to curtail their work" as their funding from Kairos plummeted, Paul Heidebrecht, the director of the MCC Ottawa Office reports.

Kairos had applied for \$7.1 million from CIDA for the four-year period ending in 2013, but was rejected for the first time in their 35-year working relationship. Kairos had budgeted a portion of this funding for its 21 member agencies that do social and economic justice work all over the world as well as educational work in Canada.

The international programming of MCC has been affected by this cut to Kairos, since Kairos has had to slash its NGO support to about 10 percent of what it had originally given. Because MCC works in coalitions to be more effective, the limitations on its partners' work will indeed affect MCC's



Pastor Marv and Brenda Friesen and their daughter Grace are thankful for the care and support they received from family, friends, the people at Vineland United Mennonite Church and the broader church community through MAX Canada's Mutual Aid Ministries Program after many of their uninsured belongings were damaged while stored in a leaky trailer.

work, Heidebrecht says.

When MCC feels that a country's programs are being looked after by another partner adequately, it can turn its resources to another area of the world that requires more attention. The cuts will likely make this more difficult for MCC, according to Heidebrecht.

According to the Kairos website, "This decision, if it is not reversed, will have a devastating impact on the work and well-being of our partners overseas, the hundreds of marginalized communities and the thousands of people who have

benefited from their programs."

"There is a clearly problematic process here," Heidebrecht says. "It leaves everyone a little unsettled. . . . We are more concerned about the state of our [funding] relationship than we would have been otherwise."

Although Kairos has been blessed by increased amounts of financial support from individuals and groups, this won't be able to continue for much longer.

"We remain hopeful that Kairos's relationship with CIDA will be restored," Heidebrecht says. ☿

IVEP celebrates 60th anniversary of service

Expansion, technological innovation the wave of the future

By RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

A program that was originally established to bring about reconciliation between Europeans and Americans after World War II has gained momentum over the last six decades. The International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP), a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) project whose purpose is to connect the world's people and strengthen the global Anabaptist church, has helped 3,446 participants from 25 countries over the years come to North America to work and learn.

IVEPers from all backgrounds and walks of life live with host families in rural and urban communities in Canada and the U.S. They either work with an MCC project, such as restorative justice, or another organization that benefits the community, such as a daycare centre.

According to the IVEP Canada coordinator, Kathryn Deckert, one of the program's biggest accomplishments is connecting the world's people. For the first year ever, Quebec has participated in IVEP, and Deckert hopes that more West Africans can participate because of the French connections in the province.

Some IVEP host families have hosted IVEPers numerous times over the decades. Florence and Otto Driedger, who attend Peace Mennonite Church in Regina, Sask., are two such people who have hosted about 25 IVEPers over the past 30 or so years, and don't plan on stopping hosting more international visitors any time soon.

IVEP not only connects North American Mennonites with Christians around the world, but it also aims to connect participants with other cultures and belief



IVEPers attend a mid-year conference in Abbotsford, B.C., in 2006.

systems in their host country.

According to Hardy Groening, an IVEP service worker at MCC Manitoba, IVEP has been intentional to connect with MCC Manitoba's Aboriginal Neighbours Program and other similar organizations in the community. This is important because many IVEPers come to Canada not knowing that there are people from different ethnic backgrounds living here. "Their expectations are that most people in Winnipeg . . . are white. Their impressions of North America come from television and movies," Groening says. He gathers some aboriginal elders and IVEPers together, "so they can hear that side of the Canadian story as well," he says.

IVEP has also begun community-to-community connections, where the pastor of an IVEPer will connect through the Internet and preach a sermon to the IVEPer's host church.

"Those kinds of connections we're hoping to do more and more," Deckert says.

"Alumni talk about having their eyes opened to a new way of life, making them more intentional about living their own lives," Deckert says, adding, "Having their worldview expanded is something that benefits them throughout their lives." To that end, expanding IVEP to include more countries and offer more opportunities for participants to grow is important to MCC. ☿

MCC BINATIONAL FILE PHOTOS



IVEPer Hans-Juergen Janssen from Germany works on a farm in Laird, Sask., in 1964.

'An Act to Eliminate Poverty'

Waterloo Region poverty activists hear good news and a call to act

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

A number of Mennonites were among a crowd of about 60 people who gathered in Kitchener on Jan. 25 to hear Tony Martin, New Democrat MP for Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., describe his private member's bill, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada.

Expecting an election this spring, Martin believes his proposed legislation will die on the Order Paper before it is put to a vote, but that it will be resurrected much like MP Bill Siksay's legislation to establish a Canadian Department of Peace has been re-introduced. Kept general and somewhat vague, so as to not raise the ire of anyone, Martin's private member's bill does set as priorities income security, affordable

housing and social inclusion.

Since a number of provinces and territories have already moved in similar directions, Martin's bill is designed to bring governments and groups together to eliminate poverty across the country. He said the bill seeks to establish an independent Office of the Poverty Elimination Commissioner, and to set guidelines ensuring that all government legislation is "poverty-proof" by not adding to poverty creation.

The meeting ended with a strong push for citizens to get involved in the process, by letting their MPs—or federal candidates, in the event of an election—know where they stand on poverty in Canada.

Quoting the phrase, "Change the wind,"

by Martin Luther King Jr., who observed that a certain percentage of legislators were for or against any issue, but some made their decisions based on where the wind was blowing, in the hope of getting re-elected, Martin said legislators can be influenced by their constituents to vote for poverty elimination, especially with an election looming.

In response, Trudy Beaulne, executive director of the Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo, said that "financial imperatives are replacing social and moral imperatives" in how legislation is being framed and how people are being cared for or not.

The evening was organized by Poverty Free Waterloo Region, whose members include Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario. Greg deGroot-Maggetti, MCC Ontario's poverty advocate, chaired the evening and reported on several good news developments in the Waterloo Region. He announced that the City of Cambridge had endorsed the Poverty Free Waterloo declaration, supporting it at the Waterloo Regional Council, and Cheryl Ives of Opportunities Waterloo Region reported that the Community Services Committee of Waterloo Region had unanimously agreed to put the strategic plan for poverty into the 2011-14 budget planning process. ❧



Tony Martin, left, New Democrat MP for Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., describe his private member's bill, An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada, with Waterloo Region poverty advocate Brice Balmer.

Don't just hand out the Bible

Interfaith Grand River questions Gideon Bible distribution, supports more study of religion in class

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

It was no accident that Brice Balmer, a former pastor at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., was quoted

widely in the local media recently opposing the distribution of Gideon Bibles to Grade 5 students in the Waterloo Region District School Board schools whose parents had requested one. This was the second year that Interfaith Grand River, of which Balmer is a member, had raised the issue.

In 2009, the issue quickly came to look like Muslims were wanting the Bible out of the hands of the students, and significant opposition was expressed. The board approved the distribution by a vote of 9-2.

Late last year, the matter came up for another vote. This time, Balmer, Lutheran pastor Rick Pryce, and Bob Chodos, a Jewish lay leader, were chosen to speak to the public school board, rather than minority religious and cultural groups like the Muslims, Hindus and Bahá'í; they told the trustees that opposition to the Bible distribution comes from all faith groups belonging to Interfaith Grand River.

While the fact that the public schools are distributing the Gideon Bibles—which hopes to sway people to become Christians—is offensive to the interfaith group's members, they are all in favour of

the teaching and discussion of religions at all levels of school. In fact, they want more religion at school, not less. They want teaching of faith that supports students in their day-to-day lives explained so that children and adults will both come to respect, rather than fear, their neighbours from different religions and cultures.

Contrary to many people's fears, Balmer and others have found that their own faith has been deepened and enriched by dialogue with those of other religions. He says that his faith has become more "mystical," more experiential, rather than intellectual.

When the board again voted in favour of the distribution this year, by a vote of 6-4, it was explained that any religious group could do the same. The Kitchener Masjid began the process to distribute the Qur'an to students. When the story of the vote appeared in the print and online versions of the *Waterloo Region Record*, the newspaper "removed some offensive comments, in accordance with our online posting policy," editor-in-chief Lynn Haddrall told *Canadian Mennonite*. The Masjid

subsequently withdrew its request.

Balmer has had a variety of responses to his public comments. He has found that those who come from communities where the religious landscape is overwhelmingly Christian cannot understand where he is coming from, while many Mennonites from diverse religious communities like Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, have affirmed him. ☞

/// Staff changes

Longhurst new Canadian Foodgrains Bank director

WINNIPEG, MAN.—John Longhurst has been named the Canadian Foodgrains Bank's new director of resources and public engagement. He began leading the team responsible for communications, fundraising and public engagement in January. Previously, he worked as director of marketing and sales for Mennonite Publishing Network.
—Canadian Foodgrains Bank



Longhurst

/// Briefly noted

Oldest Canadian dies at 111

Elizabeth "Liese" Buhler died on Jan. 24 in Winkler, Man., at the age of 111. She was born on Feb. 8, 1899, in the Mennonite village of Grigorjewka, Naumenko, in South Russia, the second youngest of 12 children. On Sept. 7, 1924, she married Isaak Buhler. They immigrated to Canada in early 1925 and settled in Manitoba, where they farmed. The Buhlers had five daughters and a son. Three daughters—Lena, Mary and Justina—survive their mother. After she turned 105, Buhler speculated that God may have forgotten about her, having outlived many of her younger relatives.
—BY JAKE BUHLER



Buhler



Brice Balmer is pictured with Layla Bigelli of the Islamic Humanitarian Service. Both are members of Interfaith Grand River, which opposes the distribution of Gideon Bibles to Grade 5 students attending Waterloo Regions District School Board schools whose parents request one.

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1. *Canadian Mennonite* should be a primary source of information about Mennonite Church Canada.

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

2. Mennonite Church Canada is adequately represented in *Canadian Mennonite*.

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

3. *Canadian Mennonite* is my primary source of information about Mennonite Church Canada.

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

4. To which geographical area do you belong?

British Columbia Alberta Saskatchewan Manitoba Eastern Canada

5. My geographical area is adequately represented in *Canadian Mennonite*.

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

6. On average, how thoroughly do you read each issue?

cover to cover read items of interest glance through seldom look at it

7. On average, how much time do you spend reading *Canadian Mennonite*?

more than 2 hours 1-2 hours 30 min less than 15 min

8. *Canadian Mennonite* articles:

strike a good balance between criticism and promotion
 are too critical of Mennonite churches, agencies and institutions
 focus too much on the "good/positive" of issues/organizations/people

9. There is too much global/national news compared to local (congregational) news.

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

10. *Canadian Mennonite* is true to its mission of "providing a balance of Anabaptist perspectives in news and commentary."

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

11. There is a good balance between theological issues and practical, down-to-earth Christian living.

strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

12. Quality of magazine: Are the writing, graphics, photography, colour and length of stories appealing, the writing to high journalistic standards?

writing is professional: strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree
 good variety of content: strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree
 stories too long: strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree
 stories too short: strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree
 effective use of photos: strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree
 layout is appealing: strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

Continued on next page

13. What part of the *Canadian Mennonite* do you find yourself reading first?

- editorial letters columns feature article church news
 book/movie/music reviews calendar milestones classified ads

14. How often do you go to our website for updates/news/online version of *Canadian Mennonite*?

- daily weekly biweekly monthly occasionally never

15. The website is easy to navigate.

- strongly agree agree unsure disagree strongly disagree

16. For the sake of understanding the demographics of our readers, please indicate the following (optional if you feel uncomfortable):

How long have you been affiliated with the Mennonite faith?

- 10 years or less 10 to 50 years More than 50 years

How would you rate your commitment to biblical study and theology?

- strongly committed committed somewhat committed not committed

Age range:

- 15 to 25 26 to 40 41 to 65 over 65

Level of education:

- grade school high school technical or vocational school
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Range of household income:

- Under \$20,000 \$20,000 to \$40,000 \$41,000 to \$75,000 over \$75,000

17. What suggestions do you have to improve the magazine?

Thanks for your time. Please send this page to:

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GOD AT WORK IN US

ACROSS  GENERATIONS

Testimonies strengthen cross-generational bonds

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Relationships between youths and seniors within congregations are often strained, as neither group understands the other. Sometimes both groups are content not to know one another at all.

This was the case at North Kildonan Mennonite Church in Winnipeg prior to a bonding activity that the church's youth pastor devised. In-home testimony nights involve a group of five or six youths going to the home of a senior who signed up to participate. The youths listen to the senior's testimony and then chat about it, with some of the youths even feeling motivated to share their own testimonies.

This youth favourite has been occurring once a year for the past five or six years, although it is difficult to find senior volunteers to share with a group of youths. According to North Kildonan's youth pastor, Brian Wiebe, many seniors feel intimidated having a group of youths in their homes.



Brian Wiebe

Leonora Wiebe, on the other hand, loves to tell stories and thought that it couldn't be too difficult to share her faith story in front of a half-dozen youths. She has participated in the in-home testimony nights twice because she feels that it is a very important conversation to have.

"[At church] I get smiles from the youth that came to my house," Leonora says. "They used to acknowledge the seniors in the congregation, but they didn't really know us." And, she admits, "I didn't know the names of some of the youth that came to my house. I knew [their parents], but I didn't know who they were. After the in-home testimony night there was a recognition and a closeness."

"I do think it's a good idea for the seniors in the congregation to be open to what the youth are doing," she says. "We have some very strong traditionalists in our congregation, but we also have to be open to new



Leonora Wiebe

ideas."

This annual event is one that the youths hope continues, according to the youth pastor, who admits to being surprised by how much the youths enjoyed the in-home testimony nights and how much positive feedback he receives from them.

Not only does this intergenerational event bridge the gap between the generations, it also acts as a kind of mentorship that teaches the young people how to put their own faith story together, Brian says. "Many youth don't think they have a very interesting faith story to tell, but they do," he says. "They think that because they've never been a bad kid, they don't have a faith story."

Once they get past this, hearing about the faith story of people in the church can help them understand certain events in their lives as acts of God, he says. "That's what I'm hoping the youth will hear."

According to Leonora, after she shared her faith story, many of the youths volunteered to share parts of theirs. "Not only did it build up my faith, I think this experience also built up theirs," she says.

Adding to this multigenerational experience is the fact that many of the seniors and youths at North Kildonan have similar backgrounds, having their roots in either Russia or South America.

According to Leonora, when she told her story, many youths said, "Hey, that sounds an awful lot like the type of stories that my grandmother told me."

Those young people whose families hadn't shared these stories with them were impacted by the fact that a lot of the things they had read in books about the world wars were experienced first-hand by people within their congregation. Based on mutual understanding and sharing, the youths and seniors involved are able to build friendships, something that was much more difficult prior to the in-home testimony nights. ☺

NORTH KILDONAN MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



The youth group at North Kildonan Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., appreciates the in-home testimony nights with the church's seniors.

ARTBEAT



The boys choir combined with youths and men to form a 270-voice mass choir that performed 'A Thousand Hallelujahs' at the Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall on Jan. 23. The concert concluded with 'Arise!', a commissioned work by Larry Nickel.

A thousand hallelujahs

Faith and Life Male Choir celebrates more than 25 years of ministry

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

“For God is great and worth a thousand hallelujahs!” proclaims the psalmist (The Message).

On Jan. 23, a mass Faith and Life Male Choir united to celebrate more than 25 years of ministry and to proclaim this message with the psalmist.

Treacherous driving conditions and heavy snow did not deter more than 2,200 concertgoers who came to hear the “A Thousand Hallelujahs” concert at the Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall. A 24-voice boys choir, 53-voice youth choir and 190-voice male choir, which included the 34 men of the Faith and Life Male Choir, comprised the mass choir.

“The spirit and energy were astounding,” noted Darryl Neustaedter Barg, chair of the concert’s planning committee and associate director of media ministries for Mennonite Church Manitoba. “Many are saying this is the kind of significant community celebration we haven’t had for awhile.”

The Faith and Life Male Choir began in the mid-1980s under the organization of Victor Sawatsky, director of Faith and Life Communications for the then Conference of Mennonites of Manitoba, primarily to record songs for the conference’s radio ministry. However, it only took one occasion of singing at a Sunday morning worship service for the mission to expand to “leading

others into worship of God through singing,” recalled Henry Loewen, who has been with the choir since its beginning.

The choir has visited well over 100 congregations in North and South America and Europe. It has given concerts in such venues as the upscale Glinka Concert Hall in Zaporozhye, Ukraine, and a straw-strewn machine shed in Mexico.

“The festivals, both with mixed and

male choirs, such as the one today, have a long history in the Mennonite world,” said Loewen. “They can be found in the stories of our people wherever they made their home. In North America, the *Sangerfests* (Singers’ Festivals) were the forerunner of our concerts today.”

“A Thousand Hallelujahs” comes out of such a tradition. The choir members for the mass choir came from across Western Canada. This was the first festival that included boys and youths. The concert concluded with the commissioned work, “Arise!,” by Larry Nickel.

“We will be launching a few conversations with the choir executive to look at the future,” said Neustaedter Barg, noting, “The average age of choir members is not going down. Younger people don’t mind participating in the festival events, but will they continue to come if it stays the way it is?”

FILM REVIEW

Movie not true to Mennonite life

Small Town Murder Songs.

Written and directed by Ed Gass-Donnelly. Starring Jill Hennessy and Jackie Burroughs.

An STMS Film Inc. release, 2010.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

Small Town Murder Songs is an independently produced Canadian movie with a Mennonite connection, first shown at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival.

The story, set in what is supposedly a small Mennonite town in Ontario, deals with a local police chief who tries to solve a

distressing rape and murder case. The movie was filmed at Conestoga Lake, and in the rural areas around the towns of Listowel and Palmerston.

While it is refreshing to have a movie dealing with redemptive pacifism, the story is weakened by the fact that its Mennonite setting is not convincing. A horse and buggy

moving across the screen, and a few scenes of Old Colony Mennonite men standing around a pick-up truck speaking Low German are the only convincing Mennonite segments, but these traditional Mennonites live in rural areas separate from the world, and would hardly consider themselves part of a “Mennonite town.”

One scene involves an older woman who seems to be wearing a covering, but her mannerisms and expressions are as inauthentic as what she is wearing.

The music, by the band Bruce Peninsula, is harsh and loud, and seems out of step with a rural Mennonite landscape.

It is not at all clear whether the police chief considers himself Mennonite or not. Some of the scene titles—“Live in the world but not of it,” and, “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, offer the left also”—suggest he has a Mennonite theology, but I doubt that a rural Mennonite church would welcome a police chief as a member.

The movie suggests the chief has repented of his violence, but his womanizing doesn't seem to be an issue. When the chief talks to the deacon in the empty church, gazing at the cross on the wall, it may convey his spiritual struggle, but it is not a convincing Mennonite action.

Small Town Murder Songs has some lovely sunset shots over a rural skyline, but overall it is a very dark and shadowy film. Even the indoor shots have limited light, as though the town needs to ration its electricity.

While Mennonites can appreciate the theme of this movie—that violence is not the answer—the context, unfortunately, is not persuasive.

Small Town Murder Songs opened in Canada on Feb. 18. ❧



BOOK REVIEW

Biography examines a disciple's life

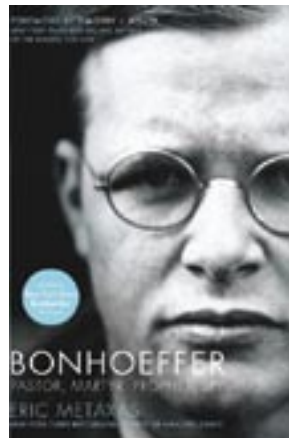
Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy.

By Eric Metaxas. Thomas Nelson, 2010, 591 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who spoke out against the Nazis, has been a controversial figure. Mennonites have valued him for his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, but many people don't know how to interpret his involvement in the plot to kill Hitler.

In this new biography of Bonhoeffer, Eric Metaxas presents him as a sincere



and courageous Christian who obeyed God's call without flinching, even to the point of death. Metaxas declares that Bonhoeffer's theology has been misunderstood and presents him as someone whose unswerving goal was to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously.

Bonhoeffer watched with dismay as the Nazis increased their power in

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Barb Draper is the Books & Resources editor for Canadian Mennonite and the author of *The Mennonites of St. Jacobs and Elmira*.

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Germany in the 1930s, especially as they began exerting influence over the church and its pastors. He challenged pastors and all German Lutherans not to be lulled into accepting an empty religion that blindly followed the government and did not take Christ seriously. He helped to organize pastors to stand against Nazi policies and assisted Jews to escape from Germany.

In 1939 Bonhoeffer travelled to New York, planning to teach theology there, but soon realized he had made a mistake and returned to Germany just before the outbreak of the war. During the war, he continued to teach theology covertly and also joined the German military intelligence as a chaplain, partly to protect himself from the Gestapo. Although Bonhoeffer was never personally involved in the various plots to kill Hitler, he was among the conspirators. Bonhoeffer spent a year-and-a-half in prison, although his involvement in the conspiracy had not been discovered. When details of the anti-Hitler scheme were uncovered, Bonhoeffer was promptly executed just weeks before the war ended.

Although this biography is fairly long, it is very readable. Metaxas uses many quotations from Bonhoeffer's vast correspondence, and presents him as a principled and likeable person who lived out his convictions. I recommend this book for anyone interested in what it means to live a life of faith.

However, every now and then the author uses over-the-top images that feel somewhat out of place. Phrase such as, "In time the bloodthirsty devils with whom they were playing patty-cake would strangle them with the guts of their quaint scruples," or the description of someone who "belched diabolical aphorisms of perfectly circular logic," seem just a little too dramatic. Perhaps this is the author's attempt to add a touch of humour to an otherwise serious study. ☺

Barb Draper is the Books & Resources editor for Canadian Mennonite and the author of The Mennonites of St. Jacobs and Elmira.

PHOTO BY RICHARD ALBRECHT



Kevin Coates, centre, reassembled The Interesting People for a benefit concert for Mennonite Central Committee's long-term development work in Haiti, held at Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., on Jan. 29. Upwards of 100 people attended the event, raising around \$4,500 for the cause. Other Interesting People members include, from left, bassist Steve Martin, drummer Andy Macpherson, guitarist Carter Lancaster and saxophonist/vocalist Don Featherstone.

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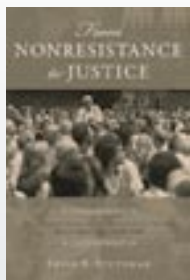
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Ervin Stutzman shows how the church moved over the past century from an emphasis on nonresistance and nonconformity to engage in advocacy for peace and justice. At the same time, Stutzman presses for a greater emphasis on the way that God's activity must guide our work in the world, arguing for a stronger link between God's grace, justice, and peace. Volume 46 in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series.

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Calendar

British Columbia

- April 8-10:** Junior youth "Impact" retreat, Camp Squeah.
- April 16-17:** Camp Squeah paddle-athon fundraiser.
- April 16,17:** Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir, 8 p.m. each evening: (16) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (17) Knox United Church, Vancouver. Free-will offering to Menno Simons Centre.
- April 23:** Columbia Bible College commencement.
- April 30:** MC B.C. women's inspirational day, Sherbrooke

Mennonite Church, Vancouver.

Alberta

- March 11-12:** MC Alberta annual general meeting, at Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton.
- May 14:** Camp Valaqua spring work day. Chop wood, clear trails, ready the facilities for campers. For more information, call 780-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

- March 5-6:** CMU "portable class" with Delmar Epp, at First Mennonite, Saskatoon.
- March 11-13:** CMU "portable class" with Titus Guenther, at Zion

Mennonite Church, Swift Current.

Topic: "Proclaiming Christ in a post-Christendom society."

March 18-19: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at Territorial Drive Alliance Church, North Battleford.

March 30: Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day, at Tiefengrund Mennonite, Laird. Theme: "God's gift through health issues."

April 5: Pastors gathering at Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham.

Manitoba

- March 4:** Bryan Moyer Suderman concert at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 8 p.m. Sponsored by MC Canada. Free admission. Donations to the Translation Project are welcome.
- March 11-13:** Peace It Together Conference returns to CMU after a yearlong sabbatical, featuring drama by Ted Swartz and keynote speakers Jarem Sawatsky, Dan Epp-Tiessen and Adelia Neufeld Wiens. For more information, e-mail info@cmu.ca.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Notice of the 2011 Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Annual Meeting

The 40th annual meeting of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS), the non-profit corporation that publishes Canadian Mennonite, will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 12, 2011, at Wildwood Mennonite Church, 1502 Acadia Dr., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

On the agenda are votes on board actions and financial statements for the past year, and elections to fill any open CMPS board positions. The meeting is public, but voting is limited to CMPS members (who are all those who donated at least \$25 in the past year), and all current board members (see names and nominating bodies on page 3). Members who are unable to be present may complete the proxy voting form below and mail it to Canadian Mennonite, 490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, On-tario N2L 6H7 before the meeting.

The annual report and audited financial statements will also be posted at Canadian Mennonite's website after the meeting.

Proxy Voting Form

As a member of CMPS, I hereby appoint:

_____ as my proxy to attend, act and vote on my behalf at the CMPS Annual Meeting on March 12, 2011.

Member's Name

Member's Address



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You Are Cordially Invited

To an evening out at the annual *Canadian Mennonite* Fundraiser Banquet at Wildwood Mennonite Church, 1502 Acadia Drive, Saskatoon, SK on **March 12, 2011** beginning at 6 pm.

Come for an evening of good food and entertainment. Cost of tickets is \$12.50. Tickets may be purchased at the door, but please reserve in advance by contacting board members Les Klassen Hamm at les@bitlink.ca or 1-306-955-2237, or Margaret Ewen Peters at 1-306-544-2633 or margary@yourlink.ca. Thank you.

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**

March 17: Verna Mae Janzen Music Scholarship performances, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7:30 p.m.

March 20: Mennonite Community Orchestra performs at the CMU chapel, at 3 p.m.

March 21: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising banquet at the Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m.

March 26,27: CMU 10th anniversary choral concerts featuring four CMU choral ensembles; (26) at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m.; (27) at Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 3 p.m.

April 2: MDS annual fundraising and awareness banquet, at Rhineland Pioneer Centre, Altona, at 6 p.m. The event will include project reporting and music, as well as the meal. For complimentary tickets, call 1-866-261-1274 or contact your local MDS representative.

April 4: Jazz at CMU, in the Great Hall, at 7:30 p.m.

April 16: CMU spring concert, at the Loewen Athletic Centre.

May 9-13: 2011 School of Writing at CMU.

UpComing

PHOTO BY FRED. W. MARTIN



*Last fall, students in the peace and conflict studies program at Conrad Grebel University College wrote and performed **Unwanted**, a play about the challenges of being a refugee claimant in Canada, for a 'peace in perilous times' course. The play has since been rewritten and will be performed on April 1 at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts in Kitchener, Ont., at 7:30 p.m., as a fundraiser for the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support. The students—including Katie Cowie, left, Jessica Reesor Rempel and Kimberlee Walker (and Michelle Van Russell, not pictured)—were partially inspired to explore the topic because of the federal government's proposed Bill C-49, which critics say discriminates against those refugee claimants who seek asylum in Canada after being smuggled into the country.*

CMU celebrating 10th anniversary with spring concerts

Choral music lovers and supporters of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) are invited to celebrate CMU's 10th anniversary at two spring concerts being held to commemorate the occasion. Westminster United Church, one of Winnipeg's heritage buildings, will host a concert on March 26, at 7:30 p.m. The second concert will be held in Gretna, at Mennonite Collegiate Institute's Buhler Hall, on March 27, at 3 p.m. Both events, based on the theme, "Hope, faith, life, love," will feature four CMU choral ensembles: the 40-voice CMU Singers, the 20-voice CMU Chamber Choir, the 50-voice CMU Women's Chorus, and the 30-voice CMU Men's Chorus—as well as various solo instrumentalists. In honour of the anniversary, renowned Ontario composer Jeff Enns was commissioned to write a special celebratory piece for the CMU Singers and Chamber Choir to perform together. "What Does the Lord Require of You?" is based on a Micah 6:8-themed text penned by California Mennonite writer/poet Jean Janzen. For more information about CMU's 10th anniversary spring concerts, visit cmu.ca/choralconcert.

—Canadian Mennonite University

Ontario

March 4-6: Mathematics and Faith: A Conversation, with Tim Rogalsky, CMU mathematics professor, at Erin Mills United Church and Erindale Secondary School; hosted by Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship.

March 5,6: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Chiaroscuro: Music for choir and two harps," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. (5), 3 p.m. (6). For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapochamberchoir.ca.

March 14, 15: Grandparent and Grandchild Days at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and Retreat Centre. Inter-generational fun and learning each day. For more information, visit hiddenacres.ca or call 519-625-8602.

March 18-19: Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg, hosts a communications workshop for engaged or newly married couples. For more information, contact Denise Bender at 519-656-2005 or denise_bender@yahoo.com.

March 25-27: Marriage Encounter weekend at King Hotel, Palmerston; begins 7:30 (25) to 4 p.m. (27). For more information, or to register, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667 or e-mail wmroth@rogers.com.

March 26: Menno Singers present "Choral Mystics," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 8 p.m.

April 2: Paul Heidebrecht, director of MCCC Ottawa Office will speak on

the topic, "Pacifist-friendly legislation in Canada: Can Bills C-390, C-440 and C-447 contribute to a more peaceful society?" at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall, at 3 p.m.

April 7: AMBS presents a public presentation, "Leading the church into God's future," by new president Sara Wenger Shenk, at Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, at 7 p.m. For more information, call Sherri Martin-Carman at 519-669-1005.

April 9: Pax Christi Chorale presents Verdi's "Requiem" at P.C. Ho Theatre, Scarborough, with guest conductor Norman Reintamm, the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony and the Peterborough Singers.

April 10: AMBS presents a public presentation, "Opportunities and challenges of theological education for the 21st century," by new president Sara Wenger Shenk, at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more information, call Sherri Martin-Carman at 519-669-1005.

April 10: Menno Singers joins with five other choirs to perform Ernest Bloch's "Sacred Service" in its original Hebrew, at Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto.

April 11: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale annual promotion dinner, at Bingemans, Kitchener, at 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker from MCC. Ticket available from the MCC Ontario office by phone at 519-745-8458.

April 16: Women of MC Eastern Canada Spring Enrichment Day, at Maple View Mennonite Church, Wellesley, from 10:15 a.m. to 3 p.m. Theme: "Leaping out in faith." Speaker: Susan Allison-Jones. To register, e-mail Florence Jantzi at jantzi@golden.net or call her at 519-669-4356.

April 17: Pax Christi Chorale presents Prayer for Peace and CD release of Great Canadian Hymns with guest conductor Ints Teterovskis, 3 p.m. Also featuring Pax Christi Youth Choir.

April 22: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents J.S. Bach's St. John Passion, at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

April 29-30: Milverton Mennonite Fellowship hosts a communications workshop for engaged or newly married couples. For more information, contact Denise Bender at 519-656-2005 or denise_bender@yahoo.com.

April 29-30: MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden.

May 7: Grand Philharmonic Chamber Choir presents "Springtime Choral Potpourri: Food and music cabaret," at the Delta Hotel, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

May 7, 2001: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "A World of Colour: Exploring and exploding the colour palette: tradition meets the present," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. Includes the premiere of a new commissioned piece by Gerard Yun. For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapochamberchoir.ca.

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.

Employment Opportunities

RECEPTIONIST

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is seeking a receptionist for its offices in Akron, Pa. This is a full-time service worker position. MCC provides housing, living expenses, full medical insurance plus a monthly stipend to service workers.

A job description is available at www.mcc.org/serve. Send resume and letter of interest to: Prem Dick at: psd@mcc.org or MCC Human Resources, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, or call 717-859-1151.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - MPN/THIRDWAY

Seeking a visionary leader with passion for a publishing and media ministry. Reporting to the binational board, and based in Harrisonburg, Va., the Executive Director will lead the integration of **Mennonite Publishing Network** and **Third Way Media** in the transition to a new multi-media agency providing Anabaptist formation and witness resources. Five years or more executive leadership experience and the willingness to regularly travel within North America. For further information, see www.mpn.net/about/openings.html or e-mail indication of interest to search@mpn.net.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S PASTOR (HALF-TIME)

Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church, a small, multi-generational Anabaptist congregation in the heart of Winnipeg's North End, is seeking a half-time Youth and Children's Pastor. Part of a two-person ministry team, this new position will develop and lead our ministry to our youth and children, and will participate in the broader ministry needs of the church. Activities will include planning and leading events, leading Christian formation and forming supportive relationships with our children, youth and their families.

If you are committed to the Christian faith and to Anabaptist teachings, have experience working with children and youth, and/or have theological education; if you have energy, creativity and want to serve the church; if you are interested in pastoral ministry and are committed to guiding youth and children on their faith journeys, then we want to hear from you.

For more information, visit the Aberdeen Church website at www.aberdeenemc.ca. Applications should be submitted in confidence to Charlotte Gesell at 204-417-8578 or thegesells@gmail.com.

Classifieds

For Rent

Bright, open-concept, renovated 1920's, three-bedroom **home for rent** beginning May 2011. Located within walking distance of Uptown Waterloo and Downtown Kitchener and is close to U of W and WLU. \$1100 per month plus utilities. Contact; kwhouseforrent@gmail.com.

Announcement

Parent Support Group: Announcing a bimonthly support group for Mennonite parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons in Southwestern Ontario. We provide confidential support, fellowship, resources and opportunities for dialogue in the Spirit of Christ. For more information please contact the following: rvfast@rogers.com, pmsnyderangel@rogers.com, or Roy and Mary Gascho, 519-742-1850.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
March 21	March 8
April 4	March 22
	<i>Focus on Summer Events and Travel</i>
April 18	April 5
	<i>Focus on Fair Trade</i>
May 2	April 19
	<i>Focus on Books & Resources</i>
May 16	May 3

Coming & going

PHOTO COURTESY OF BETTY WIEBE

Scott Mabee was installed as the new pastor of Erie View United Mennonite Church, Port Rowan, Ont., on Dec. 12, 2010. He is pictured with his wife Suzie. Al Rempel of Menmonite Church Eastern Canada was present for the installation and licensing service. Mabee, who is passionate about reaching out to hurting people, is from the local Brethren in Christ church, where he served as youth pastor. He has also worked as an auto mechanic and school bus driver. Mabee replaces Charles Byer, who retired after six years of ministry at Erie View.



MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO



After more than 40 years of ministry with aboriginal communities in Manitoba and across Canada, Edith and Neill von Gunten are retiring at the end of May. The co-directors of Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry say that living and working in aboriginal communities has resulted in close friendships and has shaped their approach to life. Although they are leaving their positions, they will stay connected with the people who have come to mean so much to them. "I'd do it all over again," Neill says, reflecting on the experience. "There were difficult times, but they were the learning and growing times. It was such a rewarding experience to learn from another culture, and in many ways I've become a part of that culture." Edith agrees. "We've learned so very much from all of the people we've lived and worked with," she says. The von Guntens plan to begin their retirement by completing a few projects around their home and enjoying the summer with their children and grandchildren. They will attend Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Waterloo, Ont., this summer.