

CANADIAN MANNONITE

May 16, 2011

Volume 15 Number 10

A group of five children are gathered around a hole they have dug into a red brick wall. A young girl in a pink shirt and plaid pants is using a small shovel to dig. Other children, including a boy in a blue and white striped shirt and another in a green and black striped shirt, are watching her. The ground around the hole is dirt and some blue paint is visible on the bricks.

Planting memories

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EDITORIAL

A political lament

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

As an American living and working in Canada, I am both intrigued and saddened by two political events of the past ten days in these two North American countries—the take-out of Osama bin Laden by the U.S. military and the take-over by a militaristic Conservative majority government in Monday's elections in Canada.

Both shake my Anabaptist moorings to the core. Frankly, I am groping for hope and a whole lot of healing in the days ahead. Both countries, bent on meeting violence head-on with guns and billion-dollar stealth fighter-bombers, keep plunging the world into a “cycle of hate” (Braun, p. 13)—a cycle of animosity that “must be broken.”

It seems as if our peace witness, our votes (hopefully) for candidates with a different agenda, have gone silent. With the prophet Isaiah we wonder how long it will be before Yahweh will “judge between the nations, arbitrate for many peoples—when they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.”

On the US side there seems to be an endless, ongoing obsession with the bin Laden killing, provoking a host of reactions—celebration, triumph, relief, closure and renewed grief. On the down side, it has triggered an ugly renewal of the torture debate, the apologists for which the *New York Times* says are both “cynical and disturbing.” It calls torture, as the Bush administration administered it, “immoral, illegal and counterproductive.”

Spokespersons for the political right in the US couldn't contain their glee over the killing of bin Laden. Sarah Palin said Americans were “united in celebration” and Mike Huckabee, celebrating the death of a madman, murderer and terrorist, “welcomed bin Laden to hell,” as if he has jurisdiction over that torture chamber for the wicked.

On the Canadian side, the problem of increasing militarism as a strategy for national security is even more endemic. The now firmly entrenched Harper government, often described as a divide-and-conquer regime, may well dominate the country's direction for more than a decade, according to *Globe and Mail* columnist Lawrence Martin.

Not only is Harper committed to the purchase of 65 F-35 stealth bombers at an estimated cost of \$30 billion (working out to as high as \$1,000 for every man, woman and child in Canada), he has, in the words of writer Marci McDonald “aligned himself with the wing of the Jewish community that holds the most uncompromising views on the Middle East peace process.”

That alignment came very close home to Mennonites in our work with Kairos, when as their partner through Mennonite Central Committee, we suffered a \$7 million “defunding” by CIDA (Canada International Development Agency) ostensibly for its “boycott and divestment campaigns against Israel—a move equated with anti-Semitism”—a

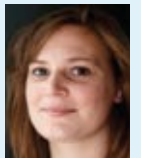
charge that was later found to be baseless.

Not only are these political strategies of stepped-up security and balance of power in the Middle East where an “Arab spring” is sweeping across dictator-controlled countries, out of touch, they have not proven effective over the long haul. Bin Laden, without stealth bombers or drones, it was noted by *Washington Post* columnist Ezra Klein, was very effective “in nearly bankrupting the U.S. economy” with his 9/11 attack.

But more fundamentally, it is wrong. It doesn't see the world with God's eyes, as David Steven, a pastor writing on *The Mennonite's* website noted: “When Al-Qaeda and those like them enter another country and kill people we call it ‘terrorism.’ When the U.S. military and intelligence personnel and those of our allies enter another country and kill people, we call it ‘justice.’ I wonder if God sees it that way.”

Student Intern to develop CM youth section, website

Emily Loewen, studying for her master's of journalism degree at Ryerson University, Toronto, begins today, May 16, as *Canadian Mennonite's* student intern. She will develop a youth section for the bi-weekly publication which references an interactive link on the magazine's website, featuring news, issues and topics that engages high-school and university-age Mennonites. She will work out of the Waterloo office as a team member of the CM staff. From Langley, B.C., she is a 2009 graduate of Canadian Mennonite University and last year was a summer intern in Mennonite Central Committee's United Nations Liaison Office compiling research on international issues, attending UN meetings and monitoring news from conflict zones.



ABOUT THE COVER:

During the 100th anniversary services at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, Ont., last month, Sunday school children prepare to bury a time capsule that will be opened in 25 years. See story and more photos on page 19.

PHOTO: LAVERNA REIMER, DANFORTH MENNONITE CHURCH

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Guiding values:

-Hebrews 10:23-25

-Accuracy, fairness, balance

-Editorial freedom

-Seeking and speaking the truth in love

-Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

-Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



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Art can be a powerful tool to advance the mission of the church, says **Deborah Froese**. Highlighting the work of **Ray Dirks** and the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, she describes how art can be beneficial to worship God, to express emotion, and to bring people together.

Aiming at evil 13

The death of Bin Laden is a time for soul searching says **Will Braun**. He reflects on various reactions to this event.

'I'll take it from here'—Metzger 15

Willard Metzger, general secretary of MC Canada, told MCEC delegates that the Holy Spirit is telling the churches to trust in God, saying, 'I'll take it from here.' Six other people also addressed the delegates with 'letters' for the churches of today.



Eanes to head MennoMedia 18

Russ Eanes will become executive director of MennoMedia, a new agency formed by merging Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media.

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AIDEN ENNS

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Changes occurred in biblical text: **BRUCE NOLAN**
Canadian farmers donate 19,523 tonnes of grain: **EMILY CAIN**
Fuel for extremism is beyond Bin Laden: **BONNIE LOFTON**

Art

with a mission

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada



From West Kildonan Collegiate



From Saint John Brebeuf School

While some creative arts like prose and hymnody have been accepted as natural forms of expression and worship in Mennonite churches, visual arts are often viewed with less certainty. For painters, sculptors and other artists who craft for the eye, this can be disheartening.

Sashira Gafic, artist, teacher and a member of First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg points out that we are made in the image of God our Creator, and as such God intends us to be creative in a variety of ways. She expresses concern that some people consider visual art a novelty rather than a tool for faith expression.

“We’re missing a whole other way of thinking about God and using the gifts that God has given us to praise him,” she notes. “We are created in God’s image and given this ability to create and we don’t use that gift visually, sculpturally, in media.”

Bev Patkau agrees. The quilt artist from Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary designs seasonal displays for her congregation and helped organize an art exhibit for Mennonite Church Canada’s Assembly in Calgary 2010, contributing some of her own creations. In an interview at the exhibit, she said that visual art offers another venue to draw worshippers into a deeper, more prayerful connection with God.

“I think it nourishes the soul. I see it the same as walking through beautiful scenery outdoors and when we go inside, why do we have to stop seeing beauty?”

In the preface to her book *The Substance of Things Seen* Robin M. Jensen refers to the importance art and the Christian community hold for each other. Jensen, a Professor of History of Christian Art and Worship at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville writes; “But even though the Christian community needs artists, the two worlds of church and art find themselves mutually wary, sometimes even hostile, often with little



Sashira Gafic: Day 1. Acrylic on Canvas. This is the first of a series of seven pieces inspired by Genesis 1:1-5.



Painting by adult EAL student depicting the murder of her husband. The artist broke into song as she painted and was joined by others. Soon, singing became weeping as they mourned together.

understanding or appreciation of one another. The church worries that art will go ‘too far’ and draw attention to itself rather than lead the faithful to God. The artists fear that the church will direct or limit their imagination and judge, censor or abuse their creativity.” (Eerdmans Publishing, p ix)

Despite this tenuous relationship, some artists have found creative ways to express missional faith through their craft. Ray Dirks, curator of Mennonite Church Canada’s Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery (MHC Gallery), is a gifted artist who leads workshops with artists of other cultures and faiths to promote acceptance through a common desire for human dignity. His work builds connections between individuals and enhances relationships with other faith groups.

In the Spirit of Humanity

Sometimes the art is accomplished but more often than not it appears child-like and innocent, at least at first glance. Simple brush strokes and bold primary colours flow across canvas or paper to create familiar subjects. Flowers. World flags. Kites. People. Yards and

houses. The earth, from an outer-space perspective.

But in some paintings a closer inspection reveals more: a pretty house and yard are blotted with spots of red; a car driving along the road is actually a military vehicle with prisoners inside; the prisoners are ordinary people. A seemingly innocuous row of city buildings towers over a machine-gun spraying bullets.

Not all of the images are despairing. In one depiction of earth-from-space, a black hand and a white hand reach across the foreground to clasp each other tightly in a clear display of unity. In another painting, red flowers bloom across a green meadow and entwine a tree trunk. The artist of that piece describes it as a metaphor for life and the way we must all grow together.

Each of these works were inspired by *In the Spirit of Humanity*, a MHC Gallery project supported by the Winnipeg Foundation, Welcoming Communities Manitoba and Manitoba Education. The project was designed to encourage sharing, respect and acceptance of one another across cultural and faith differences.

In the Spirit of Humanity brings Dirks with his friends, Hindu artist Manju Lodha and Muslim artist Isam Aboud, into school classrooms and English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL) settings across Manitoba. The artists share stories about their relationship, their individual life experiences and their art. These visibly distinct people with vastly different roots use heartfelt words, music and a PowerPoint presentation to open up about themselves in a deeply personal way and then encourage students to reciprocate on canvas or paper.

“The three of us come from three different places but we all want peace and to work together,” says Lodha to a class of Grade 8 students at H.C. Avery Middle School in Winnipeg. “Together we are so much more than we are apart.”

Roots

Lodha was born and raised in Jaipur, India but has lived in Canada with her husband for 38 years, longer than she was in India. While she is proud to be Canadian, she still connects strongly with her roots. The unique mix of experiences that shaped her find their way into

her paintings and poetry. An exhibit of her works at the MHC Gallery in 2007 helped her find a way to connect with the world through art.

About met Dirks in 1998 as a refugee from Sudan living in Nairobi when he participated in a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored Sudanese Muslim art exhibit Dirks organized. When

About immigrated to Canada in 2004 with his wife, he landed in Winnipeg and reconnected with Dirks over the telephone.

For anyone who may feel slightly cocky about not being different, Dirks levels the playing field. "If you are not First Nations, your roots are somewhere else." Although Ray is a second-generation Canadian, he

traces his own roots back from Russia to Holland. "I always compare my family story with Isam's and say that, in many ways, they are the same—both stories of refugees coming to Canada. They just happened at different times."

After their presentation, Lodha and About start new paintings and invite students to come and watch. They take

Art that speaks volumes

The success of *In the Spirit of Humanity*, a series of art workshops encouraging acceptance of others across cultures and faith groups, prompted Mennonite Church Canada's Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery curator Ray Dirks and fellow artists Manju Lodha and Isam About to share the experience.

They have completed a DVD about the project and are currently developing a book of the art created by participants, who come from schools across Manitoba and English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL) classes. Comments from the artists about their work will also be included.

Pat Harrison has followed *In the Spirit of Humanity* closely. As the Social Studies Consultant for in the Winnipeg School Division where many of the workshops have taken place, her job is to find ways of inspiring empathy and understanding in students, and to encourage active involvement in human rights issues. Harrison admits that she cried when she first saw the DVD summarizing the project.

"It's phenomenal," she reflects in a telephone interview. "There are no other words I have for it. I know exactly what a lot of those kids are going through...I would love to see this in every classroom in this province. I'd like to see it happen across Canada and wherever in the world it needs to be seen."

The DVD features an original song with lyrics by Lodha and music by Dirks' daughter, Alexa Dirks of the Juno Award-winning group, Chic Gamine. The book and DVD will be distributed to all schools and EAL classrooms throughout Manitoba. A few extra volumes will be printed for possible sale. Funding for printing and production was provided by The Winnipeg Foundation, Welcoming Communities Manitoba/Manitoba Heritage, Culture and Tourism, and the Blennerhassett Family Foundation, among others. It is endorsed by the Manitoba Association for Multicultural Education.

In the Spirit of Humanity

by Manju Lodha with Alexa Dirks

From all over the world we come to Canada
We come together
Making it our home
On this beautiful land we come all together
Of many cultures, colours and faiths all our own

In the spirit of humanity
It isn't all about you
It isn't all about me

Finding a value in everyone
There are many ways to show where we come from
We communicate it over a thousand tongues
And with art we can speak them together all at once

In the spirit of humanity
It isn't all about you
It isn't all about me

Respecting others and ourselves
We are a land of freedom
Coming together from beyond
the boundaries of where we come from
Learning from each other about beliefs and culture and
land of origin

Living peacefully together here in Canada
Along with our First Nations making it also our land
and their land and my land and your land and their
land
and our land and my land and your land our land.

In the spirit of humanity
It isn't all about you
It is not all about me

Oh in the spirit of humanity
It isn't all about you
It isn't all about me

time, as does Dirks, to mingle with the students who are pouring reflections of their own onto canvas.

Some paintings make obvious inferences, like Philippine flags of which there are several, or an eagle, an important symbol in Aboriginal communities. Some are more ambiguous, depicting music notes, or a sunset, or an open door

glowing yellow on a background of grey. A few of the young artists are happy to share the stories behind their paintings while others are more reserved. But even for those who aren't ready to discuss their work, the physical act of painting gives them an opportunity to consider the importance of their experiences and individuality.

For the betterment of all

"The world used to be out there, but the world is now our neighbour," Dirks says later during an interview at the gallery. He sits behind a desk piled high with art magazines and books. His desk is nestled behind a large number of crates; an art exhibit packed and ready to travel.

"As Christians we should know our

Creative connections

Like many pastors, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, who co-pastors First Mennonite Church in Edmonton with her husband Tim, enjoys creating space for creative gifts to flourish. "It's totally selfish. I love working with people like that," she says in a telephone interview. Her enthusiasm is evident in her voice.

In the fall of 2010, Wiebe-Neufeld found a unique way to bring visual art into worship with a project entitled Snake Girl vs. Bunny Girl and the help of Glenna Schowalter, a 16-year-old Grade 11 student.

Busy with stage preparations for an upcoming presentation of *Les Misérables* at school, Schowalter wasn't available for a telephone interview but responded enthusiastically to a few email questions about her experience.

"Donita has approached me a few times about doing a children's story. My first ones were skits, the very first one being a puppet show that Donita and I collaborated on. Snake Girl vs. Bunny Girl was not originally intended to incorporate art. It was going to be a dramatic skit...based around communication and settled on a premise of twin girls fighting over which pet they wanted to buy. Donita wrote 'Snake Girl vs. Bunny Girl' in her notebook and I pointed out that it sounded like a graphic novel. Jokingly, I followed this up with 'I could totally draw that.' The idea took off from there."

With colourful, expressive illustrations and some shrewd insights into human behaviour "Snake Girl vs. Bunny Girl" made the big screen in three consecutive worship services. Since then, it has been made available to the congregation in booklet form.

"The response was hugely positive," Schowalter writes. "The kids enjoyed themselves and I had several adults

find me after the service and congratulate and/or commend me."

And that, Wiebe-Neufeld points out, is an added bonus. "Involving others in worship this way builds bridges within the congregation...People who have maybe never talked to Glenna before will come up and talk about what she did...It ties people across generations in a really neat way."

Wiebe-Neufeld is keenly aware of the challenges artists face if their particular gifting doesn't accommodate traditionally accepted worship expressions. "My brother-in-law is a talented folk musician and the only place he can be supported is in the bars...How can we draw people in whatever their gifting and support them through the church?" Wiebe-Neufeld muses. "In our congregation we really do try to find where people fit and use their gifts."

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld is a Mennonite Church Canada General Board Member-at-Large and the Alberta correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.



neighbours and celebrate them...stereotypes are wrong or misplaced." He explains that for acceptance to occur, people must be proud of who they are and where they come from.

"In schools, it's amazing the effect it has on kids. Others shouldn't be allowed to mock you or bully you. It is for the betterment of us all if we get to know and accept each other."

Across from Dirks, Lodha warms up a variety of East Indian dishes for a lunch she intends to share with us, filling the air with scintillating aromas.

"Be proud of who you are and of your heritage," she says. A country that accepts people for who they are will find strong supporters in those people. She sum-

Dirks, Lodha and Aboud are finding ways to use the visceral, universal language of art to convey a strong, clear message about unity in diversity.

marizes the philosophy of In the Spirit of Humanity; "We can all teach, we can all learn. If we take that attitude we can't help but be a better country."

Lodha admits that it was difficult finding her place in Canada on her own. "But like a rope, with the others there is more opportunity, more strength because we are intertwined." The pair have numerous stories to share from workshops, including one about a young boy who chatted enthusiastically with Dirks for some time after the session was over. The boy's teacher approached Dirks later, marveling at the child's sudden outspokenness. She pointed out that the boy who never talked was now laughing and playing with other children in the classroom.

Lodha shares a reaction to a photo of dried eels and caterpillars, considered food in some communities. Students were asked if anyone had eaten these foods before. A Congolese girl enthusiastically responded, "Yes, I eat caterpillars. And they're good." In the Spirit of Humanity stresses the idea that customs like these are not right or wrong; they are simply different.

In one EAL class, an older Somali woman sang as she took brush to canvas for the first time in her life. Others joined

in. As painful experiences from the past emerged around the room, the voices singing together began weeping together. The older woman painted memories of the day her husband was killed in front of her, while another Somali woman created images in memory of her husband and children who had died before she came to Canada as a refugee.

"The teacher later said she'd never seen this kind of reaction before," Dirks recalls. "She said, 'We spent so much time trying to help them blend in without saying we want to get to know you.'"

Dirks was so moved by the singing that he invited the women to sing at the opening of an exhibit of student art for In the Spirit of Humanity at the MHC Gallery—

and they agreed. In yet another EAL class a woman from Bosnia painted the murder of her husband. When the trio of artists returned the next day to work with another group, the woman also returned. Why did she come back?

"I like very much," she told Dirks. That day she painted flowers. It didn't mean that everything was suddenly resolved, Dirks admits, but it demonstrated the



Ray Dirks, curator of the MHC Gallery, stands behind Muslim artist Isam Aboud (left) and Hindu artist Manju Lodha (right). Photo courtesy of Ray Dirks.

power art can have as therapy and the impact the trio of visibly different artists could have by celebrating the intrinsic value of others.

"The instant we walk into a school, the fact that we treat each other with respect serves as an example. It's great that we've come together." By coming together, Dirks, Lodha and Aboud are finding ways to use the visceral, universal language of art to convey a strong, clear message about unity in diversity. They are using art in a way that defies traditional perspectives by engaging in a timeless mission. ❧

*See more art at www.canadianmennonite.org/art-with-mission
Images of art used by permission of the artist and/or the MHC Gallery.*

❧ For discussion

1. What emotional responses have you experienced in the presence of creative art? Is something creative always good? When should art be evaluated? Does censorship abuse creativity?
2. How does your congregation use art in worship? Do you agree that we need more creativity and visual art in worship? How might your congregation encourage its members to express themselves artistically? Would art workshops like those described in the feature story be beneficial to your community?
3. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld refers to a relative whose folk music fits better in bars than in worship. How could the church better use the gifts that have not traditionally been used in worship? Are there kinds of artistic expression that definitely do not belong in worship?
4. Sometimes a visual symbol, drawing or artwork can express an idea much better than words. What examples can you think of? Do you agree that we have valued verbal over visual expressions? Is our culture changing in this regard? What visual/verbal balance should the church be aiming for?

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.

/// Correction

Loren Swartzendruber was appointed to a third term as president of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. Incorrect information appeared in the headline to the article on page 20 of the April 18 issue. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

✉ Prayer needed as MC Canada prepares to downsize

RE: “‘THE SIGNS are clear’: MC Canada leadership discerns a smaller church system,” April 4, page 18.

While the factors feeding into this crisis are complex, I believe much of it has to do with how the

FROM OUR LEADERS

Finding pastors in your backyard

BY GARRY JANZEN

Finding a good fit in a pastor is not an easy thing. Meeting a congregation’s present reality and hopes for the future is a daunting task for a search committee—given that we give the job to ordinary people, doing ordinary jobs. Granted, they love the church and are deeply committed to the life and health of the future church, plus they have the ever-present young person on the search committee who represents the future (but doesn’t have a clue as to why he or she said yes when asked.)

Thankfully there are lots of places to advertise, and each Area Church Minister has access to a list of people who have said they would like to pastor somewhere within half an hour of Winnipeg. Okay, lots of these potential candidates are more open than that. But have we looked in our backyard lately?

It was only a couple of generations ago when we expected that our pastors would be raised up from within the fellowship

of our congregation. And, back then, the bonus was that we would just call them, they would keep their day job, and we would find ways to say thank you throughout the year.



God began to reveal a candidate right near at hand

In the last few years in Mennonite Church BC, we have found ways to call people from our backyard and pay them too! Some are full-time, while others are in varying measures of part-time. In each case, full effort was given to looking in all the available places, but in the process, God began to reveal a candidate right near at hand, who ultimately became the one to fulfill the calling.

In February of this year, First Mennonite Church in Kelowna called Kevin Barkowsky to be their lead pastor. I introduced him to the chair of the congregation more than a year ago as a

friend in Kelowna who had previously pastored, gone back to his former employment, but was open to re-engaging pastoral ministry. They courted each other for that year. It was one of the most serious discernment processes I have seen—ending with a joyous commitment to the marriage.

On May 1, Rob Wiebe was installed as pastor of Church of the Way in Granisle. Rob attempted pastoral ministry just out of Bible School, years ago, and it did not go well. He has had many years of volunteering and developing his ministry gifts in his home church, First Mennonite

Church Burns Lake (which is an hour down the road from Granisle). The Church of the Way people love him and he loves them, so after an eight month courtship, they too made the marriage official. They went the full route of a proper search, but soon it became clear that this was Rob’s time to re-enter the pastoral ministry. It was time for Church of the Way to extend the call.

Look hard—far and wide—but keep your eyes open to your backyard.

Garry Janzen is executive minister of Mennonite Church British Columbia.

whole national church sees itself and “what we can do together that we can’t do on our own.”

I recently spent a year in Winnipeg, Man., studying and occasionally visiting churches in support of our church-planting ministry in Macau as an MC Canada Witness worker. During that year, I had cause to frequent Mennonite Church Canada offices. These visits convinced me that our national church staff is not superfluous. In fact, they are already stretched in

their various capacities of serving the national church, yet they do it with joy.

This is why I stood up at the 2010 MC Canada assembly in Calgary, Alta., to express this point. I believe what they do is very important, even though much that they do may be “behind the scenes.” I realize that just expressing this likely will not increase understanding of what the national church does, or support for it. There has been a downward trend in giving to the

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Capitulate no more

BY PHIL WAGLER

Capitulation is tantalizing. Tucking our tails is tempting. This is why stories of the persevering human spirit are so inspirational. Those who overcome the black hole of capitulation surprise us by their tenacity. Mark Twain, with whimsical honesty, captures our capitulating nature: “Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I’ve done it a thousand times.” This “giving up” is so easy to do. Long-suffering is in short supply. Given the opportunity or faced with trial, we will retreat. The magnetic pull toward desertion is strong—even logical. Just ask Judas.

The church has always wrestled with what to do with those who give up. The third century Novatianist controversy raged over what to do with baptized believers who offered pagan sacrifices when faced with persecution. Anabaptists suffered because they were deemed traitors in the sixteenth century European milieu. These same Anabaptists then had to figure out what to do with their own who surrendered to capitulation. Desertion is such a kick in the gut that human beings always need to do something about it.

Apart from the Holy Spirit—whom Jesus said would empower disciples in the hour of testing—we will throw in the towel. The Spirit gives strength to stand when our knees knock. However, we can wrongly think we’re standing firm when

relying solely on human wisdom and self-justifying religiosity. Capitulation is disastrous, but capitulation that speaks with a forked tongue is insidious.

Believers are called to long-suffering faithfulness rooted in this Good News: Jesus Christ came as God in human flesh. He suffered and died because sin demanded payment and he would not give up despite his very human desire to do so. He was buried, seemingly capitulating to



Scripture saves some of its harshest words, not for external persecutors, but the internal false teacher

those who would not give up their cultural and religious thrones, but he rose from the dead and lives today as Deliverer, Saviour and Lord of a new Kingdom that is on a mission of love and transformation in a treasonous world. Everything Christians are to be about is sourced in this just and loving act of God on our behalf. Jude urges us to contend for this faith, despite those who would appeal to our human tendency to give up (Jude 3-4).

The pressure on the church to capitulate comes in two forms: First, from cultural forces that see the cross as foolishness. Second, from religious forces that look at the cross as a stumbling block (1 Corinthians 1:23). This second pressure is the most dangerous. External pressure tends to galvanize zeal. To build upon

Twain’s metaphor, a diagnosis of cancer can often muster up the nerve to finally give up smoking. Conversely, the internal craving for a smoke can actually trump the confessed risks of inhaling poison. Likewise, the internal pressure to redefine or stumble over the uniqueness of Christ and his cross of judgment and grace is much more destructive because it normalizes and even rewards capitulation. Ever wondered why Scripture saves some of its harshest words, not for external persecutors, but the internal false teacher?

So, does the church take capitulation seriously? How do we—even against the clear teaching of The Book—minimize and even glamorize false teaching? It is easy to do. It sells and feels good. It keeps

the peace. It is philosophically sexy. It avoids the risks of making the mistakes of the past, all the while making the greatest mistake of all. To deny the Gospel of a loving and just God made flesh, crucified because of sin, and risen from the dead as Victor and Lord of all is to capitulate either to cultural trending or religious self-justification. And, this giving up becomes another sad footnote in the annals of church history littered with tales of regrettable capitulation.

Phil Wagler is married to an amazing woman named Jen, parent to five, and a pastor with those learning not to capitulate. He is author of Kingdom Culture: Growing the Missional Church (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).

national church in the last few years, and we trust God as the board and executive seek God for a way through this.

We will continue to do what we can to report and inspire, but know that our prayers must accompany that, too. We will be praying for the General Board and executive as discussions and discernment continue.

TOBIA VEITH, MACAU, CHINA

✉ Heavy hitter assigned?

IT APPEARS MCC has decided to send out the heavy hitters in the game for the constituency's heart. To borrow a quote from William Shakespeare, "MCC doth protest too much, methinks."

BARRY HEINRICHS, WINNIPEG MAN.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Seven gestures of contemplation

BY AIDEN ENNS

I find hope as I tend to my mystical side. As a youth growing up in church, I did this through prayer. But, in spite of my earnestness, it often felt formulaic and contrived.

In my journey since then, I've been through a desert of no prayer and drab contact with God. I've been through a hall of mirrors where every appeal to the divine seemed only a flat reflection of myself. Now I'm in a foreign land where language fails me: I trust it is possible to interact with God, but I do so through posture and gestures.

In a recent issue of *Geez*, where I serve as editor, we focussed on the inner work needed for outer change. Associate editor Bre Woligroski wrote a little booklet (the size of a business card!) to go with that issue called, *A Beginner's Journey into Contemplation*.

I'd like to reflect here on seven things she suggests we do to invigorate a life of prayer:

1. Breathe. When I'm full of anxiety, I often recall the platitude, "Just live in the moment," which echoes Jesus' admonition to not worry about tomorrow. That's fine advice, but *how do you do this?* A simple guide can be our breath. As we sit still, close our eyes and "watch" our breath come and go, we are able to set aside, or sit beneath, the flurry of

thoughts and emotions that normally cause anxiety. This quietness can become a place of conversation with God or a time to simply dwell in the presence of Life Itself.

2. Slow down. In his classic Christian text, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster names "hurry" as the a major adversary to the spiritual life. Often I want to get several things done at once. But

As I notice the ordinary, I appreciate the transcendent dimension



when I resist the temptation of distraction, allow myself to slow down, accept the feeling of being less productive, I enter a more contemplative space.

3. Notice. I'm come to realize that, really, all we have is everyday ordinary things. As I notice the ordinary, I appreciate the transcendent dimension. Our culture of spectacle will have us believe otherwise: that the exceptional is amazing. That's a lure away from the fullness of emptiness, or the splendour of ordinariness. "The transcendent is disclosed in what is wonderfully familiar: bread, wine, fire, ash, earth, water, oil, tears, seeds, songs, feasting and fastings," says Gertrude Mueller Nelson in her book, *To Dance with God: Family, Ritual and Community Celebration*.

4. Write. To keep a journal—to write

down thoughts, feelings, observations and insights—is to pause, acknowledge and nurture that which happens within us. This is not an essential practice, but it can be very helpful. It's better to notice more, judge less.

5. Pray. Be mindful of something more than yourself. "Dwell in confidence. Trust in the divine," writes Woligroski. In his book, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*, Richard Rohr assures us that words are secondary, "Prayer lives in a spacious place. It is free of personal needs or meanings or even interpretations."

6. Make. The simple act of creating—it could be making a meal, a postcard, a table or a sock—is an offering to the world. The process of making something

can lift the soul; creativity is the midwife of joy; it also reflects the Spirit of creation.

7. Rest. For us Mennonites, this feels like a sin. To do nothing feels irresponsible, unproductive and wasteful. Yet this is the great insight of the sabbath principle: when we stop and force ourselves to rest, we discover a priority higher than productivity. We acknowledge our dependence on God, or the forces beyond our control. Harmony can be restored when we allow ourselves—even oblige ourselves—the time to rest.

Aiden Enns is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and the editor of Geez magazine. He can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.

/// Milestones

May 16, 2011

Births/Adoptions

Busa—Benjamin Michael (b. April 4, 2011), to Dean and Michelle Busa, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Cressman—Elizabeth Joy (b. April 27, 2011), to Andrew and Melissa Cressman, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Graves—Bree Joy (b. April 27, 2011), to Andrew and Virginia Graves, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Kelterborn—Bennett Michael (b. April 13, 2011), to Melissa and Scott Kelterborn, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Marsh-Lansard—Gabrielle Jeanne (b. Feb. 1, 2011), to Marcel and Carmen Marsh-Lansard, Valley View Mennonite, London, Ont.

Rion—Elizabeth Renee (b. April 26, 2011), to Jeff and Lindsey Rion, Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Smith—Evelyn June (b. Feb. 14, 2011), to Maybelle (Janzen) and Jimmy Smith, Rosemary Mennonite, Alta.

Van Sintern-Dick—Annika Marie (b. April 14, 2011), to Cathrin and Matthew van Sintern-Dick, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Katherine Finn, Lorne Quiring, Pam Quiring—Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask., April 24, 2011.

Marriages

Braun/Thiessen—Ryan Braun (Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.) and Cori Thiessen (Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg), at Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren, Winnipeg, Feb. 26, 2011.

Deaths

Bergen—Isaac, 64 (b. Jan. 9, 1947; d. April 29, 2011), Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Dyck—Maria (nee Brandt), 96 (b. Nov. 16, 1914; d. April 11, 2011), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Enns—Peter Alan, 63 (b. Oct. 25, 1947; d. April 13, 2011), Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont.

Funk—Mary (nee Neudorf), 82 (b. May 30, 1928; d. April 9, 2011), Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.

Goerzen—Maria (Mary), 83 (b. June 1, 1927; d. April 7, 2011), Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Huebert—Clara, 84 (b. Jan. 1, 1927; d. March 22, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Kernohan—Ann, 64 (b. Dec. 10, 1946; d. April 18, 2011), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., in Toronto.

Klassen—Aaron, 86 (b. Dec. 9, 1924; d. April 18, 2011), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Klassen—Hedwig, 88 (b. Sept. 15, 1922; d. March 5, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Justina (Jessie) 89 (b. Dec. 25, 1921; d. April 18, 2011), Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Koop—Agnes, 89 (b. Jan. 7, 1922; d. April 18, 2011), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Krahn—Elsa, 84 (b. Dec. 12, 1926; d. April 24, 2011), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

Langemann—Kaethe (nee Koop), 92 (b. April 28, 1918; d. April 26, 2011), Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C.

Loewen—Helen, 90 (b. Jan. 2, 1921; d. April 14, 2011), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Neufeld—Katherina (Tena), 75 (b. Nov. 26, 1935; d. April 11, 2011), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

Rempel—Peter E., 91 (b. Oct. 29, 1919; d. April 7, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Swartzentruber—Erma, 78 (b. June 10, 1923; d. Jan. 7, 2011), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

Zehr—Sarah, 99 (b. May 9, 1911; d. Feb. 11, 2011), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



VIEWPOINT

Aiming at evil: Bin Laden's death an occasion for soul searching

BY WILL BRAUN

On the surface, the story is simple and satisfying: The good guys got bin Laden. Justice has been done. The fight against the forces of evil will continue.

This is the underlying plot that western leaders have used to speak about the U.S. strike on Osama bin Laden. But some religious leaders warn against oversimplifying the script.

"One of the tragedies of the events of the last 10 years [since 9/11] is how we, especially in North America, have given in to a much more black-and-white way of looking at the world," says Chris Huebner, a theology professor at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Though Huebner says anyone responsible for the attacks of 9/11 is indeed a "wicked" person, he does not believe it is helpful to understand the situation in terms of "good guys and bad guys."

"What if it's more complicated than that?" he asks.

As Huebner knows, anyone who raises such questions is in danger of being lumped in with the bad guys—that's part of the over-simplification—but the questions around bin Laden's death are hard to avoid. Did that Navy SEAL bullet make the world safer? Is peace closer?

The answers are not obvious.

Some of the complexity of the situation is captured in the question that quickly surfaced on blogs, particularly religious ones: what is an appropriate response to bin Laden's death? If addressing the evil of terrorists is as simple as killing them,



then Americans should rejoice openly.

Indeed, some of them are. Sarah Palin said Americans are "united in celebration." Former U.S. presidential candidate Mike Huckabee went further. "It is unusual to celebrate a death," the Associated Press reported him as saying, "but today Americans and decent people the world over cheer the news that madman, murderer and terrorist Osama Bin Laden is dead."

"Welcome to hell, bin Laden," he added.

At least one commentator had trouble figuring out how to respond. At first, David Brody, a senior correspondent for Pat Robertson's right-wing Christian Broadcasting Network, criticized Obama for not "showing a little joy" in what was a measured speech by the president on Sunday night. Then, in a later blog post, Brody corrected himself, crediting Obama for doing what is instructed in Proverbs 24:17: "Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice."

The flip-flop is understandable. There is something in each of us that finds satisfaction in a simple solution to evil. We want to see consequences for evil actions and a solution with the finality of death holds particular appeal. This gut-level desire for retribution stands in tension with a decency within us that knows death is not something to gloat over. It also stands in tension with religious teachings of compassion, forgiveness, and love for enemies, all of which are far more complicated than simply eliminating the bad guy.

Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton, who heads the Canadian Council of Churches, emphasizes the need to reflect on the complexities of the so-called war on terror. "We have simplified complex issues," she says. Speaking personally, she says when she heard of bin Laden's death she felt "sadness for the state of the world." Lamenting the ongoing violence in the world, she sees no simple solutions. Rather, she believes people of faith need to continue talking together about the basic questions of how to love our neighbours and how to make the world a more peaceful place. "The answers are going to be complicated," she says.

It is clear that addressing the evils that bin Laden and al-Qaeda have come to symbolize will not be as simple as pointing a finger, or a gun, at a lone villain in a fortified compound on the other side of the world. The late Russian novelist and Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn said that such fingers are best pointed within. "The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either," he wrote, "but right through every human heart."

The Vatican likewise called on Christians to look within. In a statement responding to bin Laden's death, it said "each person" should reflect on the responsibility to seek the "growth of peace and not of hatred." The statement echoes words of Martin Luther King Jr. which have been making their way through the blogosphere since Sunday: "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

However removed these lines may seem from the blunt reality of suicide bombers or the war against Taliban insurgents, they raise the unavoidable question of how to reduce the cycle of hate that lies behind the terror we seek to end. They challenge us to consider a plot line that is less about good guys fighting bad guys than a cycle of animosity that must be broken.

Will Braun is a Winnipeg writer. He can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com.

MENNONITE WOMEN CANADA

—A place to belong—

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

A place to belong

Listening to the heartbeat of change and making new connections

BY EV BUHR

At the heart of change lies the challenge to move forward, to evolve into something greater and to listen with your heart for a new beat. Connections to the past become the groundwork for connections to the future. For Alberta Women in Mission (AWM), three examples of such new connections come to mind:

Kate Janzen, Vice-president of AWM, is the new kid on the block and she doesn't fit the "typical" profile for this position because she doesn't belong to an AWM women's group since her church, Foothills Mennonite in Calgary, only recently formed such a group. So how did she come to this position? As a member of the Mennonite Church Alberta program planning committee for the 2010 annual meeting, she encouraged people to think "outside the box" while choosing a guest speaker. That tweaked AWM executive interest and we asked her to consider the vice-president position despite her lack of involvement with women's groups. When her name was presented at our Enrichment Days last May, the women followed suit! Excited about what Janzen



PHOTO BY IRENE BAERGEN



Sondas Blasieh (left) and her daughter, Hader Milhem, Palestinian refugees from Syria participated in the Alberta Women in Mission spring tea at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

could bring to our group, they not only accepted her but pushed a proposal to change our constitution (as Mennonite Women Canada had already done) to include *all* women who are part of an AWM group, or MCA congregations to participate, and to serve even as members of the executive committee.

We want to bring women of diverse backgrounds, ages and ethnicities together to strengthen Christian sisterhood. The Edmonton AWM annual spring tea included women from Holyrood Mennonite Church (including several Liberian women), Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church, Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church, plus three members of a Palestinian refugee family sponsored by First Mennonite. Together, they listened to an inspiring presentation by Cara Baergen (Calgary) who shared stories of "Living Water" from her one year MCC SALT assignment in Tanzania. She stressed three key points:

- women all over the world, use water in very similar ways and this connects us.
- developing water resources frees people to work beyond survival. In many countries, women don't have time to take leadership roles because their days are consumed with water-related tasks.
- we must exercise deep gratitude, realizing the incredible gift of available water resources.

Later, as twenty-something's mingled with octogenarians, new connections were made and discussions of reciprocal invitations were heard.

As we plan the AWM retreat for next fall, we want to invite feedback from women on relevant themes. One respondent, the mother of a one-year-old and part-time childcare provider, said: "I'd like to know how we can find spirituality in our busy lives when we're pulled in all directions as women, wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, etc."

Like previous generations, today's women continue to be actively involved in "traditional" caregiving and homemaking roles, but have added many more vocations to their "work portfolios." They are also connected in an instant to the whole world and have a myriad of ways to be involved in outreach (missions), peace and social justice issues, and other work of the church. Adding all these additional complexities and commitments to already demanding roles, can result in very high stress levels and lead to burnout. We especially want to hear and respond to these experiences while also continuing to nurture and attend to the needs of seniors among us who may be dealing with health issues and/or whose roles have dramatically changed. Often, they too, feel overwhelmed by these unanticipated retirement responsibilities such as baby-sitting grandchildren.

We want to hear and connect with the "heartbeat" of all these women as we walk on this journey of faith together. ☸

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

'I'll take it from here'—Metzger

Seven 'letters' hit spiritual renewal themes

BY DICK BENNER, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
BADEN, ONTARIO

All indicators point to the old structures giving way to new ways of being the church, Willard Metzger told the nearly 400 delegates gathered for the 2011 annual church gathering of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Friday, April 29. "This is the new reality and we really don't know what it is."

Metzger, the new general secretary for Mennonite Church Canada, was one of seven persons giving "letters" on the theme of "What is the Spirit Saying to the Churches?" This "new way" is bringing with it a high level of uncertainty and uneasiness," he said, "but I hear the Spirit saying 'I'll take it from here.'"

This should not bring disengagement or being passive, he cautioned, but rather bring us to a fervent prayer for a new infusion of the Spirit, a new seeking of God's presence in partnership, a different level of trust and confidence in the context of the unknown. He called for a "discipline of trust" that holds loosely our assumptions and for listening to voices from unexpected sources, from the "whales and donkeys" we read about in scripture.

David Martin, MCEC executive minister, sounded a kind of gathering theme when he asked the question: do we know how to make disciples? Our biblical scholars have schooled us well in knowing the particulars of our historical faith, he said, perhaps "now is the time for them to instruct us on how to share our faith with others."

The "letters" presentations grew out of regional consultations last fall when clusters of congregations gathered at the initiative of MCEC on what God "is calling us to

in our time." "We came from congregations big and small, rural and urban," said MCEC moderator Aldred Neufeldt, "comprised of believers who trace their Mennonite identity from a few years to nearly 500."

At the core of the themes that emerged from these consultations "is a deep yearning to understand better who we are in today's world and to build on our identity," he wrote in his gathering message.

Ervin Stutzman, visiting as the new executive director for Mennonite Church USA, said the "spirit" is saying many different things in his context, with congregations in all sincerity seeing and having convictions in quite opposite directions.

In order to bring some order to this sometimes chaotic and frustrating process, his councils will bring to the upcoming Pittsburgh Assembly, seven different "first things first" core values, namely (1) Christian formation—is the image of the church shaped by Christ-centred beliefs? (2) discerning in love—seeing congregations as interdependent, (3) developing a holistic witness, avoiding fragmenting into different emphases (4) stewardship of "all we are," (5) leadership development from outside the congregation, (6) an inter-cultural ministry focused on racial healing rather than on racial bias and (7) cultivating church-to-church relationships, such as more cooperation between MC USA and MC Canada.

Brian Bauman, MCEC mission minister, in his Saturday morning "letter," said that established churches and the new church plants are all a "part of the same mould," citing the pastor of his youth, Gerald Good, now retired, as giving him a chance to be

angry without thwarting his formation. Quoting Jesus' words to John, he said we should likewise "look to God to break into our lives, to not try and tame the Spirit."

He did question, however, the prioritizing of area church dollars when the mission budget has been reduced 40 percent in the eight years he has been mission minister.

Through an interpreter, Lucy Roca, church planter in Sherbrooke, Quebec, told of a vision when the spirit said the churches are lukewarm and found wanting with the "fire of the spirit," and called MCEC churches to reaffirm their "first love" of Jesus and his Word.

In a video-taped interview, Ralph Lebold, retired minister and conference leader, said he was encouraged with how the young people "are extending the peace of Christ" in so many ways. He said pastors should work hard at spiritual formation to discover their "spiritual centre," that congregations should focus more on developing community and for parents not only to revive what he said was the lost art of "tithing," but to talk about it with their children.

He called, too, for a renewed interest in scripture, including memorization, and for ongoing spiritual renewal where we intentionally look for "where God has been at work."

Finishing up the "letters" was Rebecca Steiner, a liberal arts student at Conrad Grebel University College, who credited her church with her faith formation, indeed instilling within her a more radical expression of that faith. She called for a new openness to "be all that God wants us to be," to be salt and light, Christ-filled vessels who are transparent and open, free and filled with joy, listening and observing "with hands wide open" as to where God is moving in our community and with "broken humanity." ❧

Area Church leadership listens

MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering follows fall listening consultation

PHOTOS AND STORY BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
BADEN, ONTARIO

Celebration was an underlying mood for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's 2011 annual church gathering. Accepting two new congregations in emerging status and one emerging congregation to full membership status, as well as a raft of anniversary celebrations in congregations set a joyous mood. Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto sponsored the Saturday morning coffee as an expression of its 100 year anniversary.

"What is the Spirit saying to the churches?" was the gathering's theme. April 29 and 30 saw the fruit of MC Eastern Canada's fall 2010 regional consultations with constituents (see Dec. 20 issue, p 18). Leadership has been listening to the Spirit as the congregations spoke. In the report book were results from the consultations—a strategic funding plan, a faith formation update, a summary from the consultations, and letters from both moderator

Aldred Neufeldt and Executive Minister David Martin. As Neufeldt made clear in his letter "to sharpen our understanding" there will be "further consultation on faith formation, leadership development, how to fund programs where we are best to work together, and so on." Martin noted nine challenges for MC Eastern Canada (see sidebar, p17) related to the postmodern, post-Christendom context in which Mennonites now live.

Listening took other forms during the gathering. After years of discussion and listening the executive council was given the go-ahead to attempt in the next year to lease or sell the Warden Woods building to the Community Centre, taking into consideration the historical relationship between MC Eastern Canada and the Centre, but failing such a relationship to sell the building on the open market. This was a contentious issue in 2010, at a



Benno Barg of Breslau Mennonite Church speaks passionately against the plan to divest the Warden Woods property.

meeting held on April 14, and on the floor this year. Voices raised questions about MC Eastern Canada's commitment to the poor and disenfranchised in our society, while others spoke of trust in leadership to be heading in the right direction. A ballot vote resulted in a 155 to 28 decision to move ahead with divestment. Other listening took the form of seven "eighth letters" to the church by leaders present and past, and by table groups processing together and reporting back in word and writing to leadership.

Through "prudent spending," meaning "little or no discretionary spending," Ester Neufeldt reported a balanced budget where a deficit had been forecast in 2010. While revenues were up slightly from budget, this just meant that less needed to be transferred from the Faithful Steward Fund, made up of large donations and bequests. The accumulated surplus from 2010 was also used. A question was raised on the floor about how long funds like this will continue to help us do ministry. The \$27,000 decrease in the capital of the Missions Restricted Fund was pointed to as example. Missions can draw 25% of the fund a year but donations are not keeping up with the draw-down, meaning they have less each year to do ministry. This is in part why the strategic spending plan is setting goals of decreasing support to new projects instead of long-term funding.

For the 2011-2012 year the budget asks for a \$25,000 increase in giving to fund a \$70,000 decrease in programming. This is a direct result of being able to transfer less from restricted funds where capital is being depleted. ☸



Jim Loepp-Thiessen, pastor of the Gathering Church in Kitchener, receives a bowl and towel, symbols of mutual service, from Linda Brnjas (assistant moderator) and Aldred Neufeldt (moderator) as the congregation moved from emerging church status into full membership in MCEC.

'Your publication is beautiful'

Canadian Mennonite earns eight Canadian Church Press awards

BY CANADIAN MENNONITE STAFF
CHICAGO, ILL.

Managing Editor Ross Muir returned from Chicago May 1 with eight Canadian Church Press awards for the *Canadian Mennonite*—the most awards won in a single year—two in first place, a second and five thirds. The meeting was held in conjunction with its American counterpart—the Associated Church Press.

Our three-part series, "Confessing Jesus Christ in a Religiously Pluralistic World," topped the Theological Reflection category open to both magazines and newspapers. "The varied backgrounds and experiences of the authors lend authority to these very readable pieces," stated judge Rolf Pedersen, a former editorial page editor of the *Guelph (Ont.) Mercury* and *Brandon (Man.) Sun*. "Academics, students, a businessman and former missionaries seem keen to convey the benefits of interfaith and intercultural dialogue to their own spiritual development—and to relationship building in general. These remarkable articles are, without exception, well written, edited and profoundly interesting. Discussion questions seem very helpful. An outstanding series that deserves attention far beyond the confines of Mennonite Church Canada."

Sarah Ens, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., and a recent high school graduate who was profiled in our pages last fall for her community and scholastic achievement, can add "award-winning poet" to her résumé. Her poem, "The Crash," came first in the Poetry-Open category, earning accolades from judge D.S. Martin: "The poet draws us in through her precise, yet ambiguous language. . . . I value this young poet's concise and curious use of words ('I'm bleeding the covenant of God'). . . . There is a pleasing flow to her words, and we get the feeling that the poet is intentional and in control, not merely random."

Our "Readers write" section came second in the Letters to the Editor category. Christine Longhurst's piece, "Making the Word in worship come alive," earned thirds in two separate categories: Biblical Interpretation-Open and Service Journalism-Open. "This is a remarkably well-written discourse clearly designed to encourage a return of Holy Scripture to a more central and prominent place in worship services," wrote Rolf Pedersen, the Biblical Interpretation judge.

Our feature on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission meetings in

Winnipeg, anchored by Manitoba correspondent Evelyn Rempel Petkau's "How complicit are Mennonites in residential school abuse" article, came third in the In-depth Treatment of a News Event-Magazine category. "Self-reflection and thoughtful analysis are at the core of this well-written article," wrote judge Mark Bourrie, a Canadian writer, historian and Carleton University lecturer.

Muir's work "Summer on Manitoulin No. 8," which illustrated Phil Wagler's "Pastoring the flock out along the fence-line" feature article, came third in the Original Artwork-Open category. Judge Ken Gammage, an illustrator whose clients include the *Washington Post* and Disney, called the piece "a striking image that boldly bridges the gap between what is visually apparent in our world and that of holy mystery. . . . I truly appreciate an image like this that leaves you thinking beyond the edges of the published page."

Canadian Mennonite's final award came in the Layout and Design of an Edition-Magazine category for our Aug. 2 issue, "Calgary round-up." Designed and laid out by graphic designer Dan Johnson and Muir, the issue was cited for its "good use of typography and colour, lively engaging photography, good pacing, navigation and overall design," by judge Brian Morgan, the current art director of *The Walrus* magazine. "I'd say this is a model church publication. . . . Your publication is beautiful," he concluded. ☞

David Martin's nine challenges in the MC Eastern Canada Mission Context:

1. The broader social context has shifted dramatically.
2. The social fabric within Eastern Canada has become multi-cultural and multi-faith.
3. Some MCEC congregations are struggling with their Mennonite/Anabaptist identity and at times confuse being Mennonite with a family history or specific ethnic experience.
4. Congregations need a more robust vision for the church that will propel them beyond primarily caring for the needs of their own members and out into the world.
5. Stronger models of congregational governance are required to increase the capacity of MCEC congregations to be effective mission agents in their local communities.
6. New models of leadership are needed for the church to more fully engage in God's mission in the world.
7. Congregational members are increasingly integrated into the dominant society, making them both better positioned to relate to individuals beyond the church, and at risk of compromising their Christian values and diminishing their allegiance to Christ and the mission of the church.
8. Many youth and young adults are not experiencing the church as relevant.
9. The relationship between the congregation and the ministries of the wider church is eroding.

Eanes to head new MennoMedia organization

Publishing executive to be new agency's first leader, starting July 1

Mennonite Publishing Network
HARRISONBURG, VA.

Russ Eanes, the current director of finance and operations for Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), will become executive director of MennoMedia on July 1. He will move to Harrisonburg, Va., where the head office of the new agency formed by merging MPN and Third Way Media will be located.

Eanes's appointment was announced by the MPN board, which will become the governing board for MennoMedia. The appointment was approved by Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A.

Eanes has served MPN from Scottsdale, Pa., since 2007. He played an integral role in the joint staff team that developed the business plan for MennoMedia and is currently engaged in laying the groundwork for the merger.

"Russ comes with a deep passion for publishing and media," says MPN board chair Phil Bontrager. "His faith and life are grounded in Mennonite/Anabaptist theology, and he articulates his faith clearly and reflects a commitment to missional church theology."

The current executive director of MPN, Ron Rempel, is retiring after eight years. He worked out of an office in Waterloo, Ont. Third Way Media is currently headed by co-directors Lowell Hertzler and Sheri Hartzler. They will be part of the new MennoMedia staff.

"Russ is attuned to the current and emerging environments in publishing and media," says Abe Bergen, an MPN board member from Winnipeg, Man., who headed the search committee to find Rempel's replacement. "His work at MPN



Eanes

for the past four years demonstrates his ability to work creatively with others for change. His understanding of finances will contribute to a solid business plan and fiscal responsibility."

Before coming to MPN, Eanes was administrator of Allegheny Mennonite Conference and pastor of Crossroads Community Church, Johnstown, Pa.

Eanes earned a master's degree in public policy and administration at Boise State University, Idaho. He earned an undergraduate degree in English from Indiana University, and studied theology at Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Earlier, Eanes was managing director of Plough Publishing House, Farmington, Pa., and worked in other capacities as well with the Bruderhof Communities. In the 1980s, he was co-founder and editor of *Coming Together*, a grassroots magazine supporting alternative Christian communities.

"I'm excited about the challenges and opportunities that our new, merged agency has to serve the church in its North American context as well as in the rest of the world," says Eanes. "I look forward to a fruitful collaboration with a wonderful group of people in Harrisonburg, in our other locations, including Canada, and in the wider church." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Construction will begin in March, 2012 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. on a \$6.3 million addition to the academic building, particularly the library and archives. It will be completed by August, 2013, "just in time for the beginning of the College's 50th anniversary," notes outgoing president Henry Paetkau. The board approved the project at its April 28 meeting, calling it "The Next Chapter" capital campaign. The expansion will triple the capacity of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, double study space in the library, increase music department space by 5,000 square feet and create a new community education facility for Peace and Conflict Studies. It will also create a clear, welcoming entrance to the College. Plans for the new Library, Archives, and academic facilities will be available on Wednesday, June 1, at 7:30 pm in the Conrad Grebel Great Hall, during a presentation by archivist Lauren Harder-Gissing from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario.



COVER STORY

'Little church with a big heart'

Danforth Mennonite celebrates a century of service

BY JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
TORONTO, ONT.

More than 200 people with past and present connections to Danforth Mennonite Church gathered to sing, worship, share food and reminisce over the weekend of April 15 to 17, celebrating a century of ministry in Ontario's capital city.

Senior church members Ed Ford and Agnes Billedeau spoke about how they came to Sunday school as neighbourhood children, and after relationships were formed with church workers, their parents became Christians and were welcomed with "open arms" to the church.

Others remembered how the deaconesses in the church became like trusted "older sisters" or "second mothers."

Muriel Bechtel shared as a former congregant—rather than in her role as Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister—about how the church ministered to her when she was feeling "disheartened" after her family's move to Toronto during a time of transition and disappointments. She credits church members with nudging her towards church leadership, commenting, "I give thanks to God for this little church with a big heart."

MC Eastern Canada executive minister David Martin brought greetings from the area church and commended the congregation for being a "mission incubator" through the decades. Among the list of church-planting efforts and church-related ministries that were nurtured by Danforth Mennonite were: Fraser Lake Camp, St. Clair O'Connor Community for seniors, Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, Toronto Mennonite New Life Church, and, most recently, the Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church (see 'A high calling' p. 20).

Danforth Mennonite has its roots in the Toronto Mission, first established in 1907 on rented property on Tate Street, and later King Street East. By 1910, a site was purchased at 2174 Danforth Avenue and

the first building was constructed shortly afterwards.

For many years, workers money and material resources were sent from more rural communities to support the Toronto Mission. Church historian Bill Bryson writes that many immigrants from the British Isles who were settling in the community "found themselves warmly welcomed into this little church by these rural Mennonites of American and Swiss-German descent."

He also notes that the workers at the Toronto Mission "were concerned with all aspects of human need: physical, spiritual and emotional." They provided a Sunday school and worship services, and were active in home visitation and evangelical outreach. The Sunday school program involved about 150 children each week.

Several pastoral families provided long-term leadership: Harold and Cora Groh (1931-45), Emerson and Elsie McDowell (1945-64), and Osiah and Fern Horst (1964-84.)

During Emerson McDowell's time in

PHOTO COURTESY OF
DANFORTH MENNONITE CHURCH



The Toronto Mennonite Mission as pictured in 1911. The mission later became Danforth Mennonite Church.

leadership, the identity and name changed from the Toronto Mennonite Mission to Danforth Mennonite Church. Fraser Lake Camp was also established during those years, to give children from Toronto the chance to experience nature, develop good relationships with others, and to learn more about the love of God.

The "mission" roots are still seen in the welcoming environment that the current congregation of close to 100 members offers to neighbours and seekers from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Major renovations to the church building in 1994 resulted in accessible and multi-use space that is used throughout the week for church and community programs. Tim Reimer, the current pastor, has served the congregation since 1999. ❧

PHOTO BY JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL



Jim Beer and Salome Snyder Harrison attended the 100th anniversary worship service at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, Ont., on April 17. Harrison was serving as a deaconess during the 1950s when Beer started attending Sunday school there as a 12-year-old. Later, he joined the church and they have served as fellow church members ever since.

'A high calling'

Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church seeks to evangelize unbelievers

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
TORONTO, ONT.

Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church, serving Ethiopians and Eritreans in the Greater Toronto Area, is among Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's newest "emerging congregations."

Pastor Ashenafi Fulase, an assistant pastor in a church in Ethiopia before coming to Canada, says that the church planting effort began in 2004 when he invited a small group of men who were new Christians to meet in his apartment for prayer and Bible study. There has been growth in multiple ways since that time. When they first started meeting, the men were single. Now they are married, have children, and meet for worship in the Amharic language with 35 to 40 other people each week. Pastor Ash is also grateful for the dynamic worship leaders who have emerged in the congregation.

Most of the Freedom Gospel church members have been in Canada for 10 to 15 years, and came with some awareness of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, a large denomination affiliated with Mennonite World Conference. Fulase says this gives them a natural affinity with the Mennonite community in Canada.

The stated purpose of Freedom Gospel is to "evangelize the gospel of Jesus to unbelievers by witnessing and sharing God's love, mercy and grace."

"Church-planting is a high calling among evangelical Ethiopian Christians," explains Brian Bauman, MC Eastern Canada mission minister. The Missions Council is providing some financial support to the church.

Freedom Gospel meets on Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto, one of many church-planting efforts that Danforth has supported over the years. Tim Reimer, pastor of Danforth Mennonite, and Fulase meet regularly to pray and share together. ☸



Ashenafi Fulase, pastor of Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church, with his wife Hiwot and their son, Lewi, attended the recent 100th anniversary service at Danforth Mennonite Church, where Freedom Gospel meets for services.

'Great people, great cause, great time'

Paddling Fraser River benefits bursary

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
HOPE, B.C.

A mixed weather bag of cold headwinds, rain and sleet—climaxing with sunshine at the end—greeted 24 paddlers who took on the waves of the Fraser River for two days last month in the annual Camp Squeah bursary fundraiser paddle-a-thon.

April 17's tally was announced at just over \$52,000, up from last year.

Every year, volunteers from Mennonite Church B.C. congregations garner pledges to make the journey from near the camp at Hope down to Fort Langley. Money raised helps support summer staff who need funds to continue college and university studies, but give of their time at camp in summer in lieu of a paying job.

First-timer Barb Bruce of Delta, who travelled in the accompanying boat as event photographer, noted the beautiful scenery afforded by water travel as opposed to the highway. "The view you get from there, you don't get from the shore,"

she said. "The paddlers have that advantage." She added that she knew the paddlers ended up "sore, tired and exhausted, but it's so worthwhile."

Participants this year included MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen, along with paddlers from Sherbrooke, Living Hope, First United Mennonite, Emmanuel, Level Ground and Peace Mennonite churches. Camp committee members and Squeah staff also participated, along with former Squeah summer staff from Vernon. Among the paddlers were two 18-year-olds who muscled two stubby river kayaks the length of the river.

"The beauty of the paddle-a-thon is [that] regardless the weather, which is always out of our control, the special community developed along the journey, both on the river and off at the various meal stops, can always be summed as great people, together for a great cause having a great time!" commented Squeah executive director Rob Tiessen. ☸



First-time Camp Squeah bursary fundraiser paddle-a-thon participant Barb Bruce acted as the event's official photographer. 'The view you get from there, you don't get from the shore,' Bruce says. "The paddlers have that advantage,' although she acknowledge they ended up "sore, tired and exhausted, but it's so worthwhile."

GAMEO appoints new managing editor, releases DVD edition

Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online

Richard Thiessen of Abbotsford, British Columbia, has been appointed as the new managing editor of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO)



Thiessen

effective January 2012, following the retirement of the current managing editor, Sam Steiner, whose term ends this year. Thiessen, library director at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford,

/// Briefly noted

In recognition of 50 years of ministry at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, a special edition Smorg (smorgasbord) event was held at Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., on April 2. The event drew nearly 300 people who enjoyed moose, rabbit, veal, pig-on-a-spit, fish and barbecued ribs, among other dishes. More than \$11,000 was raised for the camp's Dining Hall Restoration and Enhancement Fund. A fire caused an estimated \$400,000 worth of damage to the Hepworth, Ont., camp's main dining hall building on February 7.

SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP PHOTO



has been serving as GAMEO's associate managing editor since November 2006.

Two hundred and fifty copies of a DVD edition of GAMEO were released in March; the DVDs include all of the encyclopedia's content through January 19. Steiner says the target audience for the DVD edition is conservative Anabaptist groups who utilize computers but do not access the Internet. Some copies may also go to Mennonite groups outside North America where Internet accessibility is limited.

GAMEO'S management board has approved formation of a panel of consulting editors from North America and around the world who will advise on larger subject areas like theology, history, sociology and the arts. The editors will review existing articles—which are between 25 and 50 years old—in their area of expertise and recommend updates or rewrites. Barbara Nkala of Zimbabwe, Gerhard Ratzlaff of Paraguay, and Hans-Jürgen Goertz of Germany are among the international consulting editors named.

GAMEO has also obtained permission to translate into English selected content from the *Mennonitische Nachschlagewerke*, an ongoing project of the Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein in Germany, and the *Lexikon der Mennoniten in Paraguay*, published by the Verein für Geschichte und Kultur der Mennoniten in Paraguay in 2009.

Work continues on expansion of GAMEO to include multiple languages. Two French-language articles are presently included on GAMEO, but fundraising towards creating a truly functional multilingual site continues. Steiner says that about half of the required \$20,000 has been raised.

GAMEO (gameo.org) is a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church U.S.A., Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference. All work is done by volunteer staff, editorial boards and writers. GAMEO contains 14,750 articles by more than 1,800 contributors. ///

'Taste & See' VBS material named a 'top pick'

By CYNTHIA LINSCHIED

MPN/MC Canada

HARRISONBURG, VA.



Based on past experience, Christian educator Lucinda Stevens was eager to order "Taste & See: God is Good," the 2011 Vacation Bible School curriculum from Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN).

Stevens, assistant director of the Resource Center in Richmond, V., ordered "Taste & See" prior to an annual VBS workshop in February. "People at our centre specifically ask for MPN's materials," says Stevens. "They expect MPN to offer good quality, biblically sound materials that work well across denominational lines."

Stevens, also education coordinator at an Episcopal congregation, says she uses MPN's materials because they "teach children that faith can be fun, without taking a 'Disney' approach. I especially like the dramas because they're a great way to include junior high kids in the program."

In an annual review of 19 publishers' VBS

materials, "Taste & See" was one of four named a "top pick" by the Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary. The centre's review highlights the MPN curriculum's "refreshingly concise" format, fun songs and daily worship experiences. Its VBS materials have been selected a "top pick" the past five years.

"Taste & See" uses daily Bible stories, worship, games, crafts and activities to help children from Kindergarten through Grade 8 look at food through the eyes of faith.

"It's really about looking at our food differently," says Mary Ann Weber, managing curriculum editor for MPN. "As children hear Bible stories about manna in the

wilderness, or the woman who shares her last bit of food, or Jesus offering himself as bread and wine, they find out how the food we eat every day can be a reminder of God. It's an inspiring theme—all about gratitude and generosity, and even 'spiritual food.'"

Although created for Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. congregations, "Taste & See" has also been ordered by Baptist, Brethren, Episcopal and United Church of Christ groups.

"This isn't unusual. We normally have a mix of purchasers, especially for VBS," says customer service representative Alma Unrau. "It's always fun to hear from people in other denominations. They seem glad to find our materials." ❧

❧ Briefly Noted

Youth from the Markham-area churches put their heads together as they plan their answer to the team interpretative question in the final Bible quiz match held at Mapleview Mennonite Church near Wellesley, Ont., on April 9. Pictured from left are: Emily Gain, Clement Mo, Caleb Niemeyer, Angelina Reesor and Fiona Mo. The Markham team again placed first, winning over Mapleview A in the final match. The number of teams in this Mennonite Church Eastern Canada youth event was down to five this year, with participants from Avon, Hawkesville, Mapleview and the Markham-area churches pitting their knowledge of the book of Revelation against each other. The Quizzer-of-the-year award went to Nikki Gray of the Mapleview A team.



❧ Briefly Noted

César García to head MWC

TAIPEI, TAIWAN—For the first time, a leader from the global South will become the general secretary of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC). On May 4, the MWC executive committee formally appointed César García of Bogotá, Colombia, as General Secretary-elect, to succeed Larry Miller on January 1, 2012. García, who was chair of the Iglesias Hermanos Menonitas de Colombia (Mennonite Brethren Churches of Colombia) from 2002 to 2008, is currently completing masters studies at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif. He also serves as secretary of the MWC Mission Commission and as a member of MWC's task force on the creation of a new network of service ministries. In addition, he has been active in inter-Anabaptist and ecumenical endeavours in Colombia. According to García, 39, the Colombian church and his local congregation, Iglesia HM Torre Fuerte (Strong Tower MB Church) in Bogotá, had sent him to California for studies in order to return and serve in Colombia, where he has been a church planter, pastor and professor of Bible and Theology. García is married to Sandra Báez, who is also completing studies in Fresno. They have two teenage daughters, María and Paula.



—BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER, MWC EDITOR

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



Disaster recovery studies graduate David Barker, second from right, poses with, from left, CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt and instructors Lois Nickel and Kenton Lobe.

Inspired to alleviate suffering

David Barker first to complete disaster recovery studies at CMU

BY NADINE KAMPEN

Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Three years ago, in the middle of reading Roméo Dallaire's traumatic first-hand account of the Rwanda genocide, David Barker decided his future would be in disaster response.

"It was the first time I read something about the actual suffering going on in the world," says Barker, recalling his profound emotional response to Dallaire's book, *Shake Hands with the Devil*.

This spring, Barker became the first student to graduate from the fledgling disaster recovery studies program at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Barker received his diploma on April 17 with a major in peace and conflict studies and two minors, one in international development and the other in disaster recovery.

If CMU had offered a major in disaster recovery, Barker says he would have taken it. But when he enrolled, CMU was just getting the 18-credit-hour program off the ground.

CMU developed the program through a partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). Its emphasis is on the longer-term phases of individual, family and community rebuilding following disasters. A key part of the program is a series of two terms of fieldwork, eight to 10 weeks each, to fulfill CMU's practicum requirement.

"The first term is spent serving with MDS. The second may be either with MDS or with another agency that does disaster recovery work in North America or internationally," says instructor Lois Nickel, program and region director with MDS. "Through these service terms, students ... receive hands-on and leadership experience in the rebuilding of disaster-affected, often-vulnerable communities. [Disaster recovery studies] helps students understand the nature of disasters, their aftermath, and the best ways to help people and communities recover physically, psychologically, socially and spiritually."

In the summer of 2009, Barker completed his first practicum, helping rebuild

homes destroyed by California wildfires. "It was a very valuable experience," he says. "We actually got to interact with the people who had been in the disaster and hear their stories, to talk to them about how they grew spiritually and mentally."

For his second practicum, Barker worked with the Red Cross in Winnipeg, helping develop a tool to assess the province's ability to respond to disasters such as floods, heat waves, tornadoes, forest fires or blizzards. In the classroom, Barker studied the theory behind disaster response and the phases of recovery. He feels his classes and hands-on fieldwork over the past three years have helped equip him to begin that work.

Barker's long-term goal is to get a job working for an organization like the Red Cross, World Vision or the UN. He says he's willing to live in whatever part of the world he's needed. "I'd find that interesting and rewarding," he says.

But to get that kind of job, Barker needs more volunteer experience on his résumé. That's why, the day after graduation, he started volunteering with the Manitoba government's Emergency Measures Organization coordinating responses to the annual spring flood. ☿

MCC ONTARIO PHOTO BY DAN DRIEDGER



Accompanied by organ and a choir, Elaine Pearce, a member of the Hanover Mennonite Church, Ont., sang in two concerts of sacred music in Walkerton and Elmira last month in aid of Mennonite Central Committee's work in Haiti. In total, \$2,300 was raised.

/// Briefly noted

Through the vision of Xavie Jean-Bourgeault of the Eglise Evangélique Mennonite de Joliette, Que., the region of Lanaudière marked Refugee Rights Day this year, by welcoming newcomers to the community 50 kilometres northwest of Montreal with the gift of a quilt. In under six months, more than 70 volunteers participated in cutting, sewing, knotting and decorating 43 quilts. They even set up quilt-making workshops in the local mall, to engage as much of the community as possible in the project. Volunteers shared the layers of meaning they found through quilting: the quilts embody the power of working together for a common cause and of making something beautiful out of diverse bits and pieces.

—DORA-MARIE GOULET

PHOTO BY GUILLAUME TREMBLAY



/// Briefly noted

Christians, Muslims stand together for peace

VANCOUVER, B.C.—Despite the cold, more than a hundred Christians and Muslims stood in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery on April 16 to pray for peace. Muslims and Christians alike wanted to say to the people of Vancouver and to their own faiths that without peace it would be impossible to co-exist in the world. The ladies held each other's hands as they chanted, and the men did the same. Everyone was deeply moved by their own faith in Allah or God the Father, believing that their prayers will be answered in the days ahead as they continue to pursue peace, justice and reconciliation. One of the prayers included the following words: "Like a stone cast into a lake, the ripples it creates spread in ever widening circles. May the tiny ripples from our circles of peace here in Vancouver spread throughout our global village so that all peoples can live in shalom. Amen."

—Peace Mennonite Church



Christians and Muslims contributed their talents to the making of placards and posters.

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Nurturing a vision for peacemaking in Korea

BY ABE BERGEN

MC Canada /CMU

Her son had been waiting in line to buy his lunch at school when a bully pushed him out of his place. A fight broke out and the boy ended up in the hospital.

The victim's mother, a single parent whose husband had died in an accident 12 years earlier, felt alone and frustrated. Many who spoke to her after this violation were dismissive. "It's no big deal. It happens all the time. That's what boys do," they commented.

She was under a lot of pressure to let it go and make nothing of it. But in her view, forgetting about it was not right; the bully needed to be punished. This was the only way for justice to be served.

Confused, alone, vulnerable and afraid, she did not know what to do until she learned about a mediation group sponsored by the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC), a partner of Mennonite Church Canada. Staff told her about an approach that would bring justice for the victim and resolve the situation in a healthier way. She was interested in the centre's restorative justice model, so a mediation committee was put in place and conversations began.

During the mediation process, victim impact statements were read, apologies were expressed, monetary compensation was arranged and reconciliation happened. She agreed not to press charges. The perpetrator did not go to jail or receive a criminal record. The court decided that a just resolution had been reached and no further punishment was required.

The woman had grown up in the church in Korea, but had left many years ago. Now she became interested in connecting with this Christian community and has since become active in the work of the centre.

In addition to the work of restorative justice, the centre established the Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute and developed a regional network of 200 individuals and organizations interested in collaborating on peace efforts. When tensions between North and South Korea erupted



Kyong-Jung Kim, director of the Korean Anabaptist Center, left, and Jae Young Lee, peace program coordinator, are two of several Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) graduates who translated the spirit of Anabaptism into a Korean context for the church and wider society.

in a Nov. 23 artillery exchange, the centre and institute issued a proposal for peace that called for the resumption of dialogue, disarmament, and respect for the previously established demilitarized zone. ❧

Abe Bergen, director of enrolment services at CMU, visited the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul early last November, participating in a restorative justice workshop and joining in the centre's ninth anniversary celebrations. This article first appeared in the CMU Spring 2011 issue of Blazer and has been adapted by permission.

Restorative justice gains momentum in Korea

BY GORDON JANZEN
Mennonite Church Canada

In South Korea, retribution is often seen as a first response to criminal behaviour. Restorative justice approaches that give consideration to the human elements behind criminal behaviour have been largely limited to the involvement of a few mediators who work with the family court to settle disputes outside of the conventional justice system.

MennoJerusalem 2011 Tours

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www.mennojersalem.org

The Korea Anabaptist Center, Mennonite Church Canada's partner in Korea, is helping to introduce the concept of restorative justice to Korean readers. As a step towards this objective, the centre recently completed the translation and publication in Korean of *Changing Lenses* by Howard Zehr (Herald Press, 1990) through its ministry, the Korea Anabaptist Press.

Zehr's book "seeks . . . to identify and evaluate some of the basic assumptions we make about crime, about justice, about how we live together," and attempts to "unravel the experience [of violation, from both sides of the issue], viewing it as a human tragedy involving real people—people who are in many ways much like us."

The centre has successfully distributed this book to a number of people working in areas of law enforcement, education and the church. The newly published text provides solid material for a restorative justice training program that helps to develop mediation skills through a framework of healing and hope.

The Korea Anabaptist Press plans to follow publication of *Changing Lenses* with additional restorative justice texts in 2011 and beyond, including selected material from the Little Books of Justice and Peacebuilding series originally published by Good Books in the U.S. ❧

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PHOTO BY ABE JANZEN



Ri Il Jun and Kim Chol Su, officials of the Korea Canada Cooperation Agency that facilitates Mennonite Central Committee's work in North Korea (partially hidden behind the hay bales), tour Arnold Retzlaff's beef cattle farm in Rosemary, Alta. Also pictured from left to right: Rob Baerg, MCC Alberta board member and a farmer from Rosemary; Retzlaff's children Rachel, Robin and Owen; and Kathi Suderman, MCC Representative for Northeast Asia.

'In order to be a family'

North Korean visitors to Canada build connections with MCC

BY EMILY WILL

Mennonite Central Committee

Two representatives of the Korea Canada Cooperation Agency, which facilitates much of the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in North Korea, visited Canada in March, sampling Canada's frigid winter weather, Mennonite history and hospitality, a smorgasbord of MCC programs and even tasting made-in-Canada kimchee, a staple Korean side dish of preserved cabbage.

Kim Chol Su, executive director, and Ri Il Jun, an officer of the agency, were hosted at five MCC offices in Canada.

Their tour began in the east, visiting the MCC Canada Ottawa Office, meeting a member of Parliament and sitting in on a House of Commons question-and-answer session. They proceeded west to MCC Ontario offices in Kitchener-Waterloo, stopping to see a thrift shop, a

Ten Thousand Villages store and an MCC Ontario program with homeless women.

Then it was on to Manitoba, where severe weather cramped plans to see some farms. They did get to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg and the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, however. Then they moved on to Alberta and three farms, and, lastly, to the MCC British Columbia offices, a warehouse, thrift shop and gleaning program.

The MCC-sponsored visit reinforced ongoing efforts to build bridges with people of a country that, "generally speaking, has been painted as 'the enemy,'" said Kathi Suderman, who accompanied the visitors on their trip across Canada. From Saskatoon, Sask., Suderman and her husband Rod serve as MCC Northeast Asia representatives, based in Beijing, China.

"Most of what [North Korea] has experienced in relation to the outside world over the past 60 years has been hostility," Suderman said, noting that political restrictions that limit interactions with North Koreans make it difficult to put a face to them and view them as humans.

The visit provided Kim and Ri a behind-the-cargo-container view of the material aid that arrives in North Korea. At MCC Canada relief centres and warehouses, the two saw volunteers assembling or packing blankets, health kits, newborn kits, school kits and canned meat, as well as dicing and dehydrating vegetables, then packing them into soup mixes.

Openly viewing MCC's operations and meeting participants from all walks of life—directors to hands-on volunteers—helps build trust for the organization among North Korean partners.

Kim spoke in terms of family ties. "There is a saying in Korean that one must visit family members often in order to be a family," he said. The warmth with which MCC Canada received them makes MCC "like family," he said, and they invited MCC directors to visit them in North Korea. ▮

GOD AT WORK IN US

The path to forgiveness

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG, MAN.

It has been a very long and incredibly hard journey, but Cliff and Wilma Derksen of Winnipeg have finally come to a bright and sunny clearing in their lives.

Their journey began more than a quarter-century ago when Candace, their 13-year-old daughter, went missing on her way home from school. Almost two months later, she was found bound and frozen to death in an abandoned shed. In 2007, DNA evidence finally led police to a suspect. The jury trial in February lasted three weeks and concluded with a conviction of second-degree murder for Mark Edward Grant.

"Life feels new," Wilma says following the verdict. "All those years of waiting meant that their lives could be rocked at any time. 'And now it's not there,' she says. "We can actually know what's going to happen tomorrow."

"We didn't know what we had lived under," Cliff says. "All this emotional and mental energy, and suddenly it's gone. I can put my energy into something else now."

Shortly after Candace's disappearance, the Derksens were visited by a man whose teenage daughter had been murdered several years earlier. When they saw how anger had destroyed his life, they resolved to take the path of forgiveness.

"I have to say it wasn't an easy road," Cliff says. "About 1997, I bottomed out. I was in a state of rage. I was in trouble. I realized if I didn't work it out, I would lose my family, relationships, spiritual dynamic."

"We were angry in those middle years," Wilma concurs.

Then Cliff made a deal with God. "I'll memorize Scripture," Cliff promised, "and you, God, do what you promised you would for those who honour Scripture: give life."

Cliff began nervously with the Book of Jonah, thinking that memorizing a story

would be easier. "It wasn't instant healing, but memorization is like meditation," he says. "The words sink in and you start to have 'aha' moments and enlightenment. In a year and a half . . . I was worshipping and praising God."

Wilma says her healing journey was "more relational. I was going to see lifers and talking to them and trying to learn what brings about murder and what kind of person does that. I wanted to understand the violence that is in each one of us and how do we deal with the violence."

"We were on a return journey by the time Grant was arrested in 2007," says Wilma.

The preliminary hearing was in 2009, and for the first time the Derksens, their son Syras and daughter Odia heard the whole story. Cliff was concerned that he would be really angry.

"I saw his picture and it was very uncomfortable to see his picture alongside Candace's, but it wasn't anger," he says. "I found myself feeling compassion, sadness

over his life, wondering how he came to this point. I realized then that I had come along the path of forgiveness."

Wilma agrees. "When Grant walked into the court room, I realized he was not a happy person," she says. "We have a beautiful family, we have friends, we have careers, we're supported, we have the best of everything. When he walked in, he had nothing. He is 47, but he looks 67. Justice had been played out. It is so sad to see Candace's life taken and his life taken. It's an ugly justice."

"The story could have been so different if it hadn't been for God and supportive people around us," Wilma says.

The day after the trial, the Derksens, together with family and friends, carried 26 white roses to Candace's grave.

"Our rose-laying ceremony brought us back to her again," says Wilma. "The roses symbolized innocence, starting fresh, forgiving, ending, beginning. We wanted it to end at Candace's grave."

Cliff continues to find an outlet for his feelings through his art; many of his works, especially his sculptures of biblical characters, are a compilation of humour, sadness and tragedy. Wilma, a journalist and writer, blogged and put energy into her work with victims of crime, writing and creating resources and training on trauma. ❧

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLIFF AND WILMA DERKSEN



Cliff and Wilma Derksen



Candace Derksen

Church administrator known for caring approach, gentle humour

Ross T. Bender

June 25, 1929 – April 21, 2011

BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary release

Ross T. Bender, dean emeritus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, died April 21, in Goshen, Ind. In his 81 years of life, he devoted himself to service and leadership in the Mennonite church. He was professor of Christian education at Goshen Biblical Seminary (GBS), Goshen, Ind., and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., over a span of 34 years.

Bender was ordained for ministry in 1958 and was pastor of congregations in Waterloo, Ont., and Lansdale, Pa., and was principal of Rockway Mennonite High School before beginning his seminary teaching. During a leave from 1984 to 1989, he was pastor of Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo. Alongside these ministries, Bender was moderator of Mennonite Church General Assembly from 1981 to 1983 and president of Mennonite World Conference from 1984 to 1990.

Bender began teaching at GBS in 1962. Two years later, both GBS and Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS), the two seminaries that formed AMBS, named him as dean. He gave significant leadership to the academic cooperation of the two schools, which led to the move of GBS to join MBS on the Elkhart campus in 1969. The resulting full integration of the two programs strengthened AMBS as a seminary of both the former Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Another significant contribution Bender made to the seminary and the church was his leadership of the Dean's Seminar, a two-year study project from 1967 to 1969 to develop a model for theological education



Bender

in the Free Church tradition. This project fostered the redesign of how the seminary trained pastors for Mennonite congregations at a time when there was significant ferment in the culture and change in the church, particularly a move to professionally trained and salaried pastors.

In all of the professional roles Bender held—pastor, administrator, teacher—he was valued for his strong and sensitive leadership, sincere faith, caring approach and creative thinking. Those who knew Bender appreciated his gentle humor, often turned on himself, and especially his warmth. The effects of Parkinson disease limited Bender's involvement in AMBS and the wider church in the last two decades. However, his caregivers noted that he kept up-to-date with developments in the church.

Bender was born June 25, 1929, in Tavistock, Ont. In 1950 he married Ruth Steinmann; she died in 1997. Surviving are their five children, Ross Lynn Bender and Sylvia Horst, his wife, of Philadelphia; Elizabeth and Jim Barker of Buhl, Idaho; Michael and Alice Bender of Washington, D.C.; Lenore and Stevan Challenger of Camano Island, Wash.; and Anne and Dave Jacoby of Bel Air, Md. He is also survived by his brother, Harold Bender, of Stratford, Ont.

AMBS marked Bender's death by tolling its bell 81 times, once for each year of his life. A memorial service was held at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on April 26. ☿

Workers begin assignments with MCC

Mennonite Central Committee
AKRON, PA.

A number of Mennonite Church Canada congregants were commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for service after they participated in an orientation at MCC offices in Akron earlier this year:

- Lilian Guenther, of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., has begun a three-year assignment in Guatemala City, Guatemala, as a facilitator of music and arts. Guenther has bachelor's degrees in musical arts and church music from Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man.).
- Ken Ogasawara, of Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., has begun a one-year assignment with MCC Ontario, Kitchener, as a communications assistant.
- Steve Plenert, of Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., has begun an assignment with MCC Manitoba, Winnipeg, as peace coordinator. He has a master of divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Commissioned last fall were:

- Stephanie Epp, of Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask., is serving with MCC Saskatchewan as an administrative and communications assistant. Epp has a bachelor of theology degree from Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.
- Gordon Letkeman, of Morden Mennonite Church, Man., is serving as a material resource/warehouse manager in Plum Coulee, Man.
- Jennifer Wiebe of St. Catherines, Ont., a graduate of Conrad Grebel University College, is serving as a policy analyst in Ottawa, Ont.

Schools directory

Briefly noted

Grebel names Distinguished Alumni Service Award recipient

WATERLOO, ONT. — Betty Pries, a 2005 master of theological studies grad, has been named as this year's recipient of Conrad Grebel University College's Distinguished Alumni Service Award.



Pries

Pries, a mediator since 1993, has been leading and designing workshops and trainings sessions on conflict resolution since that time, and is appreciated as a respected instructor in the conflict management certificate program that is part of Grebel's Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. She has worked as a consultant in a variety of congregational settings and is an active member and co-director of Associates Resourcing the Church (ARC); in this setting she has assisted congregations from various denominations in vision setting, managing conflict and training leaders in communication and conflict management. She has also worked in the business and professional sectors, had her work published in magazines and several training manuals. Pries has led seminars at the Centre for Family Business, and has received her designation as a chartered mediator through Alternative Dispute Resolution Canada. She received her award at the university college's convocation on April 10.

—Conrad Grebel University College

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Calendar

British Columbia

Alberta

June 8: Heritage retreat at Camp Valaqua. Speaker: Abe Janzen, MCC Alberta director. Music by Corpus Christi Choir. For more information, call Erna Goezen at 403-335-8414.

June 11: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon fundraiser. Location TBA. For more information, call 430-637-2510 or e-mail valaqua@xplornet.com.

July 8-9: MCC Alberta Summerfest and Auction (formerly called the Relief Sale), at Sherwood Park, Edmonton. For more information, visit

MCCReliefSale.com.

Saskatchewan

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

June 24,25: RJC musical performances of *Honk* and alumni decade reunions.

July 17-22: Natural Building School, at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Sept. 16-18: Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization junior youth retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

Oct. 4: Youth Farm Bible Camp annual fundraiser at the camp, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Manitoba

May 27-28: MCC Manitoba Quilt

Show and Sale, Winnipeg; (27) 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., (28) 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

May 27-29: Birding retreat at Camp Moose Lake.

June 1: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 7 to 9 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 2: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 10 to 12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 4: Eden Foundation and Mennonite Heritage Village "Tractor Trek" begins at 7:30 a.m. at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. Fifty antique tractors will drive 50 kilometres.

June 5: MCI Saengerfest; worship at 10:30 a.m.; concert at 2 p.m.

June 6-24: CMU's third annual Canadian School of Peacebuilding.

June 16: Annual general meeting of Eden Health Care Services at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at 4 p.m.

June 18: Golf tournament fundraiser for Camp Koinonia.

June 23: Eden Foundation's Ironman Golf Tournament at the Winkler Golf Club. Golf a hundred holes in a day.

July 13: MCC Manitoba's ninth annual golf tournament fundraiser, at the Links at Quarry Oaks, Steinbach, in support of literacy and education in Afghanistan. Register online at Manitoba.mcc.org/golf. For more information, call Paul Friesen toll-free at 1-866-761-1046.

July 15-17: MCC alumni reunion for workers who served in Southern Africa. Visit mcc.org/alumni/reunions.

July 16: Eden Foundation's "Visit the Villages Tractor Trek" from Reinland to Gretna, begins at 8 a.m. in Reinland.

Aug. 23: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising golf tournament, at Bridge Golf Club, Winnipeg.

Sept. 10: Eden Foundation's "Head for the Hills" bike event begins at Colert Beach, Morden, at 8 a.m.

Ontario

May 28-29: Children's Letters to God, a musical presented by the Singer's Theatre Junior Ensemble led by Amanda Brunk of Rockway Mennonite Church, is being performed at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts, Kitchener; (28) 2 and 7 p.m.; (29) 2 p.m.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date Ads Due

June 13 May 31

Focus on Environment/Health

June 27 June 14



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May 29: Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute Reunion, "Celebrating the vision through our memories," at Mannheim Mennonite Church, from 2 to 6 p.m. Bring a potluck lunch and lawn chair. For more information, call Lester Kehl at 519-669-0553.

May 24-27: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church "Quilts for the World" event with guest artist Elizabeth Schneider. Gift shop and appraisals. (24-26) 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; (27) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Proceeds to MCC.

June 1: Stories from the "Mennonite Box" at Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall. Archivist Laureen Harder-Gissing will outline plans for the new library/archives. For information contact Fred W. Martin at 519-885-0220 x 24381 or fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca.

June 4: Annual "Rhubarb and Rhummage Sale" at Crosshill Mennonite Church, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., featuring "All Things Rhubarb" at the "Rhuby" Café, fresh baking and rhubarb, free children's activities and food, and more. Individuals and groups can also bring their own "rhummage" sale items to the sale, sell them and keep the profits.

June 4: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario at Conrad Grebel, Great Hall. Expansion plans for Mennonite Archives of Ontario at 1:15 p.m.; business meeting and Lucille Marr speaking on MCC post-war relief in Germany at 2 p.m.; consultation on genealogy database at 4 p.m. Everyone welcome.

June 9: Lebold endowment fundraising banquet at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 6:30 p.m., with Rebecca Slough from AMBS speaking. Call 519-885-0220 x 24223 for tickets.

June 14: Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp annual chicken BBQ and pie auction, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. Advance tickets required; contact 519-625-8602 or info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 25: Strawberry social at Nithview Home, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m., and again from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Sponsored by the Nithview Auxiliary.

June 18: Mennonite heritage dinner at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, celebrating Walter and Marina Unger's heritage cruises to Russia. Funds raised will go to the Mennonite Archives of Ontario. For tickets call 519-885-0220 x 24223.

Aug. 8-12: Peace Camp at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, for students who have just completed

grades 6, 7 or 8. For more information, e-mail pacs@uwaterloo.ca or call 519-885-0220x24269. Register by July 29.

Aug. 14-26: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/ommc.

Sept. 2-5: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp 50th anniversary camping weekend.

Sept. 21: Peace Day at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Nov. 18: Spirituality and aging lecture at Conrad Grebel University College,

Waterloo. Speaker: Dr. Steven Sandage. Topic: "The role of forgiveness in psychological and spiritual well-being in late life." For more information, or to register, e-mail infocguc@uwaterloo.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.

Mennonite Heritage Dinner

Celebrating Walter and Marina Unger's Heritage Cruises in Ukraine

The proceeds of this entertaining evening support the capital expansion of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario.

Saturday, June 18, 2011 at 6:30 pm

at Conrad Grebel University College

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CMU Athletic Scholars

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



Canadian Mennonite University recognized 11 Scholar-Athletes with a grade point average (GPA) of 4.0 and higher at its annual awards banquet on March 20. Pictured from left to right, front row: Bethany Abrahamson, Nina Schroeder, Jaime Semchuk and Josh Ewert; and back row: Jacob Miller, Holly Goossen, David Epp, Josh Krueger and Graeme Leaver; not pictured: Justin Rempel and Erin Sawatsky. In total, 72 percent of the 2010-11 CMU athletes achieved the Scholar-Athlete designation (a GPA of 3.0 or higher).