

CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 30, 2011
Volume 15 Number 11

A river runs through it

Flood waters rise around
Camp Assiniboia

pg. 14



inside

What's to become of Mennonite schools? 4

Wake-up call for Christianity 12

Pennsylvania confirmed for 2015 MWC assembly 18

EDITORIAL

How much is a Mennonite education worth?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The case for Mennonite schools is an increasingly complicated one as the values of our religious system and that of the dominant culture, of which we are a part, both change.

On the one hand, the vision of church leaders and parents to instill and formulate distinctive Anabaptist values, beginning at an early age (elementary school) and continuing through university and graduate-level theological training, is needed as much or more than when our immigrant parents wanted protection from government-controlled education with an agenda under suspicion.

On the other, there is another theory that children and young people, properly rooted in our core beliefs learned at home and church, are better tested in their faith formation with integration into the larger culture of public schools and universities. Being forced to defend and articulate their beliefs among peers in a more pluralistic setting, Mennonite young people learn much more quickly how their beliefs and lifestyles are countercultural.

Add to those opposing views the fact that Mennonite schools, as noted in our feature on their sustainability for the future (page 4), are struggling financially and attracting fewer and fewer Mennonite students. With fewer than 50 percent of their student bodies comprised of Mennonites, some high schools and universities, are, by

default, becoming good private schools as opposed to those with a parochial curriculum and faculty.

School administrators are wondering increasingly if Mennonite education is indeed a partnership with the church, an enterprise of shared vision with those who claim our particular brand of the Christian faith. I imagine that in their weaker moments they are tempted to give up the struggle.

Parents, too, are feeling the pinch. Is the extra expense worth it, they ask? I am reminded of a humorous photo posted on Facebook of my cousin's husband posing with their son graduating from a church college. The dad held up an empty wallet. The graduate was the recipient of Mennonite education from a young child—elementary, high school and college. While the grad was smiling, the dad had a very strained look on this face, given he had two more children coming along the same route! I couldn't help but share the pain.

Is this enterprise a shared partnership among church, parents and Mennonite educators?

The prospects, in all reality, are dim and diminishing. If our schools, at all levels, will one by one be forced to close, all of these partners would be the losers—at many different levels. And we wouldn't feel the impact until later, as is the sad



outcome too often of decisions driven by subtle changes in the culture and in our own ways of being the church.

You have to give large credit to the imagination, innovation and strategic thinking of our educators. At the post-secondary level, our three institutions—Conrad Grebel University College in Ontario, Canadian Mennonite University in Manitoba and Columbia Bible College in B.C.—have created institutional models that have both merged struggling Mennonite schools of various denominational stripes and have located themselves on the edges of provincial universities to take advantage of broader degree programs for their students while maintaining a Mennonite presence in living arrangements and the offering of church-related courses.

At Conrad Grebel, this arrangement happily works both ways. Non-Mennonite University of Waterloo students can take specific Anabaptist-related courses to give Grebel a total enrolment of 2,800 students in any given year.

What is too often lacking is a matching vision on the part of congregations and parents. Kudos to those congregations making school grants available to their students attending Mennonite schools a part of their budget. Hats off to parents making supreme financial sacrifices to send their children to a local Mennonite school or off to a Mennonite university.

In a public education system that doesn't question the militarism, nationalism and consumerism of the dominant culture—and lacks a specific conscience on creation care in the formation and development of our children's values—I would opt for the caring, nurturing and highly competent teaching environment of our Mennonite schools.

The cost to our Anabaptist faith, without our schools, can't be counted in dollars.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Camp Assiniboia manager David Hogue stands on the flooded pathway to Riverside Chapel. For story and another photo of the sandbagging efforts at the camp, which is bordered by the Assiniboine River on two sides, see page 14.

PHOTO: KATHRYN HOGUE, CAMP ASSINIBOIA

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Guiding values:

-Hebrews 10:23-25

-Accuracy, fairness, balance

-Editorial freedom

-Seeking and speaking the truth in love

-Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

-Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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contents



What's to become of Mennonite schools? 4

In our education feature, Saskatchewan correspondent **KARIN FEHDERAU** explores the challenges and opportunities Mennonite schools across the country are facing.

A river runs through it 14

Earlier this month, volunteers were laying sandbags around the buildings at Camp Assiniboia in Manitoba as the waters of the Assiniboine River rose to flood levels in many parts of the province.

Sexual inclusivity motion to be presented at assembly 15

After meeting with members of Harmony: Mennonites for LGBT Inclusivity, MC Canada will entertain a motion at this summer's national assembly to create open and loving spaces for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in congregations across the country.

The smell of contentment 22

Our Business of Faith series profiles music student-turned-baker **TAVIS WEBER**, who, along with his wife **HEIDI**, has opened the Golden Hearth Bakery in downtown Kitchener, Ont.



Mennonite musicians 'rule' in Winnipeg 24

The Liptonians, Flying Fox and the Hunter Gatherers, and Royal Canoe—all bands with Mennonite members/roots—are making a name for themselves locally and further afield, while encouraging the church to rethink its stand on popular music.

Focus on Seniors 26

Read **EMILY LOEWEN'S** story about Toronto's St. Clair O'Connor Community, a multi-generational housing complex that connects seniors with young families. Plus, **ELSIE REMPEL** ponders the active roles seniors can have in their congregations.

Regular features:

For discussion **7** Readers write **8** Milestones **11**

Pontius' Puddle **11** Yellow Page **29**

Calendar **30** Classifieds **31**

How much is a Mennonite education worth? 2

DICK BENNER

Others are watching closely 8

WILLARD METZGER

When savers and spenders marry 9

SHERRI GROSZ

A double-edged sword 10

MELISSA MILLER

Online NOW!

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Sexuality dominates this week's headlines: **DICK BENNER**
Proximity and resources: **DAVID DRIEDGER**

WESTGATE MENNONITE COLLEGIATE PHOTO



Westgate Mennonite Collegiate students in Winnipeg, Man., show their support for the school's Varsity girls basketball team during a recent competition.

EDUCATION FEATURE

What's to become of

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

SASKATCHEWAN CORRESPONDENT

Gerhard Luitjens, pastor of Hope Fellowship Church in North Battleford, Sask., took his high schooling at RJC and also sent four of his five children through the same school. 'The problem for a lot of kids [today] is that they're involved in other things in their local community and they don't want to leave that,' he says.

Thirty years ago, Anna (a pseudonym) took her first tentative steps through the doors of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont., and entered a very different world than she was used to.

"It was hard explaining to my friends why I was going to a Mennonite high school," she recalls. "They didn't know what to make of it."

Back then, the student population was made up almost entirely of students from solid Mennonite borscht-eating families with a few international students and a couple of Dutch Reformed teenagers tossed into the mix.

Mennonite schools have been part of their communities in Canada for decades. They were born out of early settlers' convictions that it was important to educate their children without government influence, so that God could be included, explains history buff Ed Schmidt. But it took on different significance with each group of Mennonites, he says. Some, like the Sommerfelder in Manitoba, felt so strongly about educating their own children that they left Manitoba and moved to Paraguay when their demands were not supported by the federal government.

Other groups felt less strongly about the issue, but all had an opinion. "In education, we wanted to make our own decisions," he notes.

ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE PHOTO



Clay Buhler, right, a Rosthern Junior College student, leads an activity at the Peace and Justice Class Peace Fair at Rosthern Elementary School, Sask.

Mennonite schools?

A new reality

Fast-forward to today and a different picture comes into focus.

In the Jan. 11 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, Gail Schellenberg wrote a piece called “New realities for Mennonite schools.” Schellenberg, a principal at Rosthern Junior College, Sask., took a hard look at present and future issues of enrolment in Mennonite schools. In it, she spoke honestly about how even simple things like changing demographics in churches can—and will—affect how these schools are run in the future.

But she also presented some startling statistics on the numbers of Mennonite students presently choosing these schools. The percentages of Mennonite students vary widely from province to province:

- In Ontario, only 37 percent of the students at Rockway come from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada churches.
- Manitoba has schools in Winnipeg and Gretna. About half of the students

at Westgate in Winnipeg come from its supporting churches, while more than four-fifths of the students at Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna have Mennonite backgrounds.

• Both Saskatchewan and Alberta governments offer funding to places like Rosthern Junior College (RJC) and Mennonite Simons Christian School, yet the number of Mennonite students remains low.

So why the widely ranging results? Does declining enrolment mean that people just don’t care about their children’s education? Or is all about money? Does a private education just cost too much for most families nowadays?

To compare tuition costs in each of the schools would be unfruitful because local regions face varying economic realities. Cost of living, government funding for church schools and local job markets all play a key role in determining the viability of such a choice.

What church pastors have to say

As church leaders across Canada weigh in on the issue, other variables come to light. Certain assumptions by parents and students can derail good intentions, and lack of communication on the part of Mennonite schools can sometimes result in decisions against an Anabaptist education being made.

Gerhard Luitjens, pastor of Hope Fellowship Church in North Battleford, Sask., took his high schooling at RJC and also sent four of his five children through the same school. “The problem for a lot of kids [today] is that they’re involved in other things in their local community and they don’t want to leave that,” he says. Parents wonder, too, what the difference is if their child goes to a public or a church-based school, he adds.

Jean Lehn Epp, youth pastor at Waterloo-Kitchener Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., sees the issue from a social standpoint. If a Mennonite school hasn’t built relationships with children

from Mennonite families, and if prospective students can't see their own friends attending, then difficulties arise, she says. "If [teenagers] don't have a relationship, there's not that loyalty," she points out. "Those relationships [between school and student] need to be built early, even before Grade 7 and 8." She acknowledges that Rockway has heard those concerns and is working to address them.

Andrew Waithe, youth pastor of Grace Mennonite, Regina, Sask., speaks to the issue from the perspective of too many choices for parents and teens. "Parents are concerned that the academic standards [at RJC] are different from a regular high school," he says. For example, in Regina, students have the opportunity to be in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. For some parents, says Waithe, "there is an expectation that our Mennonite schools should be equivalent to the IB program."

Not so, says Schellenberg, who points out that last year RJC students qualified for \$90,000 in scholarship money. On average, she says, RJC has between five and seven Greystone scholars, which are classified as having marks over 90 in Grade 11.

Parents don't always see the necessity of a spiritual education either, says Waithe. "My kids will do well if I teach them myself," is an attitude he has encountered, adding that some parents find it hard to let their teen go. "RJC is a boarding school. There is a reluctance by parents to send their kids," he says, noting that the majority of his youth group members use the public school system in Regina.

That being said, however, Waithe is quick to point out the upside of living in a residence. "I do see a benefit to being in a Christian community," he says. "There are so many forces being weighed on kids. There are a lot of negative influences." He readily acknowledges that a Christian community like RJC will take a different approach, for example, on an issue like bullying.

Principals respond

With fewer families choosing the Anabaptist path, Mennonite school

With fewer families choosing the Anabaptist path, Mennonite school boards are forced to consider other options. Many chose to open their doors to the community, accepting students from various faith backgrounds, but with the stipulation that the parents and students accept the role of religious instruction in the school.

boards are forced to consider other options. Many chose to open their doors to the community, accepting students from various faith backgrounds, but with the stipulation that the parents and students accept the role of religious instruction in the school.

"In large part, the response we get from students and parents is positive," says Schellenberg. "This is who we are and you have to be comfortable with that," she tells parents.

Other Mennonite schools look for financial solutions elsewhere. In the case of Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary, Alta., with students from Kindergarten to Grade 9, the board took the unusual step six years ago of approaching the public school division to ask about a partnership, because the school—with 25 percent Mennonite students—was struggling.

"We found we couldn't make it," says principal Byron Thiessen.

The Palliser School Division outside the city agreed to incorporate the school as part of its alternative programming, and the new arrangement allows teachers more benefits and a pension.

Thiessen believes the reason fewer families are choosing Mennonite schools is for the sake of convenience. "Families, for the most part, are comfortable with their own community schools," he says. "It's not a priority to go to a Mennonite school" any more.

Ed Schmidt agrees. "There is a phenomenal lack of commitment to our basic tenets of belief," he states. "As our forefathers wanted to make their own decisions about education, parents today do the same. They're still defining what 'Mennonite' means for them."

So with financial struggles and lack

of interest on the part of Mennonite families, is it worth keeping Mennonite schools open?

"We need the church and the church needs us," says Schellenberg pointedly. She believes there is a higher percentage of graduates going into ministry or missions than those coming from a public high school. "Look at your churches. Who is leading worship? Who is teaching Sunday school? That's across Canada, no matter what," she says.

If the church needs the schools, what, then, is the role of the church? Should there be a place in every church budget for student bursaries to these schools?

Terry Schellenberg, former principal of Rockway and now a vice-president at Canadian Mennonite University, believes strongly in the importance of church support and participation. "It's an issue for the church, not just the schools, in the sense that the church has a calling to embrace these schools," he says.

Do the effects of declining enrolment carry over to Mennonite post-secondary institutions? "Just under 50 percent [of CMU students] come from Mennonite contexts," Schellenberg says. "We think that's good. . . . Other denominations are looking to this tradition. I think we have a gift to kids from other backgrounds," he says.

Students respond

Lastly, it's worth looking at what teens today are thinking.

Kyle Siemens, a Grade 12 student from Warman, Sask., took a good look at what RJC had to offer and then chose to go the public route. "There are several reasons as to why I decided not to go to RJC," he says. "One of the main reasons was the cost. RJC isn't cheap. It costs roughly

MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PHOTO



Kindergarten students enjoy playing in the sandbox at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, Alta.

ROCKWAY MENNONITE COLLEGIATE PHOTO



Rockway Mennonite Collegiate students kick up their heels while enjoying a school trip to China earlier this spring.

the same as a year at a post-secondary institution and that was a big drawback, considering I could get the same level of education from the government for essentially free. I also have numerous friends at my current school; I didn't really want to leave them to go to RJC."

Rachel Dueck, a Grade 11 student at RJC, believes passionately in the value of Anabaptist schools. "I decided to come to RJC because I wanted God to be a larger part of my life," she says, feeling that she couldn't be true to herself in the public setting for fear of offending people by expressing her beliefs.

But she also had to relinquish certain musical opportunities. "When I came to RJC, I gave up a brilliant music program at my old school, as well as the opportunity to play my French horn in a band," she says.

"I think that the reason more people aren't coming here is because of the cost," Dueck says, adding, though, "I believe that if people were more aware of the advantages of Mennonite schools like RJC, more people would want to attend."

Luke Warkentin, a Grade 12 student at RJC, believes his choice to go to RJC has led to "a much more meaningful education. It's hard to understand the benefits of a school like RJC until you actually attend," he says. "Although lots of people are unsure about coming to RJC, I would say that 95 percent of students wouldn't think of going back to their old schools once they are immersed in the RJC life."

'If I didn't believe these schools make a significant difference in kids' lives, I wouldn't have put all these years into it.'

(Terry Schellenberg, former Rockway principal)

Final conclusions

Two of the three students mention money as being the reason they or their friends are choosing the public system over Mennonite schools. If teenagers are staying away from Mennonite schools because of cost, what is that saying to church leadership? Where is the support in the churches to help teenagers make a choice based on heart issues rather than financial issues?

"If I didn't believe these schools make a significant difference in kids' lives, I wouldn't have put all these years into it," says Terry Schellenberg, who has worked in Mennonite education for the past 23 years.

Is it time for a second look into how to support future leadership on a national scale, not just leaving each area church and its related schools to do the best they can on their own? ❧

❧ For discussion

1. What percentage of the adults in your congregation attended a church school at some level? Do you agree that fewer young people are choosing Mennonite schools today? What is the major deterrent? Should congregations provide tuition assistance to encourage students to attend Mennonite schools? Does yours?
2. What are the education options in your community at the elementary and secondary level? Do parents have concerns about the values being taught in public schools? How prevalent is home-schooling? How much support would there be for a Christian/Mennonite school in your community?
3. Gail Schellenberg believes that graduates of church schools are more likely to become pastors and church leaders than other young people. Do you agree? Does declining enrolment show a lack of vision and commitment to the church?
4. Menno Simons Christian School in Calgary, Alta., worked out a public-private partnership. Is that a model for other struggling church schools? Should schools that are having financial difficulties simply be closed? How important is it for the church to have input into the education of children?

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.

✉ Stop 'cherry picking' the Bible

RE: "BIBLE TEACHES against women in ministry" letter, April 4, page 12.

Peter Rempel reminds us that the Bible teaches against women in ministry and references Paul's letters to Timothy and the Corinthians as back-up.

Nice cherry picking by Rempel, but he is letting our women off the hook far too easily. There is a more pervasive problem that pertains to virtually all women attending worship in our modern churches: head/face coverings. The Apostle Paul clearly points out that it is shameful for a woman to enter worship without a veil. Yet we blithely ignore this unambiguous exhortation found in I Corinthians 11.

It doesn't end there, of course. We gleefully pick passages to highlight, and ignore others as suits our

FROM OUR LEADERS

Others are watching closely

WILLARD METZGER

It's no secret. Throughout church history, the unchurched have watched Christians closely, ready to assess, evaluate and judge how God's people act and respond to the world around them. Christians judge each other, too, a simple and easy response when disagreements flare up.

At this summer's Mennonite Church Canada assembly, we will read, discuss and debate Part 3 of a very important document and process we have engaged in since 2009: "How to be a faithful church in times of doubt and disagreement."

In Part 1, assembly participants proposed that the church can either repeat what it has said before, change what it has said before, or say something new. In Part 2, we put Part 1 to the test with discussion and discernment on being a pacifist church, recognizing that we are not all of one mind about pursuing peace exclusively through nonviolent, non-

militaristic means.

Part 3 proposes a plan and process to discuss and discern a risky and challenging conversation on human sexuality. In MC Canada, our leadership, through deep Scripture study and prayer, has discerned that it is, in fact, the job of the church to walk towards risky and challenging matters with joy and confidence. Assured of God's Spirit in our midst, discerning difficult topics is the responsibility of the church.

The document we will engage this summer, titled in part "A Plan to Discern Faithfulness on Matters of Sexuality," proposes a four-year study on matters of human sexuality. More importantly, though, it carefully and wisely asks us to consider these questions:

- Will we understand the need for such a process as an unwelcome burden imposed on Christ's body?
- Or will we understand the potential



witness to others that this process offers?

- Will we engage each other with the joy of our vocation, which is to "discern the times [kairos]" (Luke 12:54-56), "test the spirits" (I John 4:1), "be worthy of our calling" (Ephesians 4:1), "live our life in a manner worthy of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27), and be a "cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) to a watching world?

Church leaders are keenly aware that others are watching closely: young people and young adults within and beyond our denomination; our sister Anabaptist denominations in Canada; our sister denominations in the U.S.; the leadership, and beyond, of Mennonite World Conference members; the ecumenical worlds we move in, including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches; the interfaith world we are connected to; disenchanted Mennonites and others who are no longer active in church life; the media, and so on.

Will we discern only with a pre-determined outcome in mind? Or will we be open to a path that has not yet been imagined and cannot be clearly defined?

May those who watch us see a people in discernment who are confident of God's presence. Such a joyful posture will be watched closely.

Willard Metzger is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.

pleasure. So let's stop this cherry picking and start taking the Holy Scriptures seriously.

Now excuse me while I attend to an urgent matter that supersedes anything Paul has to say, in that it comes from none other than our Saviour. I'm referring to his command to anyone wishing to enter the kingdom of Heaven, to sell all that he owns and give the money to the poor.

GORD WILLMS, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Compassion unites, theology divides

I APPRECIATED JOHN Lapp's article identifying factors that have made MCC work well ("What has made MCC work well?" April 18, page 6).

The last item on the list, "MCC is noteworthy as a church agency in using lay—non-ordained—females and males in its executive offices," could have been elaborated upon, as it is quite important. When thinking about what has made MCC successful, I suspect a major factor is the absence of clergy/theologians at

GOD, MONEY AND ME

When savers and spenders marry

SHERRI GROSZ

"But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mark 10: 6-9).

When I was engaged and focused on planning a wonderful wedding day, my mother reminded me that weddings don't make a marriage. As exciting as the wedding day may be, it's the days and years that follow that should really be the focus of our plans.

Would you be surprised to learn that many engaged folks don't actually talk about money or finances before the big day? And if they do, it's likely to be a conversation limited to the wedding budget. Pastors and parents may be uncomfortable talking about money, so couples are often left on their own to sort it out . . . or fight it out. Yet money is often listed as one of the leading reasons for separation and divorce, and it's a common area of fights and disagreements.

We tend to have either "saver" or

"spender" characteristics. Both have positive traits and, when combined, create a healthy, balanced view of money. Savers are anxious about money; they tend to hesitate and look for the cheapest option when they must spend money. Spenders, on the other hand, are carefree and optimistic about money; they believe it will all work out somehow and like to have fun.

Savers need spenders to help them have some fun and enjoy indulgences.



Savers need spenders to help them have some fun and enjoy indulgences.

Spenders need savers to help stretch budgets and consider the future. When they work together, there is balance and health. Spending and saving decisions are filtered through the needs and wants of both parties and measured against the overall goals of the couple. Trust is built and the marriage is much more likely to weather challenges.

When spenders and savers collide, however, the fireworks start. Spenders can resent savers for being miserly and denying their desires. Savers can resent spenders for endangering their financial

health and future. Savers may squirrel away money as protection against an uncertain future. Spenders may keep purchases secret in order to prevent fights. It's a no-win situation where trust is lost and both parties feel they have been wronged and misunderstood.

One young man told me that when he and his wife were engaged, they were invited to share a meal with an older couple in their congregation. After the meal, the older couple shared their process for making financial decisions, and how they determined priorities, including charitable giving. This young man said he was amazed at how transparent and helpful the conversation had been.

As the church, we should be doing everything we can to ensure that mar-

riages are built on the best foundation. That includes open and honest conversations about debt, saving, charitable giving and how to make financial decisions as a couple. How does your church help engaged and married couples begin money conversations?

Sheri Grosz is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

all levels of MCC; this group is often more concerned with correct doctrine and teachings. Lay people are more concerned with compassion.

It might well be that agencies such as Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service and Ten Thousand Villages achieve success as Christian organizations because of the limited influence of clergy and the emergence of compassionate lay people. As someone has pointed out, compassion unites and theology divides. Jesus seemed to pursue the compassionate route.

HENRY NEUFELD, DELTA, B.C.

✉ Inspiring story of inspiring leader

RE: "NOT HER gender, but her age that's an issue," March 7, page 8.

Congratulations to Emily Toews on her recent ordination and congratulations to North Star Mennonite Church, Drake, Sask.

During classes, choir practices and chapel at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., she was a thoughtful, happy, gentle human. We need people like Toews as leaders to inspire our churches to be lamps of God's grace and Christ's loving, caring and challenging presence in the world.

FAMILY TIES

A double-edged sword

MELISSA MILLER

Divorce can be seen as a double-edged sword that cuts two ways, with the potential to bring both pain and healing. With one edge, it ends a marriage and there is great loss and brokenness. At the same time, the sword of divorce severs what has died, and, in doing so, creates new possibilities of life and health. This metaphor was given to me decades ago by a Mennonite pastor whose own parents had divorced when he was a teenager. I have leaned on its wisdom many times as I've been invited to walk with those experiencing divorce.

Currently in Canada, 40 percent to 50 percent of marriages are ending in divorce, a dynamic that affects all of us. As Christians, we hold a core value of marriage as

a lifelong covenant. At the same

time, we hold a value of wholeness and abundant living. Sometimes these values of marriage commitment and personal welfare are in tension. Many of us find ourselves in-between an ideal of marriage "till death we do part" and the reality that we are unable to keep the commitments we have made. If we aren't

in the numbers who have personally experienced marriage break-up, we are surely in the community of family and friends where divorce has been present.

Often the cause of marriage-ending is clear. Abuse, addiction and adultery are identified as covenant-breakers. To that list, I add abandonment, where a partner is physically or emotionally unavailable to provide faithful support and presence. Sometimes the life of a marriage has been sapped by great loss, such as the death of a child or the cost of chronic mental or physical illness. On some occasions, there is a less clearly defined reason, but the outcome is the same.

So how do we respond in our families and in our churches when a marriage

ends? May I suggest we learn from those who are "walking the walk"? Those who know marriage break-up from the inside are our best teachers, with much to offer, borne from their own experience. Here are some things I have learned from those who have known divorce.

Much agony and struggle go before the

decision to separate. Divorce is a painful alternative to a deeper pain of living a lie, or attempting to bear what has become unbearable. It requires courage and strength to end a marriage. Living in a dead marriage is a kind of hell; afterwards, people often wish they would have had the means to end the marriage sooner.

Some friends and family members will turn away when a marriage falls apart, and that hurts. At the same time, surprising companions will come alongside, to share tears or a hug; they are a treasure.

Even if people abandon those who divorce, God does not. In fact, God's grace becomes known in ways that they would previously not have imagined. Many people say that in the season of separation and divorce, they encounter the full scope of God's abundant grace and unending love. Perhaps they received the new life that comes when the sword of divorce cuts away what has died.

For my part, I believe it's still possible



Many people say that in the season of separation and divorce, they encounter the full scope of God's abundant grace and unending love.

to hope for—and work towards—lifelong marriages even as we claim God's unfailing grace to guide us when marriages end.

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

The picture published with the article says so much about Toews. Our job as a community and congregation is to support our leaders so they can maintain the commitment and energy to focus on the ministry they have been called by God to perform. To some are given the gift of ministry. Thanks be to God.

And thanks for the great publication that helps keep us all connected.

**MATTHEW BRAUN AND JULIE BERGEN,
PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.**

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Brenning—Sibel Helene (b. May 4, 2011), to Alex and Bettina Brenning, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

Doell—Kylie Alyssa (b. March 24, 2009), by adoption to Curtis and Corrina Doell, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Doell—Samantha Grace (b. Nov. 10, 2007), by adoption to Curtis and Corrina Doell, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Epp—Nicholas Henry Derksen (b. April 25, 2011), to Ryan and Lorna Epp, Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Hergott—Jorja Geneva Rose (b. May 5, 2011), to Jessica and Jamie Hergott, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Klassen—Colby Peter (b. March 18, 2011), to Darren Klassen and Kerri Banman, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Knoepfli—Chantal Janna-Marie (b. Feb. 9, 2011), by adoption to Hans Peter and Alison Knoepfli, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Loewen—Sebastian Clark (b. April 27, 2011), to William and Ana Loewen, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Robins—Ayden Loren (b. Feb. 20, 2011), to Heidi and Loren Robins, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Schultz—Hannah Kane (b. March 14, 2011), to Samantha and Scott Schultz, Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Yantzi—Zachary William (b. March 16, 2011), to Jason and Jenni Yantzi, Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Trevor Bergen, Karsten Hoehn, Clayton Wiens—North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., May 1, 2011.

Marriages

Bartel/Schmidt—Steven Bartel (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Kaylyn Schmidt at North Star Mennonite, May 7, 2011.

Friesen/Klassen—Joe Friesen and Rachel Klassen, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 7, 2011.

Deaths

Brubacher—Mable (nee Bechtel), 95 (b. Jan. 13, 1916; d. May 2, 2011), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Epp—Gordon, 84 (b. March 19, 1927; d. April 26, 2011), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Funk—William F. (Bill), 96 (d. April 28, 2011), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Gerber—Velma (nee Jutzi), 80 (b. Aug. 9, 1930; d. April 28, 2011), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Krause—Harold, 82 (b. March 2, 1929; d. April 16, 2011), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Sawatzky—Henry, 94 (d. May 3, 2011), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Schmidt—Lothar, 62 (d. April 4, 2011), Pembina Fellowship house church, Morden, Man.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wake-up call for Christianity

BY TROY WATSON



If you are reading this, it means Judgment Day didn't come as predicted or you're not a true believer and missed the Rapture. I'm referring, of course, to Family Radio's certified Bible guarantee that Judgment Day would begin around 6 p.m. on May 21.

I'm sure all the brouhaha of the predicted apocalypse has faded and we've moved on to something else by now, but I'm writing this in the days leading up to May 21 and feel compelled to launch my own sort of prophetic call.

I first became aware of the Family Radio campaign a number of weeks ago while our family was driving to our faith community's Sunday evening gathering. It was then that we noticed a gargantuan sign overlooking the main street heading into downtown declaring the imminent end of the world.

My initial reaction to the imposing billboard of doom and gloom was an unsettling flashback to the time I lived in the southern United States. My second response was one of curiosity. Was this for real? Or was this a hoax, prank or some artist's satirical concept piece on religion?

Once I realized this was serious, the foreboding forecast raised some sobering questions for me.

How did Harold Camping's inane prophecy—based on sloppy numerology and dubious biblical interpretation—spread around the world so successfully and so quickly? How did this 89-year-old civil engineer's end-times calculation come to be posted on more than 2,000 giant billboards across the planet and broadcast non-stop in more than 40 languages on his international radio network that has more than 150 outlets in the U.S.

alone? How did his Family Radio ministry accrue tens of thousands of followers worldwide, accumulate more than \$120 million in assets, and find the resources to launch this audacious "Judgment Day" campaign?

The answer: An enormous amount of time, money and labour from "true believers." The truth is, May 21 would have quietly slipped by like any other spring day if not for the thousands of volunteer hours and millions of dollars donated by Camping's followers.

I don't understand how people continue to fall for "prophetic" preachers like Camping—especially given his

previous erroneous prediction that the world would end in September 1994. Even worse is the fact that most Canadians today associate Christianity with people like Camping and his undiscerning herd of *sheeple* (an urban dictionary.com word meaning "People unable to think for themselves. Followers. Lemmings. Those with no cognitive abilities of their own.").

It's characters like Camping and Reverend Terry Jones and his small Qur'an-burning congregation that, unfortunately, represent Christianity to the world, instead of the countless Christians who have devoted their lives working for peace and justice. The loudest and most mobilized Christian sects have made the words "Christian" and "church" synonymous with anti-gay, anti-science, judgmental self-righteousness, rather than compassion, peace, hope and joy.

I'm outraged we've allowed a few bigoted Bible bullies to so passionately and arrogantly claim to represent the true voice of Jesus that they have drowned out the actual voice of Jesus, who taught that his true followers would be known principally by their love (John 13:35).

I don't know when the end of the world will occur, but I believe the end of the world's hatred and violence, archaic tribalism, segregating ideologies, and antagonistic relationships between faith and science, and between spirituality and reason, must begin now, and it might as well start with us:

- It's time for Christians to focus on making the Earth a more Spirit-filled place, by seeking to develop peace and unity with all people, rather than judging or proselytizing them.
- It's time for the way of Jesus to become known as the way of peace and hope again.
- It's time for Christians to stop wasting time on distractions like eschatological speculation and start investing our energy and money into making the love of God an experienced reality for all on this planet.

I don't understand how people continue to fall for 'prophetic' preachers like [Harold] Camping.

- It's time to make the Christian message about the ridiculous unconditional love of God again, not what Camping and company make it out to be: merely ridiculous.
- It's time for a different brand of Christianity to step forward and represent to the world around us what following the way of Jesus is really about.
- It's time for us to see an end of a paradigm as a beginning of a new thing God is doing.
- It's time for the Anabaptist tribe to focus its role in this current faith revolution.

To be continued . . . ❧

Troy Watson is a Mennonite minister, resident theologian, spiritual director and a founding leader of The Quest, "a different kind of 'church' for life in the postmodern shift" in St. Catharines, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

A spiritual entity and a social experiment

BY MAURICE MARTIN

Having worked in the church, I ponder the question, “What is the church anyhow?” We have all kinds of “holy” language, based in New Testament Scriptures to describe the church. Paul Minear has counted nearly a hundred biblical images for the church.

Sometimes it helps to get away from the old language and coin different words, phrases or metaphors, to see how they might help us understand the church through fresh eyes. So I tried putting two disparate phrases together:

- The church is a spiritual entity.
- The church is a social experiment.

I turned to Acts 6:1-7 to test this hypothesis. According to the writer of Acts, there is no doubt that the church is a spiritual entity. When the Holy Spirit came upon the believers—as described in Acts 2—there was born, as C. Norman Kraus said years ago, “the community of the Spirit.” These seminal beginnings were accompanied, you might say, by a certain spiritual euphoria.

In the chapters that follow, some practical down-to-earth cultural issues emerged, and the church kept having to define and redefine itself. In Acts 6, we see that, while the church was growing by leaps and bounds through the evangelistic work of the apostles, there was an important piece of ministry that “went missing.” That was the care of certain widows who were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

So the apostles gathered the disciples and put a resolution on the floor to bring into being a new church structure: the “board of deacons.” As a “social experiment,” the church is always trying to figure out not only what its core mission is, but also how to manage its life and work together. Faith



never floats free of culture as the church tries to do its work within appropriate structures through which the Spirit also works.

The apostles were hugely “entrepreneurial” church planters. I use that term

deliberately to describe a certain style of minister who, like the businessperson, loves to put energy into starting a new work, but is less energized by maintaining it over the long haul. Fortunately, the apostles caught on that they needed a kind of social experiment in the church that would allow them to be that kind of entrepreneurial-ministering person, but not neglect other important aspects of

We shifted from pastors who were called from the plough to the pulpit, to pastors who have become trained professionals.

ministry that were also needed.

We Mennonites have engaged in many social experiments along the way. I have been involved in several restructuring endeavours, both in Mennonite Church Canada and MC Eastern Canada. The social experiments have to do with how to “do church” and “be the church” for our times, both historically and currently.

We have tried various leadership models, from bishop/minister/deacon teams to other forms of pastoral leadership. We shifted from pastors who were called from the plough to the pulpit, to pastors who have become trained professionals. And we work today at forming collaborative leadership models among pastors and lay leaders.

We have tried various models of congregational life, including anything from

the small house church to something approaching a megachurch, and points in between.

We have experimented with just where we should meet as a church. From the outset in the 16th century, out of necessity we met to worship in a forest, in a barn, in a house, in a boat on the *Zuider Zee*, in the cave of the Anabaptists.

In Ontario’s Swiss Mennonite groups, with which I am most familiar, we have experimented with church building design, moving away from the Old Order meetinghouse style to something more Presbyterian in design, with benches extending ever further towards the back. Then we reverted to something closer to the meetinghouse style because that seems to best suit who we desire to be: the church in community.

Here in Ontario we have “recycled” vacated Methodist or United Church buildings. We meet in a converted laundry shop and an egg-grading station. We meet in a storefront. One of our MC Eastern Canada churches meets in a former liquor store! So it is no wonder that we can sing heartily, “What is this

place where we are meeting? . . . Yet it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here, and know our God is near” (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 1).

So I conclude that we, as a Mennonite church, are indeed both a spiritual entity and a social experiment. Who knows what social experiments we will yet need to engage in as we look to the next 25, 50 or more years? We can maybe take comfort and courage in a verse from “As Tranquil Streams” (*Sing the Journey*, No. 51): “A freedom that reveres the past, but trusts the dawning future more; and bids the soul, in search of truth, adventure boldly and explore.” ☛

Maurice Martin has been both a pastor and regional minister with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

COVER STORY

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID AND KATHRYN HOGUE



Volunteers help lay sandbags around the buildings at Camp Assiniboia on May 7 as the Assiniboine River began to rise.

A river runs through it

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

River levels are changing daily at Camp Assiniboia as the Assiniboine River ebbs and flows around the south and east boundaries of the camp. Unprecedented volumes of water are creating great stresses on the dikes and diversions that lie along the path of this major Manitoba waterway.

David and Kathryn Hogue, who live at the camp near Headingly, Man., and coordinate and manage its activities, have never seen anything like this before. Along with many others who live and work in the Assiniboine Basin, they are being vigilant as they watch and wait to see if the ring dike around the camp can withstand the onslaught.

"We have been told that it is in good shape," says David. "But these are unprecedented amounts of water and this will continue for a long time yet. We have to be vigilant and keep inspecting the dike."

Although the dike is secure, there is considerable seepage. Three pumps work continuously in an effort to keep the seeping water under control and protect the camp

buildings. On May 7, volunteers came out to help lay sandbag around some of them.

The provincial government decided on May 14 to breach one of the dikes near Portage la Prairie, west of the camp, because the river had exceeded its capacity, in an effort to prevent an uncontrolled flood that could damage more than 800 properties down river. Several communities and individual homes lie in the path of this controlled flooding, but the Hogues do not expect it to adversely affect Camp Assiniboia, one of three Mennonite Church Manitoba Camps with Meaning.

"We are not at the top of our dikes, but many in the area are," says David. "We don't know how long this will last. We still have [a metre] before the water level reaches the top of our dike, but the bottom half is already saturated and seeping."

The Camp Assiniboia Forest has been severely affected by the flood, though.

"Where people hike, the beavers now swim," Kathryn reports.

Summer camp is only weeks away and the river is expected to stay at a high level

for about six more weeks.

"Amongst the highlights of summer camp are the campouts in the forest and the ropes course," says David. "Also, the swimming pool is in a low spot, so the river is filling it. The repairs to the holes in the pool that we were planning for this spring won't happen now."

The camp staff may need to find alternatives for the ropes course and for many activities that take place in the Camp Assiniboia Forest, depending on how the water recedes and how quickly drying happens.

Some spring camp bookings have already been cancelled and camp activities are restricted.

"We go week to week and group to group," says Kathryn. "Younger school groups especially are a concern because we don't always know what supervision they have, and the water is high and moving fast."

"Things change daily as to what we can expect," she adds. ☼

Sexual inclusivity motion to be presented at national assembly

Decision follows meeting between church leaders and Harmony group

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

While topics regarding sexuality have dominated the mainstream headlines in the past several weeks, Mennonite Church Canada and area church leaders have made a move that points to a shift in values regarding sexuality within the conference.

On May 14, MC Canada general secretary Willard Metzger and chief operating officer Vic Tiessen, and Ken Warkentin, executive director of MC Manitoba, met with members of Harmony: Mennonites for LGBT Inclusion. The grassroots initiative within MC Canada desires to create open and loving spaces for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in congregations and conference bodies. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a motion Harmony plans to present at the MC Canada assembly

in Waterloo, Ont., in early July.

This motion will ask MC Canada to acknowledge that:

- There are non-heterosexual individuals who are struggling within its congregations, whether or not those individuals have publicly acknowledged their orientation, and whether or not they are in a relationship with another person; and
- That all Christians have a legitimate place in God's kingdom generally, and in the church specifically.

The motion also calls on MC Canada to:

- Urge its area churches and congregations to take seriously the call to continue in loving dialogue, and to fully embrace—by inviting and welcoming into their midst—all persons, including their non-heterosexual members, adherents and neighbours; and

- Be encouraged to expedite the present “Being a Faithful Church” process, especially as regards to education and discernment on matters of sexuality.

The timing of this motion is especially important to Harmony, since it was 25 years ago that a motion on sexuality—known as the Saskatoon Resolution—was presented and adopted at a national assembly.

That resolution reads in part: “We understand the Bible to teach that sexual intercourse is reserved for a man and a woman united in marriage, and that violation of this teaching is a sin. It is our understanding that this teaching also precludes premarital, extramarital and homosexual sexual activity.”

“In the past, the Saskatoon Resolution has been used as a tool to make non-heterosexual people feel excluded,” said Ben Borne, a coordinator of Harmony and the incoming student council president at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. “It is certainly outdated, because of the language and the wording used.” He said the Harmony motion is meant to do what the Saskatoon Resolution could not: include non-heterosexuals in the church.

“This is a resolution to call on congregations to embrace their [non-heterosexual] brothers and sisters,” said Erwin Warkentin,



MC Canada general secretary Willard Metzger and MC Manitoba executive director Ken Warkentin (photo left) meet with Ben Borne, one of the coordinators of Harmony: Mennonites for LGBT Inclusivity (photo right), to discuss a motion on sexual inclusivity at this summer's MC Canada assembly.

a member of both Harmony and Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

Harmony believes that the Saskatoon Resolution, through its outdated language, has led to a deep struggle with unspoken pain, resulting in silence for individuals, their families and communities, and has led to schisms, withdrawals and expulsions of individuals, their families and supporting congregations within MC Canada.

For Borne, being able to meet with senior Mennonite church representatives symbolizes the relationship Harmony hopes to build with the national church. "It shows that Mennonite Church Canada is interested in what their own members are doing," he said.

According to Metzger, putting forward

this motion that would hold the church accountable for "loving dialogue, is a message we always need to hear"

Looking ahead, Metzger is prepared for difficult discussions regarding sexuality at the conference.

(See his *From Our Leaders* column, "Others are watching closely," on page 8.)

"The General Board is committed to walk towards difficult conversations, confident that when God's people gather, the Spirit of God is in the midst," he said.

The Harmony motion is scheduled to go through the Resolutions Committee on July 6 at the assembly. It will be given a 20-minute time slot.

"That's more time than any other resolution," Tiessen noted. ❧

more attention to is young adult ministry. Such a ministry is included in some of the youth pastors' job descriptions and they are looking for ways to minister effectively to this group.

"On one hand, young adults are deeply engaged in church life, and, on the other hand, a number are disengaging," she said. "The issue may look different in rural and urban areas, but often when young people complete high school it is a time when some begin to disengage. We want to learn how we can be more faithful and walk with young adults. We want to learn from each other and help each other."

Fifteen out of 20 youth pastors regularly participate in the semi-annual gatherings. In addition to being a support to each other, they look for ways to be a support to those churches without youth pastors. Last year, they invited senior youths to an intensive Bible study retreat. They are planning a similar retreat this fall from Nov. 10 to 11.

"What is absolutely thrilling and hopeful is the number of people around the circle who are under the age of 30 and passionate about the life of the church," Giesbrecht said of the youth pastors. "They are faithful, gifted and excited people offering the church a real gift as they work at discipleship and church formation."

Some of Giesbrecht's enthusiasm for her ministry can be glimpsed online at mennochurch.mb.ca. ❧

Manitoba youth pastors plan for the future

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

On April 15, youth and young adult pastors from Mennonite Church Manitoba congregations gathered at Camp Assiniboia for a day-long retreat. These semi-annual retreats are times of worship, sharing and praying together. They provide a welcome opportunity for these pastors to support and learn from each other in a challenging and exciting ministry.

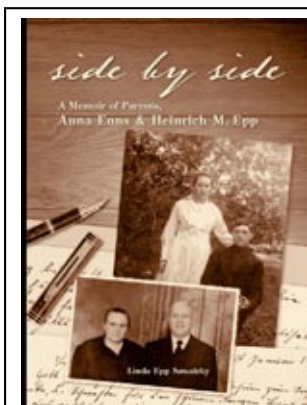
At this retreat, strong interest was expressed in forming a volunteer service team for the National Church Planting

Conference, which takes place in Winnipeg from Nov. 15 to 17.

"Many youth pastors have an interest in attending this event because of their passion for a growing church and being part of a church that grows," said Kathy Giesbrecht, director of youth ministry for MC Manitoba.

MC Manitoba has agreed to provide lodging for those youth pastors who come from outside the city.

An area that the pastors want to give



Side by Side, A Memoir of Parents, Anna Enns and Heinrich Epp, is an account of the public and private life of my parents who emigrated from Caucasus, Russia in 1924. The effects of war and famine, poverty and illness, motivated this young couple to leave family and all they had known to seek a better life in a new country.

They farmed at Lena, MB and moved to a farm at Mt. Lehman, BC in 1945. Heinrich was a leading minister at Lena and an Elder in the West Abbotsford Church. He also served on the Mennonite Relief Committee and the Canadian Board of Colonization.

Contact the author, Linda Epp Sawatzky at:
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AMBS president Sara Wenger Shenk answers questions as David Martin, MC Eastern Canada executive minister, moderates her presentation at Floradale, Ont.

'Practical theologian' takes seminary helm

Sara Wenger Shenk speaks to constituency in Ontario

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

FLORADALE AND LEAMINGTON, ONT.

"I'm a practical theologian who has done my primary work trying to make sense of the stuff of our daily lives in light of God's presence in the every day," said Sara Wenger Shenk in both Leamington and Floradale. "I never anticipated seminary leadership, but it's become one of the joys of my life."

Wenger Shenk spoke during a swing through southwestern Ontario to meet Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) constituency, graduates and supporters in early April.

She used extended metaphors to describe the work of the seminary. She likened community to a wheel with a hub, spokes and a rim. Communities begin with family (the hub) joined to others through spokes (all kinds of people and gifts) in order for the community (the rim) to thrive.

In both presentations she spoke of the seminary being a house to provide spiritual shelter for people in an increasingly post-Christian culture. This house provides a

place for new leaders to come to ask their questions; develop their skills; and gain understanding in Scripture, worship and mission.

While there are many "houses" in an increasingly post-denominational Christian world, AMBS affords learning in Anabaptist

priorities, something she said that the larger Christian world is interested in. At a gathering of seminary professors this winter, she was told that most seminary professors would choose Mennonite as their denomination of choice after their own.

Shenk outlined some of the pressures facing the seminary: financial pressure, declining enrolment and an unwillingness of many students to relocate.

There is also pressure on the church, as the fastest growing religious preference today is "no religious preference," she said.

But AMBS is working to face those pressures with "new faculty, design team, new partnerships, Church Leadership Center, New Anabaptists Leaders Scholarship, Center for Faith Formation," she said.

Wenger Shenk stressed the need for continued partnerships between AMBS and schools like Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. The unwillingness for students to move is only partially answered by extension courses and online education, both of which are high on AMBS's priority list, she said.

Seminary is not just about knowledge and skills, but about forming people into spiritual and church leaders. She said that this is an ongoing issue for schools like AMBS and Grebel: How to form leaders who are "focused on the one thing, so we all in one voice say, 'I am the Lord's servant. It is my mission to share the peace of Christ in everything I do and say.'" ❧

With files from Barry Bergen in Leamington.

/// Staff changes

Pastor welcomed back, admin assistant steps down

HAWKESVILLE, ONT.—Hawkesville Mennonite Church had a farewell breakfast on March 27 for Steve Brnjas, who served as interim pastor for four months while Perry Bartel was on sabbatical. That morning, Brnjas was presented with a card that was signed by most of the congregation and he spoke about the light yoke that he was blessed with. The congregation then blessed him with a circle of prayer. On April 3, the church welcomed Bartel back with a noon potluck meal. A week later, Hawkesville Mennonite thanked Anna Brubacher for the dedication and service as she stepped down as administrative assistant after 12 years; she was presented with a figurine of "Footprints in The Sand" made by a local crafter as a token of appreciation.

—BY ELO WIDEMAN

Pennsylvania confirmed as site for 2015 MWC assembly

Plea for visa advocacy accompanies decision to hold world gathering in the U.S.

BY BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER

Mennonite World Conference
TAIPEI, TAIWAN

With eyes wide open about the visa challenges faced by international participants, especially youths, the Executive Committee of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) agreed on May 9 to hold the next global assembly in the United States in July or August 2015, in Harrisburg, Pa.

The action, taken at the committee's annual meeting in Taipei, was in response to a formal invitation from MWC's four member churches in the U.S.: the Brethren in Christ (BIC) General Conference, the Conservative Mennonite Conference

(associate member), Mennonite Church U.S.A., and the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

After considering an extensive feasibility study by a task force, the committee endorsed the Harrisburg State Farm Show Complex as the assembly venue. The inviting churches will decide between two available dates: July 21 to 26 or Aug. 4 to 9.

The discussion preceding the decision was dominated by concern about the difficulty many global visitors will face in getting visas. Representatives of the Young

Anabaptists Network, meeting at the same time as the Executive Committee, presented an impassioned plea that the American churches work hard at advocating for youths who want to attend the Global Youth Summit associated with the assembly, since the U.S. currently places severe restrictions on visitors from many parts of the Global South, particularly those between 18 and 25 years of age.

"U.S. visa refusal is more likely with young people, who may not have significant bank statements or assets to show a steady job or family to come back to," explained Marc Pasqués of Spain in an interview. Pasqués is the European youth network representative. "Then there is the fact that the vast majority of young people in Africa, Asia and Latin America could not afford to travel overseas."

"Can people still call it a 'global' youth summit when there is a risk that the face of the global church may not be adequately represented [at the youth summit]?" wondered Elina Ciptadi, outgoing Indonesian member of the youth network.

MWC works to nurture Anabaptist identity

Executive Committee meetings also include budget discussions, welcome of 100th member

BY BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER

Mennonite World Conference
TAIPEI, TAIWAN

At its annual meeting earlier this month in Taipei, the Executive Committee of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) reviewed and discussed updates from the Faith and Life Commission on two draft documents that seek to nurture Anabaptist identity. The documents, which may eventually become available as teaching tools and references are:

- "A holistic vision statement of the 'Anabaptist Vision' exploring fellowship, worship, service and witness"; and
- "The Anabaptist tradition: Historical roots; central theological themes; contemporary significance."

American John D. Roth, newly appointed as secretary of the Faith and Life Commission, presented a proposal for "The MWC global Anabaptist profile project." The

research project, based at Goshen College, Ind., where Roth teaches, would be independently funded but overseen by MWC. It would randomly select 25 national churches for in-depth study of what Anabaptist-related churches believe and practise. Based partly on a smaller survey conducted among churches relating to Eastern Mennonite Missions, the project would help MWC in its discernment of how best to serve its member churches in the future.

"We need to look at this in light of the commission's discussions," Iris de León-Hartshorn of the U.S. cautioned, referring to the difficulty that MWC's four commissions have in finding the funds and time to do their work. "The reality is that we can't do it all," she said.

The proposal was approved, with the proviso it not

[T]he U.S. currently places severe restrictions on visitors from many parts of the Global South

Bert Lobe, North American staff representative for MWC and part of the feasibility group, told committee members that the Harrisburg area is well endowed with Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations and institutions, and thus presents rich possibilities for volunteer participation and personal connections. Harrisburg is also close to many historical sites that are important to North American BICs and Mennonites.

In a related action, the Executive Committee also accepted the invitation of MWC member churches in Indonesia to hold the 17th assembly in that country in 2021. Indonesia's three Mennonite church bodies are home to about 90,000 baptized members. 卐



Members of the Young Anabaptist Network, who met in Taipei at the same time as the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee, insist that support for global youths in overcoming visa barriers be part of the planning for the 2015 assembly, to be held in Harrisburg, Pa. Pictured from left to right, standing: Young Anabaptists Melani Susanti of Indonesia, Tigist Gelagle of Ethiopia, Rodrigo Pedroza Garcia of Mexico, Kristina Toews of Canada, and Sumana Basumata of India; and seated: Executive Committee members Adi Walujo of Indonesia, Edgardo Sanchez of Argentina, and Sandra Campos Cruz of Costa Rica.

detract from other MWC priorities and that it not be dominated by theological and cultural questions that come only from the Global North.

Transitions and assembly plans affect budget

MWC's new director of finance and administration, Len Rempel, presented a financial report that showed the organization in good financial health, despite the global recession. While the Restricted Fund balance is currently at \$1.2 million, it will be brought down significantly as the leadership transition is completed in the next year, and especially as MWC prepares for Assembly 16 in 2015.

The Executive Committee passed a revised 2011 Unrestricted Fund budget of just over \$1 million. The 2012 budget was also approved for \$991,000, while projections for 2013 and 2014 show a decrease in expenses to under \$900,000 in each year as MWC moves beyond the transition and begins preparing for the next assembly.

Other actions

The Executive Committee:

- Accepted the nine-congregation Iglesia Evangelica Menonita de Chile (the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Chile) as the 100th member church of MWC.
- Accepted the International Brethren in Christ Association as an associate member, a category of membership that can apply to networks of churches.
- Agreed to appoint an MWC member to the joint governing council of Mennonite Central Committee in its new structure.
- Heard updates on two developing conversations with other world communions: a trilateral dialogue with Lutherans and Catholics on baptism; and a conversation initiated by the world body of the Seventh Day Adventists, who are rediscovering and wanting to explore their Anabaptist roots.
- Approved the formation of a standing task force, with youth representation, charged with creating the annual World Fellowship Sunday worship materials.

Women feast on 'the Jesus diet'

Wellness of body and soul the theme for MC B.C. Inspirational Day

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
VANCOUVER, B.C.

Food and spirituality combined when B.C. Mennonite women assembled for their annual Inspirational Day at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church on April 30. The theme for the day was "Feasting and fasting: The Jesus diet."

The theme was carried out even for the noon meal. Instead of what many would call a "typical" meal for a Mennonite gathering, participants partook of the kind of Middle Eastern food Jesus may have eaten: fish and bread (tuna on pita sandwiches), lentil soup, olives, almonds, and fresh fruit, including dates and figs.

The afternoon's three speakers all focused on aspects of food and wellness that affect the body and soul.

Katrina Goertzen, a nutritionist and member of Sherbrooke Mennonite, spoke on the general topic, "What/how would Jesus eat?" She suggested his diet might have included simple foods and locally grown or produced foods, such as fruits

and vegetables, herbs, eggs, cheese, nuts and figs. She reminded listeners not to let food become an idol, and talked about the different ways Jesus dealt with food in accordance with Jewish dietary laws. "[Jesus] feasted, he fasted and he shared meals," she said.

Dr. Helen Eng, a family physician, spoke on taking care of the physical body that God has created. Acknowledging that, although the expected lifespan of a Canadian woman has risen to age 87, the top causes of death continue to be heart attack, stroke and cancer. People realize that they need to eat healthier and exercise, but often have trouble getting started and remaining motivated, she said. Eng gave practical suggestions, such as eating slowly, choosing healthy foods and doing a variety of exercises.

Concluding the afternoon, Ingrid Schultz, pastor of First United Mennonite Church of Vancouver, spoke on "Come,



The theme for this year's B.C. Mennonite women's Inspirational Day was "Fasting and feasting: The Jesus diet."

taste and see the goodness of the Lord." "God provides us with everything we need to lead healthy lives," she said. Just as fast food can be quick and non-nutritious, so can prayer done quickly and shallowly can be non-satisfying. "We don't linger long enough to acknowledge God's generosity, knowing where our food comes from," she said.

Schultz talked about the communal aspect of food, saying that "every meal shared in love with others is a feast," and said that ancient Jews washed their hands at mealtime not only for sanitary reasons, but because food was considered to be holy.

She also acknowledged that today's culture is obsessed with food, and this can cause such problems as overeating or misuse of food through disorders such as anorexia, bulimia or binge eating. When food becomes something it is not intended to be, she said believers need to consider what void they are using food to fill: sadness, shame, a desire to hide?

Lastly, Schultz talked about how fasting can deepen a Christian's love relationship to God. Fasting can be a holy encounter with God, self and others, she said, urging those who fast to be accountable to another believer.

Twenty-five women in Mennonite Church B.C. congregations who had died

/// Briefly noted

Saskatchewan women focus on 'God's gift through health issues'

LAIRD, SASK.—Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite Church welcomed 75 women on April 30 for the annual Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day. The theme for this Enrichment Day was "God's gift through health issues." Myrna Sawatzky told of raising a daughter with attention deficit disorder, who is now a young woman with a family of her own. Mary Krause spoke of her journey, together with her husband, after he was diagnosed with a debilitating illness. Tena Siemens, who suffered a devastating stroke when she was 55, spoke of the long road to recovery and acceptance. All three emphasized how important prayer, faith in God, and the support of family, church and community were in their experiences. An important item of business was a constitutional change that will welcome all women who attend a Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregation to participate in Women in Mission activities whether or not they belong to one of the 28 church women's groups. This complies with a Mennonite Women Canada recommendation and was affirmed by all those present.

—BY EILEEN EWERT

during the past year were recognized in a memorial service. The day's offering of \$3,709 will be split among several ministries: Camp Squeah will receive half, with the other two portions going to the Samuelito Day Care Centre in Bolivia and the Refugee Food Bank at Sherbrooke Mennonite. ✂

✂ Briefly noted

Eastern Canada women called to 'leap out in faith'

WELLESLEY, ONT.—Susan Allison Jones used the illustration of zip lines throughout her testimony of "leaping out in faith" at the Enrichment Day held April 16 at Maple View Mennonite Church for the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Allison Jones said her journey away from a job she enjoyed in a community she loved, to the next place that God was calling her and her family, was like harnessing herself to a zip line—a small cable suspended over a cliff. She shared stories and pictures of her family's six years in Botswana, including the learning curve, the blessings, the seed planting, and eventually another leap of faith when returning to Canada. Among the seeds planted during her ministry in Botswana was the dream to have a Vacation Bible School troupe go to Botswana. With human logic it seemed to be an overwhelming, expensive dream, but God put the pieces together and three young women took the leap of faith. David Martin, executive minister of MC Eastern Canada, also brought greetings, affirming the contributions of the women's group. With enthusiastic anticipation of her new role as president of Mennonite Women Canada (MW Canada), Liz Koop presented the MW Canada report and encouraged everyone to take part in the MC Canada assembly in Waterloo, Ont., specifically the women's luncheon on July 8.

—BY PHYLLIS RAMER

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- EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS (September 22-October 3)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)
- FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)
- BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)
- OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)

2012 TOURS

- AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)
- JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)
- GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)
- VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)
- EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)
- FOLLOWING the STEPS OF MOSES (April 16-27)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-11)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)

2013 TOURS

- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)
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- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
- MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)
- MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct. 12-22)
- SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (Oct. 13-22)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (Nov. 12-21)
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GOD AT WORK IN US

The smell of contentment

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

KITCHENER, ONT.



“There are some things I don’t understand,” opines Bruce Weber about his nephew, Tavis Weber. “The guy goes to school in music for four years and then he goes and buys a bakery.”

Four years as a voice major at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., had made it clear to Weber that there were parts of a music career that were not to his liking. “[In music] you basically have to job interview for anything you want to do,” he says. “I don’t like job interviews and didn’t like the thought of doing that for everything I wanted to do.” He also admits to being uncomfortable with being a voice teacher because he doesn’t want to “mess people up.”

He likes cooking and baking at home for himself and his wife Heidi, so he looked into cooking but found that working in a restaurant kitchen was very stressful. When the couple heard that the Golden Hearth Bakery in downtown Kitchener was up for sale, they thought about it. Six months later, he worked with the departing owners for three weeks and became the boss on May 10, 2010. Since Heidi works for the Waterloo Region Homes for Mental Health, they hired Nate Salter as their only employee.

People who come in to shop are looking for something different than mass-produced breads found in the average grocery store. Golden Hearth is an artisanal bakery producing mostly whole-grain, organic, hand-made breads, cookies, croissants, squares and granola.

This is a place where Weber’s Mennonite roots show in his concern for the environment and local farmers. Whole-grain flours come from Oak Manor Farms near Tavistock, and unbleached flour—for the few ‘white’ products—comes from New Life Mills in Hanover, both within the proverbial 100 miles.

Other themes that run through Weber’s



Tavis Weber checks on loaves of fresh-baked whole-grain whole-wheat bread at the Golden Hearth Bakery he owns with his wife Heidi in downtown, Kitchener, Ont.

life are those of giving to the community, pragmatism, gratitude, pacifism and service. Leftover products go to the House of Friendship, a Kitchener organization reaching out to those on the margins of society.

The creativity of working with his hands, the week-to-week regularity, the sense of making something worthwhile and the immediate results—“You know within a half an hour if you’ve done something wrong”—are joys for Weber. He likes the independence of being his own boss, although going to bed at 7 p.m. on Friday for the 2 a.m. start on Saturday morning is a definite dislike.

While it would be difficult to live on the income of the bakery alone at this point, he hopes to grow the business, not to become huge but to live well. The business, on the corner of Cedar Street and King Street East, is open from Wednesday to Saturday. Besides a regular flow of customers coming through the front door, Golden Hearth

also supplies bread and other baking to a dozen or so local restaurants and stores.

Like many young adults who grew up Mennonite, Weber has not felt at home in the church for a long time. A small group of like-minded friends meet occasionally to talk about their spiritual walks together, but this is a recent development for Weber, who felt forced to go to church and found that a world religions course at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, opened his eyes to what he sees as many potential paths to God. He had a hard time with God for a number of years until proselytizing atheists turned him off and renewed an openness towards God in him. He wants room to question, to hold provisional answers, to explore other spiritualities.

In the long run, he hopes to contribute to the community as an entrepreneur and an individual, raise a family with his wife, and live a good life in Waterloo Region. In spite of his Uncle Bruce’s consternation, he says of buying the bakery, “I’m glad I did it.” ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Who are the Mennonites in South Africa?

BY KAREN SUDERMAN
Mennonite Church Canada

It's often difficult to describe the fact that my husband Andrew and I are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers, since many in South Africa do not know who Mennonites are. We either have to give a brief description of our work with the Anabaptist Network in South Africa or a longer version that describes the 500-year history from which we come.

A recent encounter helps describe what we do.

We were in Soweto, out for lunch with Mpho Putu, the pastor of a church in the same township. He and Andrew were deeply engrossed in conversation, while I had a greater preoccupation: our infant daughter, Samantha, who hadn't slept well the night before and was having a particularly fussy day.

I had tried bouncing her, feeding her, cuddling her and walking with her in my arms, and was beginning to run out of patience. I decided to carry Samantha on my back, a wonderful practice that I've learned as a mother here. There are two things that we've observed about carrying babies in such a way: babies on their mother's backs rarely, if ever, are fussy or unhappy, and it is even more rare to see a white woman carrying her child this way.

I walked around with Samantha on my back in the hope that she would fall asleep. Slowly I felt her little body relaxing against mine, so I made my way back to my seat. Just before I reached our table, a man with a huge smile on his face came up to me. He thrust his hand out to mine and said with enthusiasm, "Hello! I love the way you're carrying your baby! This is beautiful! I'm wondering if I might be able to take your picture."

I agreed as he kept repeating, "This is beautiful, this is beautiful."

He thanked me, then tickled Samantha's cheeks and asked her name. When I told

him, he responded excitedly, "We must give her a Zulu name!" Smiling, I told him Samantha's Zulu and Xhosa names.

Again, he repeated, "This is beautiful." He then looked me in the eye and asked, "Where were people like you during apartheid? We need people like you." He smiled, shook my hand again and was gone. The encounter was brief and wonderful.

Creating spaces

This is what we do here in South Africa. We create spaces for something different to happen, spaces where people can come together to converse, commune and learn to know one another despite race or socio-economic standing. Bringing people together in such a way is significant in South Africa. Despite the fact that apartheid officially ended 17 years ago, separation and division are still strong.

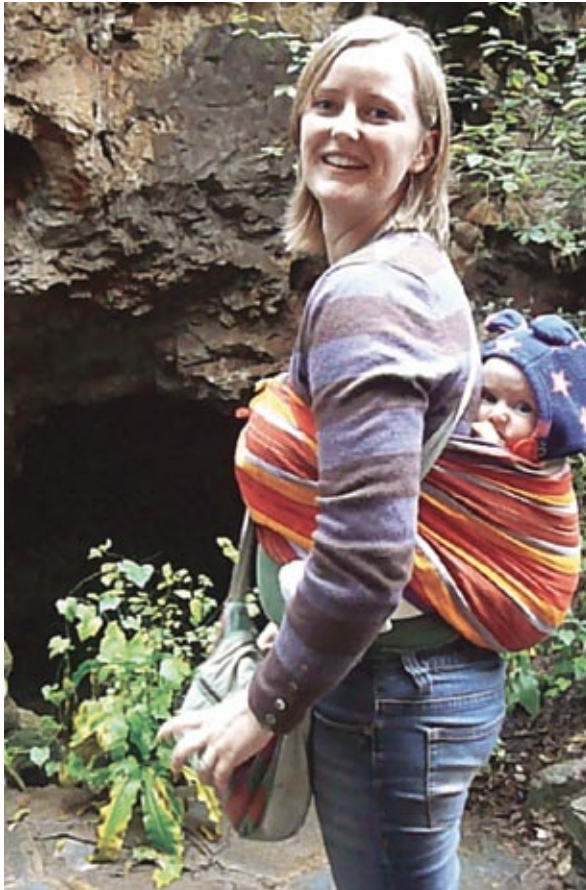
On April 30, during an extensive tour of the country, our network's theological forum discussed "discipleship amidst empire." The forum brought together 20 people, ranging from Dutch Reformed Afrikaners to Brethren in Christ pastors and a pastor from an independent church in Soweto.

Somehow, the space created that evening was immediately safe, which is rare here. All members of the group felt free to ask questions and talk together, more than likely with a higher degree of honesty than they had experienced before.

Small but amazing things happen when spaces like these are created. People from different backgrounds, races and socio-economic standings begin to recognize each other as children of God, creating the opportunity for new types of relationships to be built. People seized such opportunities that evening.

As the Anabaptist Network in South Africa develops, we are excited to see how we can continue to create these nurturing spaces. In our quest to explore, embrace and embody a radical lifestyle centred around God's reconciling vision for the world, and from drawing on the collective wisdom found within the Anabaptist movement, the network seeks to walk with, support and grow communities of peace, justice and reconciliation here. ✚

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN SUDERMAN



Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Karen Suderman carries daughter Samantha on her back South African-style. Suderman, Canadian Mennonite's former advertising representative, and her husband Andrew head up the Anabaptist Network in South Africa.

ARTBEAT

Mennonite musicians 'rule' in Winnipeg

Church needs to rethink its stand on popular music, says local Mennonite pastor and music critic

BY AARON EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Writers with Mennonite roots, like David Bergen, Miriam Toews and Di Brandt, have long dominated southern Manitoba's literary scene. Now, the community's music scene is experiencing a similar sort of influence.

One of the most sought-after recording engineers and producers in Winnipeg, John Paul Peters, was brought up Mennonite. Michael Petkau Falk, artistic director of the West End Cultural Centre, a 400-seat concert venue in Winnipeg's Spence neighbourhood, has similar roots.

When it's not being used to record choirs or Camps With Meaning CDs, the recording studio at Mennonite Church Manitoba has been used to produce albums by Mahogany Frog, a progressive experimental rock band, as well as The Other Brothers, an acclaimed roots duo.

And in February, when the local alternative weekly published its quarterly round-up of albums by local bands, hardcore act Comeback Kid, vocal jazz ensemble Chic Gamine, award-winning pop-rock quartet The Liptonians, and horn-laden theatrical rockers Flying Fox and the Hunter Gatherers all garnered rave reviews. Each band features members with roots in the Mennonite church.

But while some of these musicians no longer affiliate themselves with the church, a handful still hang on to their ties with MC Canada.

Paul Schmidt, the trombone player in Flying Fox and the Hunter Gatherers, is one of those musicians. Formerly the youth pastor at Carman Mennonite Church, Man., Schmidt now attends Home Street Mennonite in Winnipeg.

"I enjoy playing music, and God created me, so I'm out there doing what God's given me a passion for," the 28-year-old says of how his faith influences his work with the band. "I think Christians have a job of figuring out the best way to live a good life, . . . so as an artist I try to be a part of [music] that is really exploring what the good life is supposed to look like."

Whether it was The Guess Who in the 60s or today's The Weakerthans, Winnipeg has long been known for its vibrant music scene. Some cite the city's isolation and freezing winters as the reason why so many people stay inside, form bands and hone their skills on the guitar and drums.

But why are Mennonites dominating Winnipeg's music scene right now?

For Bucky Driedger, singer-guitarist for The Liptonians and experimental pop-rockers Royal Canoe, part of the answer comes down to numbers while part can be traced back to Mennonite tradition. "There are a lot of Mennonites in Manitoba," the 25-year-old says simply, adding, "I think [the Mennonite church] is a culture that regards music very highly, so it's natural for Mennonite youth or young people to have an interest in making music, whether it's rock music or choral music or whatever."

The Liptonians have toured across Canada five times and won a Western Canadian Music Award for their self-titled 2008 debut album. Their second album, *Let's All March Back Into the Sea*, was released this past February. *The Globe and Mail* described the disc as "brainy, entertaining stuff, from a band

PHOTO COURTESY OF KILLBEAT MUSIC



Although The Liptonians are not a religious band, singer-guitarist Bucky Driedger, left, says his Mennonite heritage has influenced the way he writes the band's lyrics.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HITS RECORDS



Most of the members of *Flying Fox* and *the Hunter Gatherers* have Mennonite roots, including Paul Schmidt, second from right.

'I enjoy playing music, and God created me, so I'm out there doing what God's given me a passion for. I think Christians have a job of figuring out the best way to live a good life, ... so as an artist I try to be a part of [music] that is really exploring what the good life is supposed to look like.'

(Paul Schmidt of Flying Fox and the Hunter Gatherers)

that can do it all, and very well."

Driedger says that, while The Liptonians are not a Christian band with a religious agenda, his Mennonite faith influenced the way he wrote lyrics for *Let's All March Back Into the Sea*. "I got really sick of saying the word 'I,' which is a very Mennonite thing," Driedger says. "I kind of got sick of writing cheesy, introspective songs, like 'I'm so sad,' or whatever, so I think trying to write in a way that can relate to more people, so more people can take the lyrics to heart, is something I've definitely done a lot of thinking about."

Reconsidering the way it

thinks and speaks about popular music is something the Mennonite church would

PHOTO COURTESY OF KILLBEAT MUSIC



Bucky Driedger, second from right, and his Royal Canoe band mates.

do well to do, says Jeff Friesen, who, in addition to working as an associate pastor at Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, hosts two shows on a local campus radio station and writes about music for a local magazine.

"[Popular music] is an art form that is all-encompassing in a way. You can't really escape pop music, as hard as you try," says the 29-year-old, who is completing his master of arts in theological studies degree at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, and will explore popular music in his thesis. "You walk into a mall and you're just bom-

barded with [popular music], and you can either slough off those experiences as kind of extraneous and non-meaningful, or you can allow yourself to be surprised in such a way that something new can be exposed to you."

Driedger agrees, adding that music and art are important parts of making church a meaningful experience. "Maybe that's not for everyone, but I feel like good art and music makes for better headspaces to contemplate things that are beyond this world," he says. "Good art should help people ... imagine a new way of thinking about the world." ❧

FOCUS ON SENIORS

'This is home'

Multi-generational housing complex connects seniors with young families

By EMILY LOEWEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
TORONTO, ONT.

As Canada's population ages at an ever-faster pace, Toronto's St. Clair O'Connor Community may hold the key to keeping seniors independent longer, and teaching young people to respect their elders. Since opening in 1983, the



St. Clair O'Connor residents Julia Bringau, Jane Huggins, Mae King, Joyce Cockburn and Doris Cullen enjoy the community's tea room, a place where residents and the public can enjoy a drink or shop for gifts.

community has provided family townhouses, independent apartments for seniors and a nursing home all under one roof.

Residents can live their entire lives here, moving from one level of care to the next, says executive director Susan Gallant.

Started by Danforth Mennonite and Toronto United Mennonite churches as a place for their seniors to live, the community is now home to many from outside those congregations. And while housing children and seniors in one place begets some challenges, it benefits both the seniors and families who call it home.

Just a child when her family moved into the community, Shea Brown now lives in one of the townhouses with her own son, Patrick. She sees him and other children learning respect for seniors in the inter-generational environment. "It's made them sensitive," Brown says, "because the elderly kind of get forgotten, and here it's in your face, so you're more likely to do something kind when you see somebody who's having trouble walking."

The community also helps senior residents. Because it provides health services in private apartments, many are able to live on their own longer than they could otherwise. The community also has a tea room for casual socialization, planned activities, a pool for physical exercise, a chaplain and a group of residents who make the community stand out.

For Roberta Eyton-Jones, a 10-year resident, bigger complexes don't have the people who make St. Clair O'Connor feel like a community. "It's very impersonal, it's very institutional looking, very polished and it's not home," she says of another residence. "It wouldn't be home to me. This is home."

And while she doesn't have close relationships with many of the children, Eyton-Jones enjoys having them around. "You see the children here, you hear the laughter," she says of the backyard in summertime. "You see them playing and so forth, and that's nice." Eyton-Jones describes it as a bit like living with family: "You're not always together, but you enjoy seeing them nearby."

Family is a common theme at St. Clair O'Connor. Despite the natural clashes

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'You see the children here, you hear the laughter. You see them playing and so forth, and that's nice. You're not always together, but you enjoy seeing them nearby.'

(Roberta Eytton-Jones, St. Clair O'Connor Community resident)

that arise—like children trampling carefully tended flower beds—it gives people a chance to adopt a family member when their own might live across the country. That attitude makes this place unique for Pauline Campbell, resident and volunteer services manager. Whether it looks like staff supporting seniors or the other way around, “there’s a lot of heart in here, a lot of people that want to help each other and support each other,” she says. ☘



Aquafit classes led by Linda DeHaan, front, help St. Clair O'Connor residents Norman Tom, Janet Grant, Pat Cavanagh, Pat Murray and John Harpen stay active



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Greenwood Court is a seniors' continuum of care complex situated in a town-like setting in a residential area in the north end of Stratford. Greenwood provides access to recreation and meeting facilities, a general store, banking, and social programs, without needing to leave the building.

Nithview Community is a seniors' continuum of care complex overlooking the Nith River in New Hamburg. Nithview, a quaint village-type setting with gardens and pathways, provides recreation and meeting facilities, banking, dining and social programming for its residents.

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VIEWPOINT

Young and old, heart to heart

BY ELSIE REMPEL

In many traditional cultures, elders are older people who are revered as keepers of wisdom.

In North America's current youth-glorifying post-everything-online culture, older people are sometimes viewed as those who have been left behind. Yet those who are in the first third of life still long for understanding, encouragement, wisdom and blessing from those who are in the last third of theirs.

Just recently, an 11-year-old urban boy told me the place he felt closest to God was in church with his grandparents in a rural Saskatchewan village, because "there were more old people in that little church and they knew so much about God."

We all need to experience more of that kind of encouragement. In today's reality, however, grandchildren and grandparents are often disconnected by geography. This can influence the ways we relate. We may enjoy intense visits followed by extended absences from each other.

Fortunately, technology has made long-distance face-to-face connections possible in many locations. Thanks to Google Talk, my sister in rural Manitoba regularly enjoys picture books with her granddaughter in Montreal, Que.

Congregational relationships can help fill in the gaps left by the physical absence of a grandparent. Many churches provide local opportunities for the development of spiritual grandparent/grandchild and senior/youth or young adult relationships through intergenerational games nights, storytelling events and service projects. On an increasing basis, interactions like these are helping young and old get to know and bless each other.

Ours is a time impacted by climate change, social change and religious change. It is characterized by a unique set of hopes and fears, by social upheaval and

unanswered questions. As grandparents, great uncles and aunts, and older mentors of children and youths within our congregations, they need to draw from the mentoring relationships they experienced and adapt them for today's context. This will help them to respond effectively to the unique challenges facing today's children and youths.

With an older baby boom generation, we have more elders available to us. I believe that many of our older and wiser citizens are ready to demonstrate God's call in their lives to serve as elders who encourage and relate to our youths. Consider the following examples as you reflect on the seniors you know:

- In Winnipeg, Man., Bethel Mennonite Church's informal Prayer Allies program linked seniors with youths so they could pray for them, learn about their lives and greet each other in church.
- At the 2011 Mennonite Church Eastern Canada gathering, retired minister and area church leader Ralph Lebold made a point of commending young people for the many ways he sees them "extending the peace of Christ" in his video "letter to the churches." Lebold lives out his commitment to young people; when

he's not busy serving in this wider capacity, he makes a point of enjoying the annual Grandparent-Grandchild days at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp with his grandchildren.

Becoming an elder who encourages younger people from near and afar doesn't just happen as part of the natural aging process. Seniors who grow into mentors tend their faith lives with a variety of spiritual practices. Commitments like prayer, sacrificial giving and Bible study help to deepen and mature personal faith, as well as develop the ability to bless and encourage younger people on their spiritual journeys.

As seniors reflect on how God has been at work in their lives and where they place themselves within God's larger story, they become equipped to share their experiences. With practice, they can learn to do

PHOTO BY PETER REMPEL



Elsie Rempel and her granddaughters Johanna, left, and Sophia, right, pose through their vehicle's windshield on a summer vacation last year.

so in winsome and grace-filled ways that connect with younger people beyond differences in clothing styles, terminology, music tastes and other cultural attributes.

As seniors connect heart to heart with younger people, it is my deep conviction that we will have a growing number of them who, like my 11-year-old friend, like to worship God together with older folks. ❧

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

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Calendar

Alberta

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

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

June 4: 41st annual Mennonite Community Festival at UMEI Christian High School, Leamington, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Silent auction, quilt and craft auction, children's activities, food booths and more. Proceeds to MCC, UMEI and other organizations. For more information, visit mennonitesale.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 to 8:00 p.m. Advance tickets required; contact 519-625-8602 or info@hiddenacres.ca.

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.

June 18-19: Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, 50th anniversary celebrations. (18) registration, barbecue supper and program beginning at 4 p.m.; (19) worship service at 10 a.m., followed by a potluck lunch and afternoon activities.

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 26: Truckers Sunday with Transport for Christ at Milverton Mennonite Fellowship. Truck parade at 9:30 a.m., church service at 10 a.m. followed by barbecue lunch.

July 1-3: Family Camping Weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp over the Canada Day weekend. Campsites are first come-first served; cabins need to be reserved. For more information, or to book a cabin, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

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.

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.

UpComing

Peace camp at Conrad Grebel: Have a hand in a better world!

WATERLOO, ONT.—Conrad Grebel University College is introducing a new summer camp that combines fun in the sun with a social justice twist. The college, in partnership with Interfaith Grand River and the House of Friendship at Sunnydale Community Centre, has kicked off its first-ever peace camp aimed at youths aged 11 to 14 in the Region of Waterloo. Camp coordinator Devon Spier and a small staff will work with junior youths and a line-up of guest speakers from a variety of peace groups to engage in collaborative peace games while exploring issues affecting communities around the world. The five-day long day camp hopes to bring together a diversity of youths to learn strategies for justice and peace through recreation programming. From Aug. 8 to 12, youths will have numerous opportunities to teach fellow participants and staff members about peace issues and initiatives they are most passionate about. Participants will have a chance to share arts, crafts, drama, foods and games from their families, cultures, religions and countries, and will get a chance to formulate approaches to justice and peace that they can apply in all areas of their lives. For more information, or to register, visit www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/peacecamp.

—Conrad Grebel University College.

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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Tickets are \$100 with a \$75 receipt
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For rent: Dunromin Cottage. 3-bdrm cottage at Red Bay on Bruce Peninsula. Nestled among maple trees. Short walk to sandy beach known for sunsets and small park. Rear deck. Available June 25-Aug 6 and Aug 13-Aug 27. Phone 519-746-4920.



Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of:

DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Mennonite Church Canada is a dynamic and exciting place to work and serve, where the team players are enthusiastic, energetic, and strive to put their faith into practice. This full-time position, located in Western Canada, participates in the mandate given to Church Engagement to inspire, invite, and resource the church in its journey of transformation as disciples of Jesus Christ in a broken world.

The Director of Partnership Development will lead the department to develop coordinated missional formation processes for congregations and nurture financial support for Mennonite Church Canada programs, ministries and mission. Frequent travel within the Mennonite Church Canada constituency is required.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and responsibilities for this position, see the job description posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>.

A letter of intent and a resume, or any inquiries or nominations can be directed to Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources at kschroeder@mennonitechurch.ca, Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4 (ph. 204-888-6781; toll-free 1-866-888-6785). Application processing will begin June 16th.

Employment Opportunities

ASSOCIATE PASTOR PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH RICHMOND, BC

Peace Mennonite Church invites applications for the full-time position of **Associate Pastor**.

This position places major focus on youth and family ministries along with a minor focus on general congregational ministry.

Applicants should have a relevant degree in Christian ministry, an understanding of contemporary Anabaptist theology and an interest and ability to relate to young people.

Please send resumes either by mail to: The Search Committee, Peace Mennonite Church, 11571 Daniels Rd., Richmond, BC V6X 1M7 or by e-mail to office@peacemennonite.ca by June 30, 2011.



Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of:

DIRECTOR OF NATIVE MINISTRY

Mennonite Church Canada is a dynamic and exciting place to work and serve, where the team players are enthusiastic, energetic, and strive to put their faith into practice. This full-time position, located in Winnipeg, participates in the mandate given to Mennonite Church Canada Witness to lead, mobilize and resource the church to participate in holistic witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in a broken world.

The Director of Native Ministry is responsible for directing Mennonite Church Canada's ongoing relationship with Aboriginal peoples across Canada. The Director facilitates relationships, ministry partnerships and learning with and among Mennonite Church Canada and Aboriginal congregations, Area Churches, and Aboriginal communities as an expression of the vision, identity, purpose and priorities of Mennonite Church Canada. This position involves travel across Canada.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and responsibilities for this position, see the job description posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>.

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Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
June 27	June 14
July 11	June 28
Aug. 1	July 19
Aug. 22	Aug. 9
Sept. 5	Aug. 23
Sept. 19	Sept. 6
Oct. 3	Sept. 20

Focus on Education

‘Difficult to exaggerate’



Within hours of tornadoes ripping through Alabama in late April, a Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Early Response Team, including disaster response coordinator Jerry Klassen of British Columbia, was on the ground in Pratt City assessing the damage. The tornado left a path of destruction 1.6 kilometres wide and 30.5 kilometres long. “This is huge, this is absolutely overwhelming. I am seeing stretches of levelled houses for miles,” reported Klassen after touring the area. “It is hard to develop language for what I am seeing. This situation will be difficult to exaggerate.” This is not the first time MDS has been in this part of Alabama; volunteers worked in Pratt City in 1998.