

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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at Assembly 2011  
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## EDITORIAL

# Assembly's afterglow

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Maybe it was the downright gorgeous summer weather before the heat wave swept into central and southeastern Canada. Maybe it was the powerfully inspired music led by Paul Dueck and his gifted musicians in University of Waterloo's Humanities Theatre.

Or the 20-minute walk from the dining hall to Assembly sessions that helped digest the food and clear the mind. Or Nelson Kraybill's quip about having to move north if Sarah Palin is elected the next US president. Or, maybe the glee and relief of parents having their teenagers disappear for a whole week because the kids were having such a good time at Youth Assembly.

Whatever these peripheral delights, the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Waterloo, Ontario the first week of July goes down in history as one of the most moving, unifying and inspired events of this annual gathering of church delegates.

Yes, there were glitches (parking for locals a huge problem, for example), as there are in the execution of any large gathering for five days running, but they pale in comparison to what happened in the university Humanities auditorium, the hallways and lunch lines, the well-attended workshops, the Waterloo Park, the Peace walk through the streets of Waterloo and the service projects of the young people.

At a deeper spiritual level, keynote

speaker Nelson Kraybill, Bible study leader Loren Johns and general secretary Willard Metzger, plumbed the depths of the Assembly's theme "It's Epic Remembering God's Future," giving us new vision and descriptive images of the

New Jerusalem, new handles of hope in a world growing increasingly fatalistic about the future.

Kraybill, insisting that Mennonites in our religious provincialism are "control freaks," asked us to see the "grand river" described

by the prophet Ezekiel and by John, the Revelator, as a gift from God for "the healing of the nations," as a source of life "not manufactured by the saints." We need an "apocalypse," he urged, an unveiling to see where God is at work, to see "where the river is flowing."

Loren Johns, in his measured and scholarly yet pastoral way, dispelled the popular Left Behind images and symbols, by saying the narrative of Revelation has to be viewed like an "impressionist painting." "You get more out of it by standing way back." It was written as an apocalypse, an unveiling of how the churches were to act in their difficult time under the Roman Emperor Domitian.

Sounding the same theme in Waterloo Park with hands outstretched in front of the band shell, Willard Metzger belted out several times that "this is not the end. The end belongs to God. It is God who will determine the end." The message of Revelation is not an easy one,



he emphasized. John was not telling the church to relax and everything would be fine. Being the church is a hard task. He said the youth, as the church now, "will speak the unthinkable and risk doing the unimaginable."

Within this context, hard issues were not dodged, such as human sexuality. Not only was this sometimes divisive issue handled wisely with the cooperation of the Harmony Group calling for more "loving dialogue" on the subject, but a workshop on Sex and the Sanctuary called for an open and frank discussion of sex, in all its dimensions (not just sexual orientation) in church where young people are yearning to be "whole persons." The silence in our churches gives way, by default, to the popular culture using sex as power, manipulation and gratification without relationship.

The presentation by Rudy Baergen of a "Plan to Discern Faithfulness on Matters of Sexuality" under the rubric of Being a Faithful Church was measured and thoughtful, serving as a model for delegates in processing this issue back in their congregations. The discussions that followed were animated and frank, but respectful, as they should be.

But now comes the hard part. Coming off this mountaintop experience filled with inspiration and new vision, delegates will now have to dig in and be creative in developing strategies and processes that make all of this work in the pew. Given handles at Assembly, they are now better equipped to address these same issues at the local level.

There will be challenges. Delegates change for every Assembly, diminishing the sustainability of these strategies and vision. Congregations will need to address that, especially now that Assembly is moving to biennial sessions.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

Paul Dueck leads music at the MC Canada Assembly. Pictured with him, left to right, are: Angelika Guenther Correa, soprano; Linda Winter Dueck, alto; Jamie Weber Steckly, bass guitar; Henry Winter, guitar, bass. Also part of the accompaniment, are Andrea Weber Steckly, violin, soprano; Jonathan Sauder, drums; Carlos Correa, percussion, bass.

PHOTO: DAVE ROGALSKY

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490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

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

**Correspondents:**

**Rachel Bergen**, National Correspondent, [ca@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ca@canadianmennonite.org), 204-885-2565 ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman**, B.C. Correspondent, [bc@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:bc@canadianmennonite.org), 604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**, Alberta Correspondent,

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**Evelyn Rempel Petkau**, Manitoba Correspondent, [mb@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:mb@canadianmennonite.org),

204-745-2208; **Dave Rogalsky**, Eastern Canada Correspondent, [ec@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ec@canadianmennonite.org), 519-579-7258.



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# Revelation threads theme

ASSEMBLY PHOTOS BY DAN DYCK



“Good news . . . God dwells with us!”

*Nelson Kraybill declares we need to open our eyes to see where God is at work*

**BY DAVE ROGALSKY**

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**A**t the last worship service of Mennonite Church Canada Assembly on July 8, Nelson Kraybill reminded the congregation that some of the aboriginal people in southern Ontario moved here from the United States as politics became intolerable there. He then quipped that if Sarah Palin were to get elected another flood of people might be going north! Then he continued, speaking of the Wednesday afternoon tour which took him to Caledonia, site of a long-standing land claim by aboriginal people.

The Six Nations were promised land six miles on either side of the Grand River, “in perpetuity.” As they watched this being eroded year after year, and with development planned for land about which they were negotiating, their response overflowed into an occupation. When the police raided, many more aboriginal people streamed onto the land, surrounding the police and escorting them off the land, “mostly peacefully.” Kraybill noted a small Baptist church standing on the edge of the disputed land and asked the native folk how the congregation had reacted. The aboriginal people told stories of how the church people “learned to know us, served ice cream, worked to build a trust on both sides, and held weekly prayer vigils for peaceful resolutions.” Christian Peacemaker Teams was also remembered as a positive force.

*Nelson Kraybill makes a point as he preaches the final message at the 2011 Annual Church Gathering in Waterloo, on July 8*

# of assembly 2011

Revelation 22:1-2 alludes to Ezekiel 47:12 where the prophet saw a vision of God at work in the world: *On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.*

This healing, Kraybill emphasized, "Is not manufactured by the saints, this river of life, this flowing salvation, is a gift from God. God dwells with us, and God has a mission from us and the New Jerusalem to bring healing to the world."

Referring to Prairie St. Mennonite in Elkhart, Indiana, where he is on the pastoral team, Kraybill told of a young man who took it upon himself to list the places where he saw God at work in Elkhart. He returned with a printed list, giving each sign 1-2 lines. "The document is 24 pages long!" exclaimed Kraybill. "God's at work," said Kraybill, "even in Elkhart!"

"Mennonites are control freaks," he said. "But missional theology turns that around—rather than saying 'what can we do,' we try to catch up with what God is already doing." We need an "apocalypse," an unveiling to see where God is at work, to see "where the river is flowing." Without mission, he said, we are like the "peanut-free peanut butter" available in the university cafeteria! Without mission, the church is not the church.

Kraybill spoke about the Voluntary Service workers connected with Prairie St.

Mennonite, who host a Wednesday evening potluck with the community including street people, the unemployed, as well as church people. At a recent dinner Kraybill sat with a young man with learning disabilities on one side and hungry children on the other side, and he felt hopeful because they were doing something in response to a bullet hole that recently appeared in the church's front door.

Referring to Alan and Eleanor Kreider's recent book, *Worship and Mission in Post-Christendom*, he called for the renewal of testimony in the church, of telling the stories of the mighty acts of God. People need to see what God is doing. Kraybill has stopped worrying about how many people show up on Sunday morning.

He told the story of the Living Water congregation in Chicago which has the tag line "meet at the corner." Years ago a young man was shot on the corner and Christians began to meet there to pray. When a commercial property came up for sale on that corner it was purchased and a church formed—"a physical outpost of the reign of God."

"Stop reducing the message to mere peace and service . . . Anabaptism should point us to Jesus, not just to ethics. Salvation belongs to God," said Kraybill.

Concluding he said, "After almost incessant worship, in this last book of the Bible, Revelation ends with an invitation to the river . . . one we can pass on, extend to the world. The spirit and bride say come, let everyone who wishes take the water of life. Amen." ❧

## Is the end near?

*Loren Johns teaches about God's future*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**T**im LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, together with Tyndale House Publishers, have unleashed a behemoth industry on the world, Christian and otherwise. The original twelve volumes of the Left Behind Series have sold over 63 million copies in over a hundred languages. The industry has created forty children's books, Bible Studies on Armageddon and "the second coming," graphic novels, a chart of novels and the book of Revelation, a video ("have you been left behind?") for Christians to leave for non-Christians, music, apparel, collectables, a board game, and a video game where you use prayer and weapons to defeat the Anti-Christ and his human assistants.



**Loren Johns**

In his seminar and four Bible studies, Loren Johns, Professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, taught that Revelation is used in a variety of ways but he prefers to interpret it in its first century context,

applying what can be learned to our day. Over and over again in his Bible studies he underlined that biblical prophecy is 90% or more teaching, with only a very small amount telling of future events. However the Left Behind series reads the symbols and images as descriptions of real events that are yet to come.

Johns found he enjoyed the novels more than he expected, "They're real page turners." But he finds the "ends justifying the means" use of lying, anger, hatred and violence disturbing. He wondered aloud how Christians would respond if a Muslim wrote similar material. "It rejects the good news of Jesus Christ," he said, a good news that does not kill our enemies or hate them. But he would not stop congregations from having them in their libraries, rather he would invite conversation about the books and their contents.

In the well-attended daily Bible Studies on Revelation, Johns began at what he considers the climax of the book—Revelation 21:1-4. "The book of Revelation is like an impressionist painting," he said, "You get more out of it by standing way back." It was written as an apocalypse, an unveiling of how the churches were to act in their difficult time under the Roman Emperor Domitian.

The first 20 chapters of Revelation are a drama of the world needing a redeemer, but not finding one, and of judgement, especially on Rome, the city of power which John compares to a prostitute. Then in chapter 21 comes the vision of the new heaven and earth, with Jerusalem inhabited by God and the lamb. In this city the great forces of chaos—the sea and the night—are conquered by God. Johns told his audience

that they should expect many peoples in the New Jerusalem because the word for nations is plural. In his final Bible Study Johns repeated, "The book of Revelation is a remarkably inclusive document." God will accept everyone, and yet the ability to choose for or against Jesus is maintained.

Jesus did not come back as John, the writer of Revelation expected, but this does not negate the message that God will bring about an end in God's own good time. We need a reverent agnosticism, said Johns, for no one knows the time or seasons. The future is in God's hands. ❧

# "This is not the end!"

*Willard Metzger (MC Canada General Secretary) preaches Revelation*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

"We are the church!" cheered Willard Metzger, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, inviting progressively younger age groups to join with him in an ever-louder cheer.

"Being the church is not easy. In fact, there is little that is more difficult than being the church," he continued at Wednesday's (July 6) service in the park. "Being the church requires flexibility. And that is never easy." The church is multicultural. "Being the church obliges us to get along. Indeed, Jesus demanded that we love one another." "Being the church insists being counter-cultural. . . . We have different values; different goals. But here we are: the People of God, the church!"

Metzger went on to describe the difficulties of being a leader in that church. Quoting Jack Suderman from the

Mennonite Church Alberta minutes "that Canada is a tough place for the church" and that "leadership in the church is not for the faint of heart," he noted that he perhaps should have read those minutes before consenting to be the general secretary.

Painting the picture of what the church is facing today, Metzger turned to the text from Revelation 21. The church of the first century was also having a difficult time. Emperor worship rose up as thankful people showed their gratitude to the peace and prosperity under the heavy hand of Rome. Not worshipping the emperor could raise questions about how patriotic someone was and whether they were in revolt against Rome. Christians, counter-cultural persons, were under tremendous pressure. Metzger wondered out loud if John the Revelator despaired, away from his community, worried about how things were going there. Did John remember Jesus' cry from the cross and contextualize it: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken us?"

But, in spite of difficulty, and challenge, Metzger told the congregation, "This is not the end!"

"The book of Revelation is not an easy message. John was not telling the church to relax and that everything would be fine." In fact, Metzger continued, were there some who expected the church to be obliterated? "Would faith drown in the blood of the

## Recommended resources for Revelation study

Lo ren Johns listed M. Eugene Boring's Revelation Commentary in the Interpretation series; John Yeatts' Believers' Church Commentary on Revelation; and Mitchell Reddish's Revelation Commentary in Smith & Helwys Bible Commentaries as accessible for pastors and teachers working with Revelation.



*Willard Metzger, MC Canada General Secretary, takes part in Friday night's worship, at MC Canada's Annual Church Gathering in Waterloo, July 8.*

martyrs?" He wondered out loud if some in our "post modern, post Christendom context . . . entertain the same thoughts"? But this is not the end. God is not finished. Putting his faith in God at work in our youth he said, "The youth will be the church who will speak the unthinkable and risk doing the unimaginable." God, through the Spirit is filling us with courage and hope for the task ahead.

This is not the end, and the end belongs to God. "It is God who will determine the end." Revelation makes it clear that no matter what happens in the world, God is in charge. "For now we struggle, swimming against the current, defying the calls to abandon hope. Sometimes it feels like hate cannot be defeated. Sometimes it feels like the frenzy of war will never be thwarted. Sometimes it feels like the cry for justice will never be given its hearing." "But," Metzger reminded the congregation, "This is not the end." God has a future with a new heaven and a new earth where God will wipe away every tear and, paraphrasing

Revelation 21, there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain. "When that day comes, the old order of things, marred by hatred, strife, injustice, and greed – will pass away."

Metzger called on the church to keep up the struggle, "defy the calls to abandon hope. . . receive the filling of God's Spirit

bringing hope, courage, boldness, and confidence."

He concluded, "Faith will always have its children. Youth will always lay claim to conviction and commitment. The passion of God to restore and make things right in the world will always rise up within the hearts of God's people. We are the church." ❧

## Quilt art depicts Mennonite-Aboriginal interaction

BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial Assistant  
WATERLOO, ONT.

A fibre art depiction of the interaction between early Mennonite settlers and Aboriginal people in the Grand River valley was on display at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly July 4-8. "My vision was to create a pictorial slice of history," said

Judy Gascho-Jutzi, the artist.

Neill and Edith von Gunten, recently retired directors of MC Canada's Native Ministries, had seen examples of Gascho-Jutzi's work and were inspired to ask the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario

to commission her to portray the early contact between Mennonites and the Six Nations in quilt form. They were very delighted to see their dream come true.

Flowing through the scene is the Grand River, meandering past many Mennonite and Aboriginal symbols. In the right foreground is the trunk of a black walnut, a tree valued by Mennonites. Balancing it on the left is a wampum belt with two parallel lines symbolizing cooperation. Grandmother moon, at the top left, lights up the sky and helps to give movement to the piece. The Pioneer Tower reminds us of the earliest Mennonite farmers while a large pine tree is an aboriginal symbol of peace with its roots stretching in four directions. The artist put the pine tree on a turtle because native tradition says that North America is shaped like a turtle.

At the bottom left is a quilt block in the traditional log cabin pattern. Gascho-Jutzi was delighted to find 100-year-old fabric for this quilt block. The log cabin and the Conestoga wagon are also symbolic of the early Mennonite presence while the long house and the various clan animals represent native culture. The crops (corn, beans, squash, strawberries) and the circles are common to both cultures. The medicine wheel is an important symbol for the Aboriginal people while the rosette design in the Pennsylvania Dutch hex symbol reminds us of Mennonites.

The artist also shared some of her secrets

of how she achieved a three-dimensional effect. "It's exciting to find just the right kind of fabric," she said. She was thrilled to find just the right texture and colour for the black walnut tree, and by sewing it onto shrinkable cotton waffle cloth, she was able to get the effect of the crevices found in walnut bark. The moon and clouds are given depth by using dryer lint. She was able to include a real arrowhead that came from a farm along the Grand River due to the generosity of Margaret Woolner. The arrowhead is attached using bridal tulle. Sometimes Gascho-Jutzi is hampered by the realities of what fabric is available and she was disappointed not to find better beans.

"These projects need to speak to me and

I need to feel them," said Gascho-Jutzi. When asked why it is in three pieces, she shrugged and said that was what felt right. In response, Neill von Gunten said that the three parts make it a Mennonite wampum belt—it symbolizes working together.

The artist said it took about a year to make this quilted art. She thought about the project and began collecting fabrics last fall and then began sewing in January. She worked hard to get it finished by July.

The historical society plans to have the piece on display at Conrad Grebel University College, although it may need to wait until the construction of the enlarged library and archives is complete. ❧



*Delegates met in groups to discuss the Being a Faithful Church document.*



*Encounters along the Grand by Judy Gascho-Jutzi hung in the assembly worship space.*

## Delegates approve a discernment plan for matters of sexuality

BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial assistant

The delegates of Mennonite Church Canada affirmed that we need to let the Holy Spirit lead us in discerning matters of sexuality. Hopefully we can land on the beach and burn our boats behind us, said Dave Tiessen of Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., in describing our approach to the dialogue on human sexuality. If we don't burn our boats, planning to sail away again if the dialogue doesn't go our way,

then we are not letting the Spirit lead.

Willard Metzger, executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, and Rudy Baergen, chair of the Faith and Life Committee, presented "Being a Faithful Church 3: A Plan to Discern Faithfulness on Matters of Sexuality" on Tuesday morning. Several delegates expressed appreciation for their presentation which emphasized the importance of prayer and



the need to let the Holy Spirit lead us in this difficult discussion. The document outlines a plan or a framework of how the dialogue regarding sexual matters will lead to discernment.

After lunch, delegates met in groups to discuss “Being a Faithful Church 3,” bringing responses back to the whole group in the following plenary session. While a few delegates made comments that spoke to the sexuality issue, most of those at the microphones addressed the issue of how the dialogue should proceed.

Henry Kliewer, conference minister for Mennonite Church Manitoba, encouraged delegates to let go of the need to control the outcome. “If we can see this overall question as one of relationship with each other. . .then, while there is fear, the potential for renewal is huge.”

The plenary discussion was very congenial. Barry Lesser of Yarrow, B.C., asked that we not push for a quick decision because that would lead to an attitude of “us and them.” He also suggested that following a timetable means trying to exert control rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to lead the church.

The issue of timeframe was a concern. If the delegates approved the motion to have biennial assemblies, would the timetable for discernment stretch from four years to ten?

Bock Ki Kim of London, Ont., spoke about the difficulty that multi-cultural congregations have with this issue. They are usually not comfortable discussing issues of sexuality and he expressed the hope that the church would address other issues too.

Andrew Reesor-McDowell, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, assured the delegates that their written group responses would be reviewed and considered. With a majority vote by raised hands the delegates approved the document, “as a framework and plan to guide the ongoing discernment in Mennonite Church Canada on matters of sexuality.” The motion also stated that, “approval is also a commitment to encourage and support the General Board as it continues to provide the leadership needed to implement this plan, and to encourage our congregations and Area Churches to participate as fully as possible.” ❧



*Ben Borne prays for the church delegates that they discern the Being a Faithful Church process as it pertains to human sexuality. Willard Metzger is also pictured.*

## “Let’s meet in the middle”

*Sexual inclusivity resolution presented at  
Mennonite Church Canada Assembly*

BY RACHEL BERGEN  
National Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT

**T**hough it is a divisive issue within Mennonite Church Canada, non-heterosexual inclusion and loving dialogue has been a subject of much dialogue recently. The topic was a highlight of the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly where a motion originally proposed by

the Harmony group and presented by Canadian Mennonite University student Ben Borne from Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, was not voted on.

After a series of discussions between Borne and the General Board prior to Thursday’s time slot, a new motion was

presented by Borne to the delegates “to refer the motion to the care of the General Board.” Like an amendment, this action put the Harmony motion on hold.

A grassroots initiative called Harmony set out to ask the national church to acknowledge that there are non-heterosexual church-goers out there and they wish to be engaged in “loving dialogue” with other members of the church. The intent of the Harmony motion was to again draw attention to a 1986 Saskatoon Resolution on Human Sexuality and to hold congregations accountable for ongoing dialogue.

Originally this resolution was meant to be voted on by delegates, however due to its controversial nature and possibility to divide the church, it was referred to the General Board to be handled with care. Rudy Dirks of the General Board seconded the new motion.

A majority of the delegates voted for the General Board to take responsibility of the motion, which according to MC Canada moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell, will be incorporated into the Being a Faithful Church 3 (BFC3) process. “BFC3 is considered a voice for a number of people.” The General Board will update the constituency on the status of the motion annually.

Reinforcing the moderator’s comments, Judith Friesen-Epp, calling the deferred motion “a gift of grace,” challenged the delegates not to just pass the responsibility on to the General Board, but “to seriously take this home with us.”

In his speech, Borne impressed the urgency of the issue, explaining that people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community face bullying in many areas of their lives, including the church. This can sometimes lead them to hurt themselves or even take their own lives.

“It is because of these feelings and questions that there is a true sense of urgency to start these incredibly difficult conversations, to listen to the stories of pain, and to listen to the stories of those who really deeply struggle with the notion of same-sex attraction as a part of our belief system,” Borne said.

After Borne spoke, there was some time for church delegates to reflect on the motion.



*Ben Borne is congratulated by Ryan Siemens of Grace Mennonite Church after the motion is passed.*

For Waldo Neufeld of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, BC, discussing the motion brought back painful memories of friends who have been excluded by the church and served as a warning.

“Dozens of pictures of people and families ran through my head of excluded people. I had to think of them all as people who became bitter and never came to the church again. But God’s grace is much greater than we could imagine,”

For Dave Thiessen, the pastor of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., the motion was a wake-up call.

I think it’s a very positive reminder to us that we haven’t been following the Saskatoon Resolution very well. We haven’t been treating people with grace... This grieves me greatly. We need to work at finding ways to do better in the future,” Thiessen said.

A few others felt that they couldn’t support the motion while supporting the Saskatoon Confession of Faith statement, including Riverdale Mennonite Church in Millbank, Ont. Sam Steiner, from Waterloo, said he couldn’t support the motion because he would have preferred “respectful discussion” in this body. “To immediately take the sting out of a difficult discussion seems to be doing less than we

are called to do.” Referring the motion to the General Board has a “tendency to bury it,” he lamented.

Steiner was joined in his lament by Scott Albrecht who said the motion indicates “we can’t handle the issue as a church body,” and citing Tony Campolo as saying the “church needs to struggle with sexuality.”

Lorin Bergen, from Surrey, B.C., was concerned about “where we start the discussion,” insisting that the present Confession statement on the issue is the biblically-based one and said he is okay with referring it to the General Board as long as “you don’t move the goalposts.”

But the general consensus was that the delegates had engaged in respectful and loving dialogue. According to Lydia Harder, a delegate from Hagerman Mennonite Church, “we can learn to love people who have a very different opinion than us. Even if they don’t change their opinion in the end, we can continue to love each other,” she said.

This is what Borne is really encouraging the wider church to do.

“Through this process, members of Harmony and myself strongly encourage all members of our body to step out and meet in the middle to lovingly and authentically face the questions of today, for the generation of today and tomorrow,” he said.

Borne and members of the Harmony Group hope that the motion will not be buried and disappear into a void. “I stand in awe of what has happened in Waterloo,” said Erwin Warkentin, a Harmony leader in a post-Assembly reflection, “I am struck by how the Holy Spirit is moving within MC Canada.”

Noting that the time frame for the BFC3 paper is four years, Warkentin said, “we would not be surprised to see it go much

longer.” The education of our congregations has been sorely lacking in understanding the reality of LGBTQ life and faith, he noted, asking for the “continuing support, participation, ideas and prayers” in the ensuing process and discussions.

“I hope they really do care for [Harmony’s motion] because the 283 signatures on the motion are counting on the motion to see the light of day in some shape or form,” Borne said.

Thursday’s discussion and motion closed with Mennonite Church Canada’s Willard Metzger inviting Borne to pray for the status of the motion and for Ben Pauls to lead the delegates in the singing of the hymn, “Gentle Shepherd, Come and Lead Us.” ❧

## No exclusions to love

### *Pastoral care critical to supporting non-heterosexuals in the church*

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

Many people struggle emotionally, physically or mentally at some point in their life and turn to pastoral care—the love and support of the church—to deal with their grief and pain. But for some people, that kind of care may seem elusive or even be withheld.

At last month’s Mennonite Church Canada assembly, a major source of discussion was a document penned by former general secretary Robert J. Suderman called “Being a Faithful Church,” a document devoted to finding a way forward in discussing difficult or challenging issues that affect the body of Christ. One of these topics is human sexuality including non-heterosexuality.

This discussion is particularly important for non-heterosexuals and their friends and families, who can be excluded by churches, sometimes harshly. They believe the discussions shaped by “Being a Faithful Church” over the coming years will lead to a more compassionate reception and result in greater access to pastoral care for those who need it.

Those who have witnessed the effects of pastoral care, or a lack thereof, told a meeting at the assembly that its availability is critical.

Victor and Rebecca Fast of Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, Ont., who have a lesbian daughter, are among them. Although Valleyview has been very supportive of the Fast family, not every church that their daughter has attended or led worship in has been.

“Our daughter was invited to lead worship at a church in B.C.,” Rebecca said. “A man got up and left because she is a lesbian. That was very hurtful.” According to Rebecca, “It’s so important to find support in a community.”

Victor said he “can’t imagine what it would be like for a [non-heterosexual] person to try to relate to an unsupportive community.”

Scott Bergen is another person who will be affected by the outcome of discussions related to sexuality, having felt the pain of being excluded by the church. He was born into a Mennonite church family in Manitoba. At a young age he knew that he was attracted to people of the same sex, but he didn’t know what his church taught about sexualities other than heterosexuality.

“It scared me because I didn’t know any openly gay people,” he said. “My parents never talked about it and my church never talked about it.”

Later on, he said he discovered that his church overwhelmingly felt that “to be anything but heterosexual was a perversion.”

Bergen did all that he could to be accepted by the church, and, by extension, God, by taking on more and more leadership. But in order to be accepted he hid his sexuality. He said he was constantly afraid that he would be discovered to be gay.

“I survived being queer in the church until my 20s by drawing a sharp divide between who I am and who I found myself to be in the church,” he told the group. “When people would make jokes about people who weren’t straight, I wasn’t fazed because I separated that part of my life.”

This meant paying close attention to his wardrobe, his manner of speaking and the people he spent time with, in order to appear straight. “It was beyond exhausting and played a very large role in an emotional breaking point in my early 20s,” he said.

Bergen believes that he and other people who are non-heterosexual are sexually marginalized by society, including the church, saying, “I struggled against being gay for literally half of my life with everything in me, very fervently. . . . It has done irreparable damage to my life.”

Bergen said he is no longer attending a Mennonite church and has left the Christian faith entirely.

# Sexuality 'too awkward' to discuss

BY DICK BENNER  
Editor and publisher

Since sexuality is too uncomfortable to discuss in church, our young people pick up their cues on the subject from the dominant culture, the images and concepts of which are often distorted for commercial purposes, asserted Scott Brubaker-Zehr, one of two workshop leaders at a crowded seminar at MC Canada Assembly.

Brubaker-Zehr, pastor at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, and Marilyn Rudy-Froese, recently retired as pastor at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, both insisted that it is time to open up the subject inside the "sanctuary" in order to foster healthy sexual relationships, to meet the yearning of the young to be "whole people."

Taking the first part of the seminar to discover where young people got their "sex education," they discovered that even in Mennonite homes the subject tended to be skirted by parents or relegated to books or films on the subject rather than discussed openly. "My father gave me a video and then asked me if I had any questions," Brubaker-Zehr recalled from his youth. "My mother gave me a book on the subject," said Rudy-Froese, "and asked me to then give it to my brother. There was no discussion."

After viewing a Katie Perry music video, the leaders asked what sexual messages were conveyed. The youth immediately identified the music and images as a tool to sell the product, a portrayal of sex in the "ideal" with no attendant relational problems or without an intimate relationship.

"Sex is often power used manipulatively," observed Virginia Gerbrandt, a recent seminary graduate now a young pastor in Winnipeg, "with men using it over women and women over men, making each sex vulnerable and subject to people playing with their emotions."

Some of the youth said they find it easier to talk with their best friends about

sex than with their parents and that it is virtually never discussed in church. "I discuss sexual issues with my best friend with whom I can discuss anything," said one youth, saying that they "end up praying about it."

In a panel discussion in which the adults were asked to write down questions for the adults in the room and visa-versa, the youth asking the adults questions, one of the adult questions was: "Is Justin Bieber sexy?" After the laughter subsided, one serious young person said that she looks beyond his physical and musical appeal to admire his ability to set goals, and his humility as a rock star.

Another youth claimed that Lady Gaga actually triggers theological messages that

lead to a "process of discovering God," a critical view of the culture, something he said the church often doesn't answer because of its fear of sex and sexuality as a way of opening up these important subjects.

"If the subject is too awkward for the adults," Brubaker-Zehr urged, "then you should bring up the subject to them." He held up a copy of *Body and Soul*, a new Youth Study Leader Guide just published by Faith and Life Resources, that he said his church will be using. Rudy-Froese referenced the second edition of *Sexuality—God's Gift*, also published by Herald Press and used by congregations to approach the subject with a biblical perspective. Unfortunately, neither of these resource books discuss homosexuality, both of the leaders said, which is a shame because that is a "discussion we must have, despite its divisiveness."

Another young participant wondered why "singleness" is also not offered as an attractive option, referencing role models who demonstrate that yes, one can be happy and content without being married. ☺

## Korea a re-run of 16<sup>th</sup> century Anabaptism

BY DICK BENNER  
Editor and publisher

Despite the cultural influence of Confucianism and growing militarism in South Korea, many Christians there are turning to Anabaptism in their theology and practice, Erwin Wiens and Bock Ki Kim told a crowded workshop at Mennonite Church's annual Assembly in July.

Wiens and his wife Marian, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Korea and Ki Kim, pastor of the Vision Mennonite Church in London, Ont. reported that the peace component of our Anabaptist belief is what is most appealing to pastors and young people who come to the recently established Korean Anabaptist Center in Seoul for Bible study and training. The restorative justice part of the peace package

has "just taken off," according to Wiens. Sixty new nationals are undergoing training right now, he said, among them many pastors.

Many of the mainline larger churches, however, are still resisting this movement, considering Anabaptism "heresy" because of its emphasis on community and its role in discernment—a direct counter to the individual "humanist" emphasis of the deeply-held views of Confucius and a threat to the military which does not recognize a "conscientious objector" position on war.

To take a stand as a CO in Korea is a huge sacrifice, said Wiens, resulting in a two-year prison sentence and the "shaming" of family and neighbours for an unpatriotic stand against the highly militarized

government. “It is almost a repeat of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Anabaptists who were persecuted for their resistance to the state-sponsored church in areas of believers baptism and refusal to take up arms.”

In a slide show presentation, Ki Kim reviewed the historical perspective that planted the seeds for what is now a rapidly-growing Anabaptist group of believers, beginning with Mennonite Central Committee sending some 77 relief workers for food distribution and working with Korean orphans some 55 years ago.

“Because MCC wasn’t in the business of planting churches,” he said, an indigenous church developed that first of all educated itself through reading Anabaptist writings and calling on North American mission boards to help them in their efforts to organize believers’ groups. Out of this emerged the Korean Anabaptist Center which is now interdenominational in scope.

KAC, with a strong commitment to prayer and worship, is working with a small publishing company called the Daejon group. Translating many of the many articles and books written by North American

scholars on the subject of Anabaptism, the company is making available to emerging churches Korean translations of these works.

The Korean church is working against both the culture and the backdrop of the influence of the Presbyterian Church which first brought Christianity to this Asian country, but which was also perceived as a “colonial power,” said Palmer Becker, another Witness worker who has recently worked with new pastors as a teacher of Anabaptist beliefs in the country.

Wiens referred to a recent setback in the government’s acceptance of the CO status when a new president was elected who replaced a Christian leader who, during his five-year term had introduced legislation to recognize young men who refused to take up arms. That legislative effort has since died.

There is also a trend away from religion in general, he said, reporting that of the whole population, 35 percent are considered Buddhists and only 30 percent call themselves Christian. ¶

## Wiebe issues \$150,000 challenge

BY DICK BENNER

Editor and publisher

**I**n his reporting on a downturn in donations to MC Canada delegates gathered in Waterloo, Randy Wiebe, chief financial officer, issued a challenge to raise an

additional \$150,000 for support of the denomination’s various ministries for a total income budget of just over \$5.5 million.

“If we are hearing correctly from the churches,” he told CM in a follow-up interview, “MC Canada needs to be more assertive in taking its case to them for ministry. The increased budget will give our staff the opportunity to be more aggressive in meeting those ministry needs.”

In explaining the various floating budget “shortfall” numbers, he said the original \$500,000 was connected to budgeting that would have “stayed the course,” with no reductions in staff or program. The \$325,000 shortfall that he reported at Assembly was the total downturn in revenue, including those from the income streams of congregations, program partnerships and individual/corporate donations. A final figure of \$194,000 represents the donation downturn from congregations and individuals, with only \$29,000 less from congregations.

“Individual and corporate donations fluctuate greatly from year-to-year,” he said. “It depends usually on the year-end financial standing of these persons and corporations rather than any loss of loyalty or support for the denomination.” There are many variables – the economy, the state of

### /// Briefly noted

#### Delegates approve biennial assemblies

Waterloo, Ont.—The Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in 2012 will mark the start of a two year cycle of national church gatherings, followed by assembly 2014, 2016, and so on. While the motion to make this change passed with a strong majority at Assembly 2011, some delegates were not enthused about meeting biennially. They did, however, understand the financial impact of annual assemblies and the related demands on staff. Diminished personal connections and fewer opportunities for Area Churches to host an assembly were noted concerns. Joanne Moyer pointed out the environmental impact of meeting annually. “It costs a lot to the environment every year, so it is also a creation care issue,” she said. Less clear to some would be the impact on youth assemblies, which already occur biennially. Delegates heard that there are no plans or resources to produce another youth assembly again next year, so the next youth assembly would not occur until 2014. Lisa Carr-Pries, volunteer Chair of the Christian Formation Council, and Dave Bergen Executive Secretary of Christian Formation (staff) asked for further delegate discussion on this matter, observing that this decision means that one group of teens will likely miss out entirely on a national youth assembly experience during their high school years. At the time the decision was made, it was not clear whether delegates grasped this implication. However, discussions later in the day and again on Friday have prompted the General Board to place discussions about the possibility of a youth assembly in 2012 on the agenda for fall Leadership Assembly meetings.

—Dan Dyck

specific industries, etc.”

Still, what is worrying is a downward trend in congregational giving, which over the last 7-8 years has totalled some \$400,000 less. Some congregations who have a shrinking membership simply can't afford to give at the same level, Wiebe observed, and some younger, flourishing ones sometimes take a greater portion of their budget to fund new leadership positions for local ministry.

Regarding savings found in a smaller MC Canada staff, Wiebe said that even though eight staff persons lost their jobs, the FTE (full-time equivalent) was more like 3.4. Meeting biennially as an Assembly, beginning after the 2012 one as the delegates approved this year, will save approximately \$100,000 per Assembly, he estimated from looking at the expense of past gatherings. “But that's only looking at the hard costs of the gathering,” he clarified. That's not considering any staff time which “is enormous” in the time and energy spent in advance of assemblies. Some communication staff, for instance, spend several months in preparation for this gathering.

With a reduced staff, Wiebe says they will definitely have to hire “outside staff” to plan future assemblies.

Overall, though, Wiebe appears optimistic. Giving by the end of the first four months of fiscal year 2011 was already \$2,000 ahead of projections. But the June mail strike didn't help things either. “We can't read too much into this,” he cautioned. “It's too early in the year.”

*With files from Dan Dyck*

## Mennonite Women Canada feeds body and soul in Waterloo

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

AB Correspondent

“**W**omen and women getting together is about feeding your heart,” said Patti Ollies, president of Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, as she welcomed over 150 women to lunch on July 8. The special lunch and business meeting of Mennonite Women Canada is open to all women at Mennonite Church Canada Assemblies. Established almost 60 years ago, the group supports the work of the church through nurturing faith and relationships among women, contributing to local and international ministries, and giving financial help to women studying theology at the masters level.

In a devotional, Bev Suderman-Gladwell of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Ont., celebrated the strong bonds women

form in church through Bible studies, potlucks and prayer circles saying, “this model of friendship and love is something to be valued.” She also warned of the pitfalls of tightly knit circles. Using a live demonstration of women forming a circle with intertwined arms, Suderman-Gladwell showed how people on the outside can feel excluded until invited in. “Enlarge the tent,” she encouraged. “It's scary to leave the comfort of old friends. . .but you never know when you're going to need another set of supporting arms.”

Outgoing Mennonite Women president, Erna Neufeldt, passed a candle to incoming president Liz Koop, symbolizing the transfer of leadership of Mennonite Women Canada. ✻

PHOTO BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN



*In her devotional, Bev Suderman-Gladwell showed how difficult it can be for women to feel included when there is already a close circle of friends.*

See more shots of  
assembly in action in our  
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## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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### ✉ Love people enough to see them change

**RE:** "SEXUAL INCLUSIVITY motion to be presented at national assembly," May 30, page 15.

If there are those LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, questioning) members who no longer are active in that alternative lifestyle, why are they not dialogued with? Certainly there are those who have experienced the life-changing gospel. Do they think there is no contradiction with the church of the Living God wanting to be "inclusive" by allowing what the Bible condemns? The letters to the seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3 have some strong language for the church that thinks it can be all inclusive, with consequences and warnings given by the risen Christ himself.

Is anything now off limits to Mennonite Church Canada? Can we expect active adulterers and maybe pedophiles to be embraced by the church?

By condoning the LGBTQ lifestyle, are we destroying the family? Children's habitats are being destroyed when we change what God had in mind for families.

Is the word "homophobia" used by LGBTQs to intimidate and end all debate and discussion on the subject?

In being so inclusive, are we not closing the door to those who truly need help from the church? It's like an

## /// Correction

Brian Quan is pastor of the Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church. An incorrect church name was given in "New' Mennonite congregations face same issues decades later," June 27, page 6.



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alcoholic needing help, being told he is okay, that we'll just love and accept him the way he is! Certainly, the church needs to be a hospital for the hurting, but also a clinic where the truth is told about what our "textbook" says about the needy conditions that are so evident!

It is no secret that the church is under attack. It's easier to take the slippery slope of compromise than to confront issues. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more." We should love people as he loved them, but he loved them enough to see them change. That's the story for people

attending our churches, the next generation included: a life-changing encounter with the living Saviour

**MARY BARTEL, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.**

### ✉ **All political parties contradict Christianity**

**RE: "MENNONITES SHOULD lament recent federal election results"** June 13, page 12.

Mr. V. Ratzlaff insinuated that Mennonites who vote for conservatives are "contradicting any commitment to our confession of Christian faith." This is an inflammatory statement. Surely he does not think that any of the political parties are more Christian than the other? Surely he knows that not one political party is promoting abolishing the military and that any party that is in power when our fighter jets need replacing will buy new ones. Surely he knows that all political parties are for punitive justice. All three parties have members who lie. I don't understand why he would think only Conservative MP's lie.

Perhaps Mr. Ratzlaff has not met any conservative voting people in person. The ones I have met are as compassionate, generous and sincere in their faith as any people I have known. It is an insult to these gentle souls to accuse them of contradicting Christianity.

**LORI KLASSEN, WINNIPEG, MAN.**

### ✉ **U.S. military killed 'a child of God' when they shot bin Laden**

**THANK YOU FOR** your "A political lament" editorial, May 16, page 2.

You seemed to capture clearly and succinctly the concerns we share with regards to both issues you raised: the celebration at the death of Osama bin Laden and policies of the Harper government on a variety of issues, including the Middle East and the use of violence to address problems.

We share your conviction that the buying of "better" fighter jets, and the supporting of an Israeli government that keeps Palestinians under army occupation while stealing their land, water and dignity, seems far removed from the dream God has for our world.

We believe that when Scripture says "*God so loved the world*," it means God loved bin Laden as much as he did the victims of 9/11 or any one of us.

Given Paul's argument in Ephesians that God is the Father of all humans, when bin Laden was killed, a child of God was killed. That is never cause for celebration. Thank you for bringing this to the attention of your readers.

**MARVIN WIENS / RAY FRIESEN, WYMARK, SASK.**

*The letter was signed by Marvin Wiens and Ray Friesen on behalf of the Emmaus Mennonite Church council.*

### ✉ **Love is essential to our well-being**

**RE: "HABITS OF repair"** editorial, May 2, page 2.

As a scientist myself, I am always overjoyed when someone articulates so well how the more we find out about the world we live in, the more it lines up with what Jesus actually taught and with the interpretation of "life" by our Anabaptist ancestors.

You wisely point out that it would behoove us to re-examine these social behaviours that have been handed down to us and that we so often take so much for granted. The Golden Rule and the translation of the concept of love into social behaviour was very central to Christ's message, and often lost in the various institutions of Christendom that our ancestors were constantly challenging.

As far as I know, besides pacifism, Anabaptists were concerned about the real day-to-day welfare of those less fortunate in their community. I don't think the economic models of the Hutterites or the extreme socialism of the former Soviet countries can be considered economic or social successes. However, sticking to the capitalistic model with social responsibility—as demonstrated by our own Mennonite Economic Development Associates, the Bill Gates Foundation, Warren Buffett, Bill Clinton, etc.—is having a very significant impact in levelling the playing field and helping people help themselves.

Love is not some fuzzy emotion out there somewhere; it is as essential to our well-being as is a sound functioning kidney or heart.

**RICHARD PENNER, CALGARY, ALTA.**



## ✉ **Mary is no co-mediator, but her life is worthy of reflection**

RE: “REDISCOVERING MARY,” April 18, page 16.

It is important to study and dialogue about the story of Mary outside of the usual traditional time of Christmas. Perhaps very little is said about Mary by Protestants and Anabaptists because of their fear of confusing her role as the mother of Jesus 2,000 years ago with what the Catholic church teaches about her today as co-mediator in heaven.

Growing up in the Mennonite church in Ontario, I do not remember ever hearing a sermon which

centred on the person of Mary and the importance of her life. When we came to Quebec in 1975, we were immersed in the issue of “interceding saints,” with Mary recognized as primary co-mediator.

Much has been written about this topic and I will suffice to say that I believe that the Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit, are the true guide: “*For there is one God and one mediator also between God and human-kind, the man Christ Jesus*” (I Timothy 2:5).

I believe that when we give credence to “interceding saints,” we are moving onto a slippery emotional slope that will only take us in one direction—away from Christ, the one foundation declared by Paul in

### FROM OUR LEADERS

# When the people gather

WILLARD METZGER

**T**he gathering of God’s People is critically important for faith from an Anabaptist perspective. For Anabaptists, the community of faith is a unique and critical environment for experiencing the presence of God’s Spirit.

Popular Christianity prioritizes the individual’s relationship with God. In this mindset, it is the responsibility of the individual to adequately secure the desired direction of God through private prayer and reflection. The direction can also be tested with a few trusted friends.

**When the people gather God is present.** Anabaptists prioritize the community of faith as the necessary context for discerning the direction of the Spirit of God. While God also relates to us as individuals, it is in the context of the gathered community of faith where God is best manifested. We hear the voice of God through one another, corporate

worship and discernment.

**When the people gather God’s love is present.** Community is not only a place where the presence of God is realized, it is also a time when God’s love is evidenced. It is in the gathered community



*How the People of God relate to one another and discern difficult matters together reflects the character of God’s kingdom.*

of faith where God’s desired outcome is visible. How the People of God relate to one another and discern difficult matters together reflects the character of God’s kingdom. The example of such a gathering serves as an attractive invitation.

This is why our Assemblies are such an important exercise as Mennonite Church Canada. Each week, these gatherings occur in congregational worship and study. In addition some congregations gather from time to time as larger

clusters for joint worship services. Area Churches will meet to discern and worship in a larger forum. And finally Area Churches and congregations join together in a national gathering to worship and discern together. These are all important times for the body of Christ. Each gathering is the environment where God directs and leads the church.

From Waterloo to Vancouver—Ontario to British Columbia—the Church convenes to experience and

express the presence of God. We experience the presence of God in our midst and express the presence of God to one another.

When the people gather good things happen. For in the gathering is a fresh opportunity to practice and receive God’s love.

*Willard Metzger is General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada.*

I Corinthians 3:11: “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

This does not mean that we cannot honour Mary and remember her life with full respect and appreciation. This year, the verse for Mother’s Day—Luke 2: 19—states: “But Mary treasured up all these things

and pondered them in her heart.” She lived so many, out-of-the-ordinary experiences to ponder.

The word ponder describes the action of people who are reflective, contemplative, non-threatening, but very much involved. Their wisdom comes out of their experience. They are strong people and know

## FAMILY TIES

# The ethics of flirting

MELISSA MILLER

**T**he guy on the bus was flirting boldly. First he locked a laser stare on the young woman in front of him. Then he shot her a wide smile. When she smiled back, he upped the ante by reaching both hands up to his ears and giving them a comical pull. At that point, as onlookers chuckled, his father, standing behind his stroller, said, “He’s a big flirt. He’ll put the moves on anyone.”

Context is everything when it comes to flirting. The who and the where and the circumstances determine if the flirting is amusing or aggravating. By flirting, I mean a playful expression of interest, a signal of a desire to get closer—something that can be expressed through words or non-verbally. In its benign form, flirting is a delightful form of human interaction whereby both participants enjoy a tingle of attraction and the sparkle of appreciation. I hasten to add that I am not advocating behaviors that compromise marital fidelity or cross over healthy boundaries. (I once had a co-worker who pestered me with comments like, “I’ve always wanted to have an affair with a married woman. How about it?” This continued in spite of my clear messages of discomfort and requests that he stop.)

Nuance is essential in flirting. I imagine the youngster on the bus will learn

about such nuance over time. He’ll learn by the messages he receives from his father, and he’ll learn from other people around him. He’ll pick up messages in the culture that surrounds him—in the school yard, at hockey games, observing the mores in the entertainment he watches, movies and computer games.

What might the Christian church have to offer by way of teaching? The Ethics of Flirting is not a regular sermon title or Sunday School lesson in my experi-



*...[F]lirting is a delightful form of human interaction whereby both participants enjoy a tingle of attraction and the sparkle of appreciation.*

ence. (There is a sly reference in Proverbs 30:19—the Hebrew sage’s list of things too wonderful to understand—that includes “the way of a man with a maid,” deftly hinting at the mysteries of sexual attraction without putting too blunt a point on it.)

Christian ethics are shaped by our understanding of Jesus. We look to him to guide us in our human relationships. Our scriptures emphasize Jesus’ divine nature that propelled him to love sacrificially and to death on a cross. Our scriptures also depict a Jesus who was fully human and engaged the people he met with respect and compassion and on

many occasions, with spirited humor and provocative playfulness. In his humanity, we can imagine that Jesus was attractive to the people around him, and also that he was attracted to them.

I wonder if honour could be the frame for our flirting. Do our signals of attraction and pleasure honour each other? Are they in keeping with the relationships and circumstances, and respectful of the other commitments we have made? Do they honour the God who created us, the beauty and sacredness of others, and the life we are blessed to enjoy?

In conclusion, I’ll offer another incident that happened at a bowling alley recently. As a 91-year-old family friend exited, he leaned down close to my sister, resting his arm on the back of her chair.

Lowering his head close to her ear, he asked, “Will you let an old man brag a little? I just bowled a game with a score of 221.” (Note: a perfect game is 300.) Our small group cheered and applauded, and then he slowly walked away, with a farewell wave. Underneath his bragging was a set of questions: “Will you notice me? With you celebrate with me? Do you find me to be worthy and attractive?” We could honour him and he honoured us.

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

self-control. People who ponder often attract others to them because they do not have a judgmental attitude.

I imagine Mary meeting Jesus in heaven after her death. He takes her in his arms and says, "Thanks, Mom, for not giving up on me." Then he introduces her to his heavenly Father, the person that she had spoken with but had never met. If Stephen was worthy to receive a royal welcome into heaven (Acts 7:55-56),

so much more Mary also could have been welcomed personally by her son. I can hear Mary singing humbly and reverently the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) in the great concert hall of heaven, with a joy in her heart that only a mother who did not give up can know.

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL, QUE.

### GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Entrusted with kingdom currency

ARNIE FRIESEN

Recently I met with an elderly gentleman who had just celebrated his 92nd birthday. In a humorous fashion he noted that he was losing his hearing, losing his eyesight and now he feared he was "losing his marbles." However, his wit continued to shine throughout our visit.

During our conversation, he reminded me that all his money existed for one purpose, "to help others." He had never lost the vision of why he had been entrusted with kingdom currency. He was still taking seriously his role as manager of all the resources God had assigned to him.

To his dying day and beyond, he wants to make sure that he never short-circuits the giving cycle. In fact, he assured me that his will had recently been reviewed and he plans to be generous through his bequests. Some time ago he and his wife, now deceased, established an endowment fund with Mennonite Foundation of Canada. Through the proceeds of these funds they plan to support many noteworthy causes for decades to come.

What does our giving cycle really look like? Are we asked to give so that God

will fill our storehouses? Is the point of giving that we prosper and keep more for ourselves? This sort of teaching is often described as the "prosperity gospel." The idea that giving is about our own desires can be deeply attractive to us. It is hard to resist the notion that somehow God can be manipulated for our pleasure.

In his book *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn dispels this myth of prosperity theology with this poignant

*'God prospers me not to raise my standard of living but to raise my standard of giving.'*

statement: "God prospers me not to raise my standard of living but to raise my standard of giving."

In II Corinthians 9:11-13, Paul clearly explains why God sometimes directs more money to our account than we really need: "*You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.*" Beyond having their needs looked after, Paul says the recipients of our generosity will "*overflow in many expressions of thanks to God.*"

Perhaps we should aspire to moving in the direction of reverse tithing. R. G.

LeTourneau, a well-documented inventor of large earth-moving machines, exemplified this by giving away 90 percent of his income. As LeTourneau did, maybe we should view our role more as God's power of attorney in financial matters. After all, we are God's deputies on earth. We are God's representatives. We are God's change agents. There is no Bank of God on First Avenue and Main Street. We are it!

The cycle of giving can be summed up this way: Overflowing with gratitude to the giver of all things, we give so we will be entrusted with more. This will enable us to give even more. The cycle goes on, all the while generating more and more expressions of gratitude to God by recipients of our generosity.

It makes sense that our Creator would

strategically direct resources to people who are interested in funding kingdom initiatives to sustain the church, help people and take care of creation. It is up to us to ensure that this cycle is never short-circuited.

*Arnie Friesen is a stewardship consultant at the Abbotsford, B.C., 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](http://MennoFoundation.ca).*



## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Bender Huband**—Hailey Marie (b. June 21, 2011), to Kris Huband and Don Bender, Cassel Mennonite, Ont.

**Chakrabarti**—Samuel Wallace (b. May 28, 2011) to Robi and Rikki Chakrabarti, Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C.

**Jansen**—Arlo Rudolph (b. May 1, 2011), to Aldin and Lisa Jansen, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Janzen**—Alarie Michelle Erin (b. June 19, 2011), to Kurt and Jorie Janzen, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Krahn Chodos**—Rachel Katie (b. June 17, 2011), to Dave Chodos and Natasha Krahn, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Loewen**—Benjamin Elijah (b. June 26, 2011), to Glenn and Laurel Loewen, Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

**Martin**—Elijah Russel (b. July 12, 2011) to Doug and Heidi Martin, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Mathias Klassen**—Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., at Hidden Acres Camp, June 12, 2011.

**Patrick Falk, Joey (Joseph) Braun**—Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man., June 12, 2011.

**Colette Johnson, Brooke Holmen, Janelle Sauder, Bobby Derksen, Helen Dyck, Kristin Faure**—Carrot River Mennonite, Sask., June 12, 2011.

**Jared Bileski, Kim Haus, Kayla Wallace**—Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., June 26, 2011.

**Chloe Bergen, Emma Bergen, Paul Hildebrand, Kathryn Kroeker**—Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 29, 2011.

**Dana Bergen, Nick Friesen, Andrew Goertzen, Patrick Sproxtton, Taylor Sproxtton, Mike Unger**—Hague Mennonite, Sask., July 10, 2011.

**Lynda Charlebois, Rosanna Nash**—Ottawa Mennonite, Ont., June 12, 2011.

**Marlene Thibodeau**—Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., June 12, 2011.

**Matthew Kuepfer, Sam Niebuhr, Joanna Poon, Dylan Symons, Victor Zhang, Mary Zhao**—Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C., June 12, 2011.

### Marriages

**Au/Kwan**—Matthew Au and Tracy Kwan, at Toronto Chinese Mennonite, Ont., May 7, 2011.

**Braun/Derksen**—Denalle Renee Braun and Andrew James Derksen, at Hague Mennonite, Sask., June 3, 2011.

**Feeney/Kuepfer**—Matt Feeney and Mag Kuepfer, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., July 2, 2011.

**Gonzalia/Zehr**—Phillipe Gonzalia (First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.) and Erin Zehr (Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.), at First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., June 4, 2011.

**Heinrichs/Waldner**—Marcus Heinrichs and Allison Waldner, Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man., at the Millennium Exhibition Centre, Altona, June 8, 2011.

**Toews/Wittenberg**—Rosanna Toews and James Wittenberg, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., at St. John's Anglican, Vancouver, June 4, 2011.

### Deaths

**Albrecht**—Laurene (nee Schultz), 88 (b. April 2, 1923; d. June 23, 2011), Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

**Braun**—Anne, 84 (b. Feb. 19, 1927; d. May 1, 2011), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Braun**—John, 85 (b. May 24, 1926; d. June 18, 2011), Laird Mennonite, Sask.

**Brunk**—Mary, 94 (b. May 10, 1916; d. April 19, 2011), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

**Epp**—Jacob Heinrich, 95 (b. Sept. 4, 1915; d. May 19, 2011), First United Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C.

**Ewert**—Orin, 88 (b. Dec. 29, 1922; d. June 29, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

**Jones**—Virginia Cressman (d. June 3, 2011), Breslau Mennonite, Ont., in California.

**Schapansky**—Jacob, 76 (b. Dec. 25, 1934; d. June 13, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Winberg**—Raymond (Ray), 70 (b. Jan. 4, 1941; d. May 1, 2011), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

## Pontius' Puddle



## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# Letting The Tiger Out Of The Cage

BY TROY WATSON

Anabaptism is more popular than ever. A growing number of contemporary Christian thinkers are convinced Anabaptists have a significant leadership role in shaping the future of Christian faith in the new paradigm. I fully agree. However, one thing that could hinder us is our preoccupation with being Anabaptist. (I will leave the potential barrier of ethnic Mennonitism for another article.)

For starters, many of the major Anabaptist distinctives are becoming the norm in many emerging Christian faith communities (i.e. the largest and fastest growing church in Canada, the Meeting House, is Anabaptist). Stanley Hauerwas puts it this way, “the Anabaptists now live in a world which they said they wanted—a world in which no one is forced either by the government or by societal expectations to be Christians. . . You have won the war.” So now what?

If we fail to embody the trailblazing spirit of the early Anabaptists we risk becoming yesterday’s solution. I believe the future of Christian faith is not more Anabaptist per se, but more connected to the God who inspired early Anabaptists to pioneer beyond the status quo they were part of. What spiritual seekers are looking for in this postmodern shift is a spiritual path that moves beyond conventional norms and traditions to foster connection with an “uncaged” God.

Mennonite scholar Arnold Snyder said as much recently: “We love a living God not a denominational fossil. . . We don’t



need to be more Anabaptist. We need to be more present to God. The good news is our tradition is not only open to it, but is built upon this experience of being present to God. We should fully expect to be led places where our faith parents were not led. Obviously, its 500 years later. . . and we’ve learned some things.”

Faith is about holding onto God’s Presence, not the past. Faith is trusting the Holy Spirit, who led our forebears beyond the conventional faith of their era and whom we have encountered through the faith tradition they have passed onto us, and the Spirit will continue to lead

*To be radical reformers will require being radical in our own time and culture.*

and guide us beyond our own status quo today. To be radical reformers will require being radical in our own time and culture.

Radical means A) going to the root of, and B) extreme change from the accepted or traditional norms. To go to the root of our faith is to be open to God’s Spirit. To challenge and transform accepted and traditional norms will include our own.

What inspires people today about Anabaptists was that they were willing to go farther than the Reformers, risking their lives to cross lines the majority felt they ought not cross. At the heart of their rebellious faith was letting God be God rather than confining God to conventional faith and theology. Anabaptists were

open to an uncaged God.

An old sermon illustration a friend shared with me speaks to this: “I visited a carnival with many exotic creatures on display. The travelling showman unveiled the final cage with great ceremony. It contained an enormous tiger. A young man began bellowing ‘he doesn’t look so tough!’ The announcer attempted to rouse the tiger with his stick as the obnoxious youngster approached the cage to taunt the motionless beast. Finally an older gentleman interrupted, ‘Excuse me sir, but let the tiger out of its cage if you wish to convince this simpleton of its fearsome power.’ Brothers and sisters, the church must do the same with God. If we want people to believe in God’s power we’ve got to let Him out of the cage we’ve created for Him.”

I have visited Anabaptist institutions that have released God from the intellectual limitations of our doctrinal assumptions and I have experienced Anabaptist worship that risks openness to the unfettered movement of the Holy Spirit. But only churches that let God out of both

the intellectual and experiential cages we have attempted to contain God in, will pioneer into the future with impact.

Early Anabaptists were led by an uncaged God. The difficult task for us is to follow their example, recognizing the status quo of our own tradition constitutes part of the cage we must let God out of in order to lead us into the future.

What this means will only become clear as we walk together in faith, interpreting the guidance of the Holy Spirit in community, as our forebears did 500 years ago.

*Troy Watson is leader of MCEC church plant Quest Christian Community in St. Catharines, Ont.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

## Community ministry has church bustling with activity

By EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Visiting Jubilee Mennonite Church on a Thursday evening one discovers upwards of 30 neighbourhood youths excitedly milling about waiting to be shepherded into vehicles for an evening at Birds Hill Park, several young adults putting up a new basketball hoop, adults working in their garden plots, and throngs of young children playing in the yard and basement.

The young children belong to the J Club made up of three- to 12-year-olds. The theme this particular evening is trees, so with adult guidance the youngsters are planting seedlings around the church and others in the basement are making paper trees.

The place is bustling with activity and Anna Marie Geddert has it all under control. Geddert is the director of community ministry at Jubilee Mennonite, a member of both Mennonite Church Canada and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.



*Anna Marie Geddert, right, director of community ministry at Jubilee Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., works with members of the J Club to make trees and learn how to care for them.*

She started coming to the church 15 years ago as a single parent. Remarried now with a blended family of six, the church saw in her someone who could help it shape its ministry in this northeast corner of the city, where four Manitoba Housing complexes with numerous aboriginal, new immigrant and single-parent families form part of the neighbourhood.

In April 2010, the church hired Geddert part-time for a three-month term to determine the needs in the community and connect with churches and secular organizations to find out what they are doing and where gaps existed.

“There are lots of needs and lots of women with kids,” says Geddert.

The position was then renewed for an additional six months to implement some programming. “Then after that we made a three-year commitment to hire Anna Marie for 20 hours/week,” says Pastor Dan Nighswander, who points out the butterfly garden that the J Club planted earlier in the month with help from the Living Prairie Museum. On this evening the place is clearly way too busy to lure any butterflies, but the dream is to bring nature to the churchyard.

“Many of these people do not have cars or cannot afford to go to a camp, so we would like to bring nature to them, to learn to care for it and love it,” says Geddert.

Geddert distributes a newsletter to a couple hundred households every month, informing them of upcoming activities. Often she takes time to visit as she does the mail drop.

“We are beginning to see people who identify the church as a place to come when they need someone,” says Nighswander.

It isn't always smooth sailing, though. Things get broken and conflicts between community members erupt at times.



*One of the young J Club members helps plant seedlings donated by Manitoba Hydro at Jubilee Mennonite Church.*

“Recently some kids from the J Club broke in and stole freezies and cookies from the freezer,” Nighswander says. “Some of the neighbours saw what was going on and reported it. . . . The church is seen as a place to come when they need something and people are looking out for us. . . . There is still a bit of damage that gets done, but the congregation says wear and tear on the building and vandalism is part of the cost of being who God calls us to be.”

Geddert meets regularly with community groups, churches, organizations and schools in the area; many have indicated an interest in assisting through donations, volunteers and resources. The local school shares some of their staff time with Jubilee's community kitchen program, and stores and churches have donated sports equipment for their hockey and soccer teams.

“We're all working at a common purpose and it's a wonderful way to have conversations about your faith,” says Geddert. ❧

# It's a birthday, not an anniversary

## *Celebrating 75 years at Vineland United Mennonite Church*

STORY AND PHOTO  
BY ANDREA EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
VINELAND, ONT.

Ross Penner, pastor of Vineland United Mennonite Church, had much to say of his church's weekend-long 75th-year celebrations, held on June 11 and 12: "We chose purposefully to call this event a birthday party; much more exciting for families and young kids who are the future for our church. We challenged ourselves to give away 75 birthday presents to those around us in the community [including service projects]. There's a real strong desire to reach out. We played a key role in establishing a community garden and we've begun providing meals to families who are challenged in their resources. Our future is in putting much more time and energy into reaching into the community."

Corney Klassen, associate pastor, has been a part of the congregation since 1946.

He organized the events for the evening of June 11, which he called "a time to remember the past. Having some of the former pastors come back to spend the weekend with us meant a lot."

Youth leader Chelsea Misener said, "The youth loved being able to plan the family fun time because they know how to have fun. It was a success."

In addition to stations on the grass for face painting, card making and balloon animals, the youth group had arranged a full string of events for the afternoon of June 12: a three-legged race- pudding-, pie- and watermelon-eating contests, and an all-ages game of dancing musical chairs.

The church has existed in some form for longer than 75 years, but as Penner put it, before 1936 it was very grassroots.

Member Jake Fransen recalled the church's many milestones. The Russian Mennonites arriving in Vineland in the mid-1920s were hosted by Mennonites of Swiss background, who had been worshipping in the area since 1800. Those people already spoke English, so the United Mennonites worshipped with Mennonite Brethren, first in homes, a rental space above a store and a rented sawmill.

Ontario United Mennonite churches were operated from Kitchener-Waterloo, so in 1936 the Vineland group separated and became its own church. That year, the United Mennonites constructed a church, which grew too small with the influx of Russian Mennonites from Western Canada as well as from post-war overseas immigrations.

The present building was constructed in 1957.

Klassen was quick to point out that "we have to look into the future. If you don't look for a future, you don't have a future." ❧

### ❧ Briefly noted

#### Teen dies at church camp

New Hamburg, Ont.—Although it was a rental, and not a Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp event, the staff of the camp were deeply effected by the death of 14-year-old Malcolm Gyfani who was at the camp with a group from the Jane-Finch Faith Community in Toronto. Campbell Nisbet found it ironic that he had been thanking God that the camp had reached its 50<sup>th</sup> year without a fatality. Late in the afternoon on June 18, Gyfani was with a group that went beyond the ropes into deeper water. Onlookers said he panicked when he discovered his error. After firefighters pulled him from the water, he was rushed first to Stratford General Hospital and then to London Victoria Hospital where succumbed to his injuries later that night. The Faith Community had been at Hidden Acres on retreat, and to baptize a number of youths on Sunday. With the consent of the youths, including Gyfani's brother Bernard, the baptism went ahead. Nisbet described it as a mixture of "tragedy and triumph." Gyfani's funeral was held on June 26. Expressions of sympathy and support have flowed in to both the Jane-Finch Faith Community and Hidden Acres, as they were supported by many congregations and individuals. "Nothing but support and sympathy," says Nisbet.

—By Dave Rogalsky



*Youth leader Chelsea Misener paints the face of Hannah Friesen, nine, at Vineland United Mennonite Church's 75th birthday celebration.*

# The ecology of ministry

*It takes the whole church to raise a pastor, according to AMBS dean Rebecca Slough*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

From 2003 to the present, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., has been working on an Eli Lilly Endowed project called Engaging Pastors. Rebecca Slough, dean, shared the major findings from the project at the 2011 Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training fundraiser at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, on June 9.

A key idea running through the results was that of an “ecology of ministry.” Spelled out, this means that it takes all parts of the church—families, congregations, area churches, national churches, schools (including seminaries) and pastors themselves—to raise and maintain pastors. Both in the process by which the project operated, and in its results, the idea of partnerships, discussions between stakeholders and learning to listen to others in the circle of the church, were key.

“The ecology of ministry . . . recognizes the organic, mutually dependent and adaptive ways that the human relationships needed for supporting pastors throughout their ministry operate,” Slough said. “It acknowledges the diversity of functions and types of work that each does, and that each function is essential. An ecology suggests a living and dynamic life form. It presses closer to the image of the Body of Christ that Paul exalts in Corinthians—each body part with its own gift, unique purpose, and contribution.”

The primary contributions she listed include:

- Congregations form Christians in faith, discipleship, and ministry.
- Area churches cultivate relationships



*Rebecca Slough, left, dean of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, spoke at this year's Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training fundraiser at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, on June 9. She is pictured with Eileen and Ralph Lebold.*

among pastoral leaders and congregations, and coordinate and support various expressions of Christian ministries and pastoral leadership in appropriate ways.

- Denominational care for the whole ministry ecology of the church, facilitate and support partnerships between its members, articulate a vision for Christian ministry and pastoral leadership.

- Schools educate and form leaders for ministry, especially pastoral ministry through focused study and supervised practice; study the developments in ecclesiology, ministerial practice over time as well as and emerging expressions of leadership; and strengthen the character and faith of ministerial leaders.

- Pastors practise sound leadership in congregations; develop professional collegiality; offer companionship and accountability to one other; mentor new leaders in the congregation and the area church. They

serve the ecology as well as being served by it.

“Both the practice and teaching of ministry are strengthened when pastors and professors regularly engage each other in ways that honour the knowledge and expertise of each,” Slough said of one of the three key findings from the process. The other two include an “urgent need and opportunity for pastoral, biblical and teaching authority to be strengthened in the Mennonite church; and the church and the seminary need to equip pastors and professors to read and engage their missional contexts with joy.”

The Lebold Endowment, now in its 14th year, has reached 70 percent of its \$1 million goal. The money is used to support both learning and teaching in the applied studies option of Grebel's master of theological studies program, proving itself to be an example of the ecology of ministry. ☛



# Coffee for Peace ships first beans to Canada

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

On May 9, 2011, Coffee for Peace exported its first shipment of coffee beans to Canada.

Coffee for Peace is the initiative of Joji Pantoja, who, with her husband Daniel, is a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in the Philippines. Through their ministry, Peacebuilders Community Inc., Coffee for Peace sells organically cultivated, locally grown and roasted coffee beans for fair-trade prices, and operates a small street-front café where coffee brewed from those beans is served.

Level Ground Trading, a company founded by four Canadian families to help improve the lives of disadvantaged producers, are shipping the beans to Canada, where they will then be sold through Ten Thousand Villages.

The coffee beans were grown by the B'lann First Nation in Mount Matutum region of Mindanao. Pastor Marcy Buan, the spiritual leader of the B'lann, expressed his joy about the shipment of coffee beans in a story on the Coffee for Peace's Facebook page. "I may not be able to go to Canada, but our high-quality coffee will be enjoyed by our Canadian brothers and sisters," he said through translators.

Buan thanked Canadians on behalf of the B'lann for treating their coffee growers justly through fair trade. The Facebook entry stated that Coffee for Peace "is committed to advancing fair trade, not just for marketing purposes, but to really see genuine justice and peace among the coffee farmers in the Philippines, especially the indigenous people . . ."

By adhering to fair trade principles that create sustainable opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers, Coffee for Peace helps to alleviate poverty. Producers have the opportunity to strengthen management skills and find access to new markets. Fair prices enable socially just and environmentally sound production.

On May 30, those very principles helped Coffee for Peace to win first place in the

Business in Development Challenge in the category for businesses with an impact on the bottom of the societal pyramid. The challenge is sponsored by Philippines Business for Social Progress and Citi Bank. ☸

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DANIEL PANTOJA



*Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Joji Pantoja with 10 60-kilogram sacks of coffee beans destined for Canada.*

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# Small Quebec congregation closes

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent,  
RAWDON, QUE.

L'Église Évangélique Mennonite de Rawdon had its official beginning in 1980, a "daughter" of L'Église Évangélique Mennonite de Joliette.

Back in the 1950s, when Harold and Pauline Reesor started the work in Joliette in their home, Melvin and Ellen Schmidt, who were living and serving at the Rock of Ages Camp near Chertsey, joined them from time to time to encourage them. The Schmidts had studied with the Reesors at the French Bible School in Longueuil.

After leaving the camp in 1965, the Schmidts and their family moved to



Baptized by Pastor Jean M'Baitoloum, centre, are Kevans Trempe, left, and Julien Cloutier, right, at the L'Église Évangélique Mennonite de Rawdon on Aug. 22, 2010.



L'Église Évangélique Mennonite de Rawdon held its last service on June 5.

Rawdon and they began attending the Joliette church regularly, becoming members in 1972.

Over the years, more people from Rawdon began attending the church in Joliette, to the point that the facilities became crowded, at which point members from Rawdon decided it was time to begin a work here. Beginning in 1976, members started meeting in homes for weekly Bible studies and Sunday worship under the leadership of André Joly and David Shantz, who were assisted by Daniel Milton and John Docherty.

In 1980, space was rented in the Rawdon United Church for Sunday worship and Armand Roussin became pastor. Two years later, Roussin was transferred to Joliette. Then Shantz and his family moved to Rawdon, and took charge of the congregation. Under his leadership, the congregation grew to about 45. Besides worship, the church offered a door-to-door outreach ministry, services in three seniors residences, bi-monthly coffee houses at which films were shown, a program led by a musical group, guest speakers and many fellowship meals to which family and friends were

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELLEN SCHMIDT



Ellen and Melvin Schmidt, founding members of the L'Église Évangélique Mennonite de Rawdon.

invited. Special programs at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving, complete with potluck meals, were well attended.

In 1991, with the help of members from many Mennonite congregations across Quebec, Ontario and Vermont, a building was erected on property that had been purchased earlier. The congregation was thankful to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, which supported the Rawdon ministry financially at this time.

After Shantz's ministry ended in 1991, Denis Tremblay, Jean-Guy Lantin, Daniel Genest, André Ouimet and Jean M'Baitoloum provided pastoral leadership.

Over the years, membership has decreased. This year, the church declined to five active but elderly members who were having difficulty covering monthly expenses and undertaking all the responsibilities they had assumed in the past.

L'Église Évangélique Mennonite de Rawdon held its last service on June 5. ❧

With files from Ellen Schmidt.

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## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# MCC requests funds for East Africa drought response

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE

Mennonite Central Committee release  
AKRON, PA.

**M**ennonite Central Committee (MCC) is appealing for donations in response to a critical drought and food crisis in East Africa, which has affected about 11 million people. MCC is responding in Kenya with food-for-work projects, while in Ethiopia, MCC funds are expected to be used for supplemental food for children under age 5 and lactating or pregnant women. As the impact of the crisis grows, MCC anticipates the potential for an expanded and ongoing response in these countries.

Two consecutive, poor rainy seasons have caused drought in large sections of Kenya and Ethiopia, where MCC has

worked for at least 35 years. In addition to crop failure and many livestock deaths, the situation is exacerbated by high, local grain prices and areas of conflict.

MCC is committing \$1.2 million through Canadian Foodgrains Bank to support two food-for-work programs in Kenya. Kenyans will be paid with cooking oil, maize and beans for their construction of 92 sand dams and 25 wells. These water-conservation projects, done through partner organizations, the Sahelian Solutions Foundation and the Utooni Development Organization, will help minimize the impact of future droughts.

MCC PHOTO BY DAN DRIEDGER



*To help people of Kenya affected by the drought and food crisis, MCC will support food-for-work programs similar to the one these Kenyan men and women are working on. Sand dams help to conserve water that can be used for irrigation during the dry season.*

In Ethiopia, MCC's partner, the Relief and Development Association (RDA) of the Meserete Kristos Church, will use an initial \$200,000 from MCC to help the most vulnerable in the Boricha area, 240 km south of the capital, Addis Ababa. Representatives from MCC and RDA are consulting with the community to determine the most effective way to address its ongoing needs. Meserete Kristos Church is an Anabaptist denomination and member of Mennonite World Conference.

MCC also is assessing the possibility of responding to the needs of Somali refugees who are pouring into Ethiopia and Kenya by the tens of thousands.

Donations to support MCC's response can be made online, [mcc.org](http://mcc.org), or at any MCC office. Gifts should be designated for "East Africa Drought Response." MCC encourages you also to pray for the people of East Africa at this time of crisis. ☸

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## Building bridges

*MDS labours on in Newfoundland*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
BONAVISTA PENINSULA, NFLD.

Tears running down her face, Debbie Faulkner said, "I wouldn't know how to thank you. You've been so good. You're beautiful people. . . . I appreciate for everything you've doing for me. I pray to God to give you the strength to go on and work."

With that, the advice of Orlan Martin of Elmira, Ont., the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) project director on the Bonavista Peninsula from April to June, came true. "The most handiest tool that you can bring [on an MDS project]," he said, "is your handkerchief, and cry with the people. They'll cry when you come because they're so glad you're there, and they'll cry when you leave because you've made friends."

Faulkner's home of 51 years, built and shared with her husband Jack, was ruined by Hurricane Igor last September. The roof was no match for the wind-driven rain, and the house, built in a low spot that had not caused problems before, sat in water until mould destroyed the contents. The house was condemned and torn down.

The Faulkners lost almost all their photos and the memorabilia of their children's growing-up years. Without insurance, they did not have the money to either build a new home or live in rental accommodation.

While the Faulkner's house was damaged by intruding rain, Dennis and Goldie Cole's house in Newman's Cove, as well as Dianne Mackay's house in Melrose, were destroyed by brooks suddenly swollen to raging rivers, which washed out foundations, roads and culverts.

MDS volunteers poured footings and foundations, framed, roofed, put up plasterboard, mudded, sanded, did finishing work and painted the houses. Aft and fore of the houses, they built bridges, Newfoundland's version of a deck or porch.



*The new Cole house at Newman's Cove, Nfld., by the brook that swelled into a river during Hurricane Igor last September.*

A key player in all of the relief is Eric Squires, priest of four small Anglican parishes on the peninsula. "I'm a Christian first, and an Anglican second," he said. "I'll find help wherever I can."

The cold, rain and fog the third week in June did not dampen the energy or enthusiasm of the mixed group of Old Colony, Reinland, Mennonite Brethren, Markham-Waterloo, and Mennonite Church Canada Mennonites who came in June and worked into July. When it rained, inside work continued, or outside walls were shrouded with tarps to allow siding, fascia and soffits to continue to be installed.

Not all the volunteers were builders.

Susan Neufeld, from near Tillsonburg, Ont., is a 19-year-old Kindergarten teacher at a private Christian school, while Marion Toews of Saskatoon, Sask., is a retired nurse. Neufeld and Toews spent their first day painting, cleaning up and shovelling gravel at the Cole house.

Even as plans were being made for the first house dedication on June 24, news came of another catastrophe: A family of 11 lost their house to fire. They, too, had no insurance. The request came. Would MDS assist again? Plans are for MDS to stay on the Bonavista Peninsula until the end of August, with volunteers already lined up for the duration. ❧

## A 'bucket list' volunteer

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
BONAVISTA PENINSULA, NFLD.

While Bonavista, Nfld., was Marion Toews first Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) project, the list of her work with other organizations, both before and after her retirement as a nurse, would fill a page by itself.

On a trip to Colombia, the plan to go out to a leprosarium to work on a retreat centre was stopped by political troubles. Instead, she worked with churches in the capital of Bogotá, a different place each day, to keep from being kidnapped. She found it inspiring to see work of the Colombian Mennonites with displaced people.

Originally from Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan,



Toews

she now attends Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask.

Having served in Africa, Asia, North and South America, she is now interested in seeing Canada, calling her volunteer work part of her "bucket list."

On her first day in Newfoundland, Toews touched up paint, worked at cleaning up a house almost ready to pass on to the owners, and shovelled gravel. The next day she was preparing spindles for a bridge. (While the rest of Canada sits on backyard decks, Newfoundlanders can stand on a bridge, fore and aft on their houses.)

Years ago, a tornado at Mayfair, Sask.,

struck her farm, blowing down trees down, turning over all the grain augers except the one that didn't work, shattered feed bins. MDS volunteers from Glenbush, Rabbit Lake and Prince Albert came and cleaned up. She sees her work now as "paying it forward," showing her children, now in their 40s, that it is possible to do that.

Toews, 72, has checked a few other things off her bucket list recently: a tandem sky dive in Hawaii, and rides in a helicopter, hot-air balloon and a tree-top zipline. She is looking forward to go to the Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut—maybe

with Habitat for Humanity, an organization she has served with before—and the MDS house dedication in Melrose, Nfld.

Does she have any frustration in her work with MDS, like perhaps having a room with only a curtain? She laughs, shaking her head. When she was working on a medical mission in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch, she was the pharmacist. There, the school they were using as a dormitory had no windows, only bars, and no curtains. She had to encourage some small local boys to climb down to give them some privacy. ❧

## MCC supporters' gifts to Japan will aid clean up, trauma healing

BY CHERYL ZEHR WALKER  
Mennonite Central Committee

Visiting Japan in May, Willie Reimer, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) director of food, disaster and material resources, was reminded that response to disaster must be personal and address individual trauma, however massive the tasks demanded by the surrounding devastation.

Reimer made two journeys around Japan, which was rocked by a 9.0-magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami on March 11, which led to the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The first trip was with Church World Service (CWS) colleagues, and the other as part of a delegation led by Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

He quoted Takeshi Komino, who heads emergency response for CWS Asia/Pacific, "This recovery requires human-to-human interaction; it is not just task oriented."

Supporters in Canada, the U.S. and around the world have given more than \$924,000 through MCC to the people of Japan. MCC will channel the gifts to the work of trusted partners in Japan, including CWS, and the Anabaptist churches of Japan, through MWC. MCC has no program, staff or direct partner organizations in Japan.

Reimer saw minimal earthquake damage to buildings and infrastructure in the northeast coastal area. "Generally, most buildings

withstood the quake," he said. "But the tsunami was different. It smashed over protection walls and caused widespread damage, destroying buildings and infrastructure in its path, one to three kilometres inland. In narrow valleys, the wave travelled up to 10 kilometres. Many of the factories along the coast were destroyed, leaving many jobless. Five hundred kilometres of coastline in three prefectures is affected."

According to Reimer, the funds given to MCC will help with recovery in at least two ways, including forwarding \$700,000 to CWS, which is part of a coalition of 29 Japanese nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), a few international NGOs and three government ministries.

The money will support CWS efforts to:

- Provide hot meals and non-food items;
- Clear debris from evacuation sites, homes, schools and shops (a task estimated to take two years);
- Train volunteers in basic trauma response skills to work alongside trauma response professionals; and
- Provide help as residents access support services.

With MWC, MCC will use the financial aid to find and support ways to "listen to and respond with the Anabaptist communion in Japan through this time of great need," said Reimer. "Japanese Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Mennonite

Brethren congregations have a high desire to respond to their neighbours' needs."

Japan is home to five Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ groups, which include about 3,100 baptized members in 71 congregations. The Japanese Mennonite Fellowship has formed a relief assistance committee and is assessing best ways to respond.

"While Japan has significant resources to respond to the disasters, their magnitude is so extensive that any country would have a difficult time to address the situation," Reimer said.

Although he is encouraged by positive aspects of the response—including effective early distribution of critical relief items; collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector; and steady progress on physical improvements—he sees significant challenges in the recovery process.

"It will be difficult to find enough volunteers for the work as time passes," he said. "It is a challenge to secure good locations for temporary homes. Factories and shops were destroyed; people's livelihoods need to be recovered. Trauma is widespread and often hidden, and the number of people with post-traumatic stress disorder is enormous. Human-to-human contact and assistance is necessary and should accompany all the urgent tasks required. Much more attention needs to be given to trauma work." ❧

MCC PHOTO



*Pictured from left to right: Mr. William, who owns Moriya Fruits Shop in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture, which has been reclaimed from tsunami damage and is again open to serve the community; Willie Reimer, MCC; Takeshi Komino, CWS; and Shingo Kobayashi, who heads CWS' implementing partner organization in the city.*

## Japanese Mennonites, BICs organize for ongoing disaster relief

By FERNE BURKHARDT AND BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER

Mennonite World Conference

A 10-day Mennonite World Conference (MWC) delegation to Japan at the end of May brought hope and support to Japanese Anabaptists still traumatized by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant meltdown in the northeast part of the country in March.

The MWC delegation came at the invitation of Japan Mennonite Fellowship to listen to the churches' concerns, visit affected areas, explore opportunities for response to disaster victims and to express the global church's solidarity with Japanese people.

The delegation included MWC Deacons Commission secretary Bert Lobe of Canada; Paulus Hartono of the Indonesia Mennonite Diaconal Service; and Willie Reimer, the food, disaster and material resources director for Mennonite Central Committee.

As the meetings neared their end, the

fellowship took a significant step by forming the East Japan Great Disaster Relief Assistance Committee to provide relief and early rehabilitation. It has received \$55,000 from member churches for disaster relief.

MCC, which has received more than \$954,000 for Japan relief, has earmarked a portion of it to support the Anabaptist churches' coordinated efforts and is currently in communication with the fellowship regarding joint initiatives that are taking place. MCC has already given \$700,000 to the ecumenical Church World Service, a long-term partner of MCC. Donations are still being accepted.

"The tsunami-affected area is still [covered in] the debris," said fellowship chair Takanori Sasaki, "but we gradually hear the footsteps of recovery."

The fellowship is recruiting volunteers and has already sent more than 60 people

in short-term teams, including doctors. Since the delegation visit, two volunteer teams helped clear houses of mud and

bring supplies to the Emmaus Centre, a Christian ministry in the Sendai district.

While issues around food and dislocation were overwhelming, the MWC delegation also heard concern about radiation. "Are there atomic energy experts in the Anabaptist communion with whom we might be in conversation? Can you send us a theologian who can help us address the nuclear question?" asked Takanobu Tojo from the Tokyo Chiku Menonaito Kyokai Rengo (Tokyo Area Fellowship of Mennonite Churches).

Since the delegation's visit, the fellowship began a study process, and would like to work with the MWC Peace Commission to address nuclear energy concerns among the Japanese.

Meeting participants saw recruiting volunteers as essential. Japanese volunteers would serve for up to four weeks and international volunteers could be invited to come for several months. Hartono was keen to have Indonesians volunteer due to their experience following the 2004 Sumatra tsunami. He spoke of lessons the Indonesian church learned after the Sumatra disaster: talk less and do more; focus on program and unity, both geographically and programmatically; work in teams; see that teams are accountable to the conference and that the conference monitors and evaluates the teams. ☿



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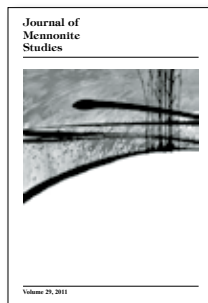
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GOD AT WORK IN US

## Paetkau leaves Grebel in Good Shape

*Henry Paetkau finishes eight and half years as Conrad Grebel University College President*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**H**enry Paetkau strides out of his office to resounding applause.

After all, during his 8.5 years as president of Conrad Grebel University College, resident students have increased by 50 percent, the institution has moved to “university” status, the Masters of Theological Studies degree is now accredited (a move that in turn has brought funding that allows full time students and pastors to study on full tuition scholarships), Peace and Conflicts Studies is poised to establish the first Masters PACS degree, not to mention successful capital campaigns that put the John E. Toews Atrium and teaching space in place and the launching of another building program to provide larger archives and library space, and a centre for community outreach and education. And new teaching faculty have been hired to replace long-term, high profile professors, some of the new instructors themselves being CGUC graduates.

The changes at CGUC over his tenure closely parallel his and the college board’s goals for his presidency. The college is on a more stable financial foundation as a variety of endowments grow, and funding for the new addition flows in. He “leaves the college with a sense of hopeful and growing future.” There have been some “dreams deferred” that couldn’t be afforded now—“a music performance facility, a peace centre for the PACS program and community education, more extensive community education opportunities, and an enhancement of the Mennonite Studies program, . . . given the resources of the materials and the archives and the faculty.”

Paetkau was no stranger to either CGUC, nor Mennonite education institutions at large when he arrived. Born in Volendam

Paraguay, he moved with his family to the Niagara area where he attended Eden Christian College. Later he graduated from Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the University of Waterloo, where he was an associate student at CGUC. His doctoral studies in Canadian History were completed there. Later his own children attended CGUC, adding to his experiences as student, board member, and finally president.

Though he had planned on an academic career, when he finished his studies, positions were hard to come by and fulfilling his focus on the church, he took a part time assignment at the Harrow Mennonite Church near Windsor. He stayed there six-and-a-half years, serving at both Harrow and at a church plant in Windsor. From there he went to St. Catharines, Ontario, where he pastored the Grace Mennonite Church for 15 years, until called to be MC Canada’s denominational minister. After 2.5 years in Winnipeg, CGUC called him to lead.

As to why leave now he says, “Sometimes it’s better to leave when things are going well. Many of the goals I’d set for myself and that the board have set have been met or are being met.” Serving CGUC as president has been a dream realized for him, “enormously satisfying and gratifying . . . a privilege.” He is planning a “self-imposed sabbatical” before taking on a new assignment. The last year has been his fullest in his time at CGUC. A holiday to Newfoundland with his wife Leonora and their family is part of the plan.

Paetkau is succeeded by Dr. Susan Schultz Huxman of Wichita, Kansas, completing her seventh year as the director of the Elliott School of Communication at Wichita State University (WSU). She has held various administrative roles at WSU since 1990, balancing these responsibilities with her passion for teaching. She began her duties at CGUC on July 4. ☞



*Henry Paetkau has completed his term as president of Conrad Grebel University College.*

## ARTBEAT

## FILM REVIEW

# Faith was their greatest weapon

*Of Gods and Men.*

Directed by Xavier Beauvois. Starring Lambert Wilson and Michael Lonsdale. DVD release date: July 2011. Rated PG-13 for graphic violence.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Based on John Kiser's 2003 book *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love and Terror in Algeria*, Xavier Beauvois' 2010 movie, *Of Gods and Men*, was called "best perhaps the best movie on Christian commitment ever made," by Richard Lowry in the *New York Post*.

It is 1996 and eight Trappist monks have dedicated their lives to living in an out-of-the-way corner of Algeria dispensing medicine, medical help, advice and Christian love to the Muslim residents of the area. Their peaceful lives are upset by the rise of the murderous actions of Islamist terrorists in the area and by the Algerian military's pressure on the monks to stop giving medical aid to everyone, including wounded terrorists. The movie focuses on the community's need to decide whether to stay or to leave for the security of France.

*Of Gods and Men* depicts the everyday lives of the monks as they care for the community around them, minister to each other and worship together through the season of Advent and Christmas. Since they are a community that functions by consensus, they move through several meetings to come to their decision, since the abbot does not carry the authority to make the decision for all of them.

Between the meetings they each live out their lives of prayer in personal ways. Several times terrorists barge into their enclosure in the night. During one religious exercise, a military helicopter slowly circles the compound, forcing them to gather more and more closely together, all the while singing the mass.

The local Muslim people, terrified by the Islamists, argue with them to stay. The community of monks actually convinces

the Islamists to leave their weapons outside, and refuses police or military protection.

This would make a great movie for either a purely Christian audience, or one to watch with local Muslims. In either case, it can lead to discussions on what it means to practise one's faith.

The movie was the National Board of Review's Best Foreign Language Film and the Grand Prize Winner at the Cannes Film Festival. ☼

*Dave Rogalsky is the Eastern Canada correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.*

## Whatever happened to dinner?

*New book promotes eating together as a way to strengthen families*

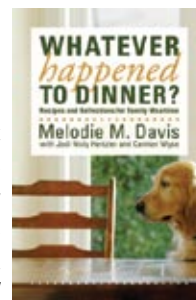
Herald Press

**W**hatever happened to families sitting down to dinner together? That's what Melodie Davis wants to know.

"Research shows that only about 60 percent of youth and parents in the U.S. eat dinner together five or more times a week," says Davis, author of the new Herald Press book, *Whatever Happened to Dinner? Recipes and Reflections for Family Mealtime*.

She contrasts this to her own experience growing up in the 1950s, when eating meals together every day was a normal part of life. "I am of a generation when the family evening meal was a special time," she says, noting that, in Canada, up to 30 percent of families eat together three times a week or less. "I still operate from the ideal that families should gather at the end of the day with some kind of meal on the table," she says.

Although families are busy with hectic schedules, they should try to eat together since the benefits are many. "Not only



do people eat more nutritious, healthy and well-rounded meals, eating dinner together also creates a routine and regular way to connect between children and parents," she says, adding that "grown children frequently point to mealtime traditions as some of their best memories and bonding experiences—laughing and telling stories around the table."

But is it really possible for families to eat together in today's busy world? Davis thinks it is. "It's about being flexible and ratcheting down expectations," she observes. The goal is connection between parent and child."

In addition to reflections on eating together, *Whatever Happened to Dinner?* includes family-friendly recipes tested by food editors Jodi Nisly Hertzler and Carmen Wyse of Harrisonburg, Va.

"I hope the book will help people re-examine the role that mealtime plays in the family, and remind us of how God gave us the good gift of food," says Davis. ☼



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*Willard Metzger sat on the “hot seat” and allowed youth to ask questions about Mennonite Church Canada and the future of the church.*

## Leader on the Hot Seat

*Youth get a chance to pose tough questions about the future of the church to the General Secretary*

**BY EMILY LOEWEN**

Young Voices Editor



*Handling difficult issues in the church was a big question for youth like Katrina Plenert (right), posing a question to Willard Metzger.*

If you thought the weather in Waterloo was hot during assembly, it was definitely warmer where Willard Metzger was sitting during Tuesday afternoon’s “On the Hot Seat” seminar. The meeting gave youth a chance to ask questions of MC Canada leadership, though they didn’t get the clear answers they hoped for. Youth spent significant time considering how the Mennonite Church can deal with major conflict using discussion instead of division, but they also raised questions of increasing youth participation in worship, and the financial position of the national church.

Several of the 17 youth present said they wish the church was more open about conflict, including the current hot buttons of same-sex marriage and abortion. Emma Bartel said if the church isn’t willing to work out these tough questions youth will turn to non-church culture for discussion, and congregations will miss out on a chance to engage her generation. She also suggested that continued silence would discourage new people from joining the church.

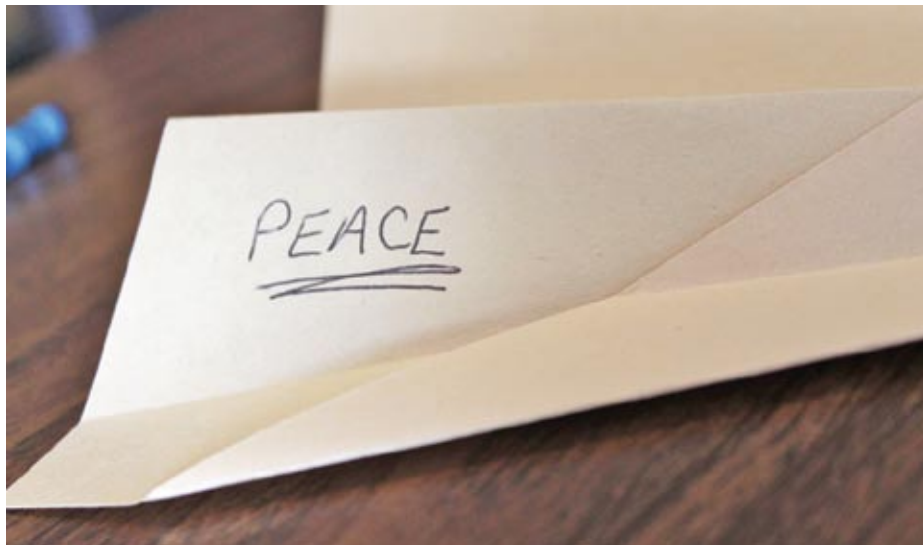
When youth asked if MC Canada has a defined stance on the question of same-sex marriage or abortion, Metzger pointed

to the “Being a Faithful Church” process and suggested that churches need to find a way to knowingly disagree and still be in the same conference. Katrina Plenert wasn’t satisfied with that answer, and felt the session involved a lot of time talking about talking about issues—though she was also.

While she didn’t disagree with including differing opinions within congregations, Bartel wondered what would keep the church Mennonite. Metzger suggested that the common “desire to express God’s love in tangible ways,” was the underlying current in the denomination.

Several teens also posed the question of how they can be more involved in worship services. Metzger recognized that as an area for improvement, but then turned the question to the youth who supplied a multitude of suggestions including: starting service an hour later, adding a band, adding more hymns, or intergenerational discussion and Sunday school.

Plenert also reminded youth that they need to accept what seniors in the congregation want out of worship just as much as they want the seniors to accept new ideas. ❧



*Throughout the week in Waterloo, youth folded and decorated planes to send a message of peace to Ottawa.*

## Planes for Peace

*Youth fold paper planes at Assembly as a protest against Canada's militarization*

**EMILY LOEWEN**

Young Voices editor  
WATERLOO, ONT.

These paper planes may not fly themselves to Ottawa, but even so they will deliver a message to Stephen Harper—spend less money on war. Throughout Assembly youth folded paper planes, covering them with words or pictures of peace, and then sent them off to the capital with youth pastor Sarah Johnson.

The act of folding paper is “something really simple,” said Renae Friesen from Altona Berghthaler Mennonite Church, but in big numbers it could make a difference. And big numbers they achieved; by the end of the week over 1,000 planes were constructed, some including messages like “this plane doesn't fly, and neither should yours.”

Though the teens hope that Canada's leaders will consider their message, they are also realistic about the immediate impact. “It's not like they're going to return [the fighter jets],” said Micahela Epp, from Altona Berghthaler, but if we don't do anything they won't know that we disagree.

Epp, Friesen and Benita Bage felt that it was important to get involved in politics

like this because their future is at stake, and if they don't work for change now they will have to live with the consequences when they're older. The teens suggested that rather than the government spending money on war, they should spend it on things like education, social programming and foster care.

According to Kathy Giesbrecht, associate pastor at Home Street Mennonite Church, the government should be using the billions spent on conflict to establish a Department of Peace, a movement with chapters in over 30 countries ([www.mfp-dop.org](http://www.mfp-dop.org)). Creating a peace department wouldn't mean doing away with defence entirely, “we're not naive,” Giesbrecht said, there is conflict in the world but we think they “might want to experiment with some solutions” and find some that don't include violence.

Though Giesbrecht thinks the government tends to write off pacifists, she said she has hope “my own government and the world can live in different ways in my lifetime.” ☘



*Anika Bartel, Trang Tan, Eric Siemens and Fiona Mo fold and decorate paper planes to be sent to Ottawa with a message of peace.*

## Sarah Harmer saves the day

*Two young adults attend Assembly for the concert and stayed for the discussion*

**EMILY LOEWEN**

Young Voices editor



*Serena Smith, left, and Amanda Schmidt, right, signed up for Assembly because of the Sarah Harmer concert but found they enjoyed learning and meeting new people like Art Harms, centre.*

If it wasn't for Sarah Harmer, Serena Smith and Amanda Schmidt probably wouldn't have gone to Assembly. The two young adults from Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg had never thought about attending the annual meetings until they saw an announcement in the bulletin advertising the free concert for young adults. They thought the Assembly sounded interesting too, and next thing they knew flights were booked and they were heading to Waterloo with little idea of what they were getting into.

"I think we didn't fully understand some of the responsibilities of it," said Schmidt, 28, who had expected Assembly to be more about learning; she didn't realize until the week before leaving that they would be expected to vote. The two spent hours at Perkins choosing which seminars to attend only to find out "the seminars were tiny tiny parts of the overall conference," said Smith, 20.

That's not to say they didn't enjoy the experience. "It was awesome to see the bigger church, you know. How things are run, how so much thought is put into certain things and so much prayer is put into

certain things," Smith said over the phone. Schmidt felt the same way, "our minds were stimulated all the time," she said, "we had interesting discussions."

For Schmidt, however, the experience also raised some questions about the purpose of the business meetings instead of using Assembly as chance for churches across the country to learn about each other. "The whole connection to money and running like a business that was a little bit unappealing to me," she said. But made sure to add, "even though some questions or thoughts that have come out of it I'm glad that I went."

While they are happy they made the trek from Winnipeg to Waterloo, both noticed that they were two of very few young adults present. Money may be one contributing factor, "how many people can afford to take a week of time?" asked Schmidt. Different advertising might also help. Young people "need to see pictures, and they need to see like exciting information to get them interested in it," said Smith, adding that Assembly, was "something that the old people go to always and that we don't think about," ☞

## Mennonites at the Winnipeg Folk Festival

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY RACHEL BERGEN**

National Correspondent

BIRD'S HILL PARK, MAN.



Daniel Epp has been going to the Winnipeg Folk Festival (WFF), or "Folk Fest" as it's more commonly called, for the past five years and has volunteered there for two years. Though, as a volunteer he gets in free of charge, there are other reasons why he gives up a week of work to

collect recyclables.

For the first three years of his WFF experience, Epp, a member of Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, spent over \$200 to be in community with other people who spiritually connect with music and who believe strongly in environmental stewardship.

The WFF is a very “Winnipeg” event, according to fellow Folk Fest-goer, Anna-Marie Janzen, a Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies major at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). It attracts approximately 65,000 Manitobans and 5,000 visitors from outside the province, the WFF website approximates. With core values such as environmental stewardship, community, and excellence in performing arts, WFF is a highlight for many Mennonites.

“People get the opportunity to enjoy music from all sorts of cultures and traditions, to enjoy being with friends and family, and to get caught up in the easy-going, friendly atmosphere that Folk Fest has so successfully created over the past 38 years,” Epp said. This is why he volunteers.

Janzen and Epp both spiritually connect with the music.

“I think music is a very spiritual thing and though I did not go to Folk Fest for typical ‘Christian’ music, I have always been able to experience God through any kind of music,” Janzen says.

Epp has had many profound spiritual moments at WFF, “whether it’s been sitting around a campfire with friends singing songs, or lying on a blanket listening to a favourite band perform,” he said.

For River East Mennonite Brethren Church member, DeLayne Toews, WFF is an opportunity for people from all different social and economic places to get together and have a good time.

“The people at Folk Fest can be themselves there and it’s okay to be ‘other.’ The people who were teased in high school come out

and are goofy and that’s okay,” he said. This is Toews’ third year at the Festival.

Epp volunteered in the campground environmental crew this year, encouraging campers to keep their campsite clean, collecting garbage and recycling, sorting recyclables, and returning aluminum cans for a refund that goes to campground improvements.

This year, WFF held their second annual Bike Ride to the Festival where festival-goers had the opportunity reduce the festival’s environmental impact by leaving their cars behind. Among the 200 people who participated were Epp and Toews. There was also a free bus shuttle between the festival and downtown Winnipeg for those who wanted to leave their cars at home. Next year, those taking the bus will have priority entrance into the campground to encourage people to leave their cars at home.

At the festival, the food village offered compostable cutlery, reusable plates, and many local, organic food options, but for Janzen who firmly believes in a responsibility to the environment as a Biblical response to the world, attending Folk Fest was a bit disappointing.

“I know Folk Fest is supposed to be all ‘enviro-friendly’ and I suppose it was not bad in comparison to other large events, but I think it could have been better,” she said, not appreciating the disorganized parking lots which left many people idling their vehicles and the over-consumption of drugs and alcohol in the campground.

“The efforts by the Festival volunteers were good, they just need to do it better next time,” Janzen said. ☺



*Worship leader Michael Turman introduces speaker Brice Balmer with an enthusiastic “preach it Brice!”*



*Worship leaders Fiona Mo and Michael Turman invite youth on the stage for cake to celebrate God’s new creation.*



*Participants in the “Bootcamp for Peace Builders” workshop learn about the world’s culture of violence, through activities that demonstrate obedience.*

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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Sept. 9-10:** MCC Festival and Relief Sale, Tradex, Abbotsford.

**Sept. 30:** Mennonite Disaster Service dessert fundraiser with great food, good music and reports from the Level Ground youth group who served in Kingcome Inlet in July, at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 6:30 p.m.

**Oct. 3-5:** Pastor/spouse retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: The Life-giving Sabbatical—three perspectives.

**Oct. 1:** Mennonite Disaster Service dessert fundraiser with great food, good music and reports from First United Mennonite youth group who served in Kingcome Inlet in July, at First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, at 6:30 p.m.

**Oct. 1, 2:** Thanksgiving Vespers with *Abendmusik Choir* at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, 8 p.m. (1) and at Knox United Church, Vancouver, 8 p.m. (2).

**Oct. 14-16:** MCBC Women's retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: The Business of Everyday Life.

**Nov. 18-20:** Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

**Feb. 3-5:** Young adult retreat at Camp Squeah

**March 2:** MCBC LEADership Conference at Emmanuel Mennonite Church.

**March 3:** MCBC annual meeting and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and banquet.

**April 27-29:** Junior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah

**May 5:** MCBC Women's Inspirational Day at Bethel Mennonite Church.

### Alberta

**Oct. 29:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta 25th anniversary celebration with Jim Lore's view of Mennonite settlement in Carstairs/Didsbury area. Register by calling 403-250-1121 on Thursdays, or email mhsa@mennonitehistory.org by Oct. 15.

### Saskatchewan

**Aug. 23:** Stony Knoll commemoration of the 135th anniversary of the signing of Treaty 6. For more information, call Leonard Doell at 306-665-2555.

**Aug. 27:** Second annual Spruce River Folk Music Festival, at Spruce River Farm, 20 kilometres north of Prince Albert on Highway 2; from 2 to 8 p.m.

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

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

**Oct. 14-15:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission fall retreat.

**Oct. 22:** MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

### Manitoba

**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.

**Oct. 1:** Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association fundraiser dessert coffee house at Fort Garry EMC with Matt & Baka (House of Doc), Andy & Trish Funk, and Mark von Kampen & Dale Kraubner (FMC Simpletones) at 7:30 p.m.

**Oct. 14:** Going Barefoot communicators conference, at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Keynote speaker: John

Stackhouse, editor of *The Globe and Mail*. Topic: The future of media. Plus workshops on media, fundraising, marketing and design. For more information, e-mail John Longhurst at jlonghurst@foodgrainsbank.ca.

**Oct. 15, 16:** Musical growing project fundraiser for Canadian Foodgrains Bank with Canzona, Catherine Daniel and Central Manitoba Youth Choir at 7:30 p.m. Westminster United Church, Winnipeg (15) and 3 p.m. Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church (16).

### Ontario

**Until Sept. 27:** "Just food: The right to food from a faith perspective" exhibit of original art on the theme of food and justice by 19 artists from around the world, on display at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, call 519-885-0220.

**Aug. 14:** Hymnsing from *Sing the Journey/Sing the Story* at Detweiler

## Briefly noted

### Conference to examine 'Horse-and-buggy' Mennonites

WINNIPEG, MAN.—The Chair in Mennonite Studies (University of Winnipeg) and the D. F. Plett Historical Research Foundation will host "Anti-Modern Pathways: 'Horse and Buggy' Mennonites in Canada, Belize and Latin America" on Oct. 22-23 at the University of Winnipeg. This academic conference will examine the culture of the Old Order Mennonites of southern Ontario and the most traditionalist of Old Colony Mennonites in places such as Mexico, Belize, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina. It will look at their ways-of-life, their perspectives, their relationships, and their religious faith in historical context, seeking to discover how it has been possible for these anti-modern people to survive in the modern world. For more information visit [mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/](http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/).  
—Chair of Mennonite Studies release

## Briefly noted

### Foodgrains fundraiser increases revenue

OSLER, SASK.—With over \$113,000 raised, volunteers at the June 25, 2011 Saskatchewan Valley Auction can look back on another successful fundraiser for Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Auction—the longest continuous fundraiser for the Foodgrains Bank—was held at the farm of Walter and Peggie Wiebe near Osler. In addition to the auction of cattle and other agricultural items, a pancake breakfast, lunch, pies, rollkuchen and watermelon were also available. The event brings together five different kinds of Mennonite churches in the area: Osler Mission Chapel, Osler Mennonite Church, Neuanlage Mennonite Church, Bergthaler Mennonite Church and the Osler Old Colony Church. Originally started by the Bergthaler Mennonite church, the sale began as a response to the MCC Relief Sale in Saskatoon to serve the needs of the rural community. Women from the Old Colony church run the rollkuchen stand, explained John Enns from the Bergthaler community. People from the Bergthaler church make the pancake and sausage breakfast and solicit donations from local businesses while local farmers donate dairy cows for auction. "The number of cattle donated was down this year," said Enns, but revenues from the sale were up, due to, "a fairly good demand for replacement milking animals."  
—Karin Fehderau

Meetinghouse, Roseville, led by Mark Diller Harder, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Bring hymnbooks if possible.

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

**Sept. 2-5:** Silver Lake Mennonite Camp 50th anniversary camping weekend. For more information, call 519-745-8458.

**Sept. 9-11:** Building Community Retreat at Hidden Acres Camp for persons with disabilities and their supporters. Trudy Beauline will speak on "Belonging and contributing." For information or to volunteer, contact Mariette at 519-569-8723 or professor\_flatbread@yahoo.ca.

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

**Oct. 20-22:** Ten Thousand Villages fair trade craft sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (20, 21) and

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (22). Call 905-627-4132 for information.

**Nov. 12:** MCC Ontario annual conference, at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ont.

**Nov. 18:** Spirituality and aging lecture at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Speaker: Dr. Steven Sandage.

Topic: "The role of forgiveness in psychological and spiritual well-being in late life." For more information, or to register, e-mail [infocguc@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:infocguc@uwaterloo.ca).

**Nov. 21:** MennoHomes' 10th anniversary celebration and annual general meeting, at Elmira Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. Celebrate 10 years, 100 units and \$10 million of affordable housing.

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

## Classifieds

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Two-bedroom retreat **cottage for rent**. Modern conveniences. By the Little Mississippi River in the **Bancroft area**. Call 519-471-3309 or e-mail [kaceee@rogers.com](mailto:kaceee@rogers.com).

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## Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Sept. 5	Aug. 23
Sept. 19	Sept. 6

## Advertising Information

Contact *Canadian Mennonite* Ad Representative

Lisa Metzger

1-800-378-2524 x.224

519-664-2780

[advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

### YOUTH MINISTRY PASTOR

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Tel: 519.650.3806 / 800.206.9356

Fax: 519.650.3947 / E-mail: [mcec@mcec.ca](mailto:mcec@mcec.ca)

Resumes, inquiries and letters of intent may be directed to: Lois Bukar at [loisarlene@hotmail.com](mailto:loisarlene@hotmail.com).



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# Scenes from MC Canada Assembly

More scenes can be found online on our Photo Gallery [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org)

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Leaders from the Lao Mennonite churches in Ontario sing during the Friday evening worship service.*

PHOTO BY THOMAS KRENGLE



*John Wideman performs his one-act play on stage Wednesday night exploring "fundamentalism, doubt, and our reluctance to step out of our comfort zone" in *This Prison or: He Came Through the Floor*. The playwright attends Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto.*

PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



*Hundreds participated in the prayer walk for international peace following Thursday evening's service in Waterloo Park, singing hymns from around the world and stopping to pray for First Nations people as well as people in South America, Africa, Europe and the Middle East.*

PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN



*For the youth, Friday's worship service turned into a big celebration of God's new creation, complete with cake, balloons and a conga line.*