

CANADIAN MENNONITE

January 23, 2012
Volume 16 Number 2

A large, colorful stained glass window is the background of the cover. The window is divided into several panels. The top panel shows a woman in a green and purple robe, likely Mary, holding a red object. The middle panel shows a woman in a blue and green robe, likely Mary Magdalene, kneeling in prayer. The bottom panel shows Jesus kneeling in prayer, wearing a yellow and red robe. The window is set in a Gothic-style archway with intricate tracery.

Joy
in Jesus' presence

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EDITORIAL

Listen to our prophets

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Reflecting recently on 57 years of writing as “an icon of Canadian literature,” Ruby Wiebe told an overflow audience at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., that one of the lessons learned in all of his storytelling was that “Mennonites tended to always view their neighbours—whether in the Ukraine, Paraguay or the western Canadian Prairies—as ‘the other.’”

Wiebe was referring specifically to the Mongols during the golden age of Mennonites in Russia prior to the Stalinist Revolution, the Arroyos of the Chaco and the several indigenous bands of native people living on reserves on the edges of Mennonite settlements in western Canada. His gripping stories of cool relations with all of these neighbours, although benign and sometimes compassionate, were characterized by a self-righteousness that kept persons of another culture at arm’s length.

For this candid exposure of one of our spiritual flaws, Wiebe paid a price. It is a well-known fact now, that early in his writing career, with the publishing of his first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, he was first severely ostracized in his home community of Coaldale, Alta., and his books were banned in many other Canadian Mennonite communities for years to come. Looking back some 25 years later, he told a group in Winnipeg, as Leo Driedger recounts it in *At the Forks*, “publishing that first novel became for me both an exaltation and a trauma; it

certainly changed the direction of the rest of my life.”

Wiebe was relieved of his duties as editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* and had to leave Canada. “Oh, words have power, power beyond what I imagined in three years of wrestling with them,” he concluded.

Reviewer Al Reimer wrote at the time: “*Peace* was the right novel at the right time, in that it raised crucial questions and long-suppressed issues of Mennonite life and faith, and dared to address them honestly and with creative independence: isolation and the patriarchal tyranny it bred, racial bigotry as the ugly product of Mennonite pride, passive nonresistance, . . . the German versus the English language crisis, sexual repression and subjugation of women, religious formalism and the lust for land.”

All this seems too easy—almost giddy—to recall now that Wiebe, after a lifetime of successful writing, has achieved fame in the larger literary world and has opened the eyes of the wider society to both our warts and beauty as a faith community. We can now laugh with him at some of the silly recriminations suffered because of his work.

But at a deeper level, we are far richer because of him and the inspiration he gave other creative writers to chronicle an ongoing narrative about who we are and how we struggle to be a faithful people. For Wiebe, as the dean of some 23 creative writers listed by Driedger, has

filled the role of the prophet in schooling us as a people of God.

In telling their dramatic stories as one of us, they have, in many ways, saved us from ourselves, providing instruction to those of us willing to receive it, just as the prophets of the Old and New testaments warned, cajoled and wooed God’s people as they wandered from country to country, often in captivity and under oppression, and all too prone to fit into the culture of their time and place.

Mennonites, especially, should take their stories to heart, not only for entertainment, but also for self-correction, a sharper self-identity, and, on a lighter note, a good laugh at our cultural idiosyncrasies and ourselves.

For it is their prophetic role that, often in a less ponderous way than our gifted theologians, has guided us through the thickets of our spiritual development. Driedger says it well in summing up the contribution they have made: “As Mennonites became more highly educated and urban, their search for new psychological identities changed as their language and culture changed. Individuals studied and re-evaluated loyalties, emotions and feelings toward their Anabaptist past and traditional rural values.

“In the city, they faced new forms of space, organization, symbols and communication, which required thought, debate, study and evaluation. In Winnipeg, Mennonite creative writers, artists and musicians helped in the process of finding new Anabaptist identities, some of which reflected their 16th-century roots and others reflect the information age.”

Not only in Winnipeg, but also across Canada and beyond. Thank you, Rudy Wiebe and your school of “prophets.”



ABOUT THE COVER:

The former Mennonite church in Obernessau, Poland—now used by a Catholic congregation—features a stained-glass window depicting Jesus’ visit with Mary and Martha. Read ‘Joy in Jesus’ presence,’ a Mennonite Women in Canada reflection, on page 15.

PHOTO: MYRNA SAWATZKY, SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN IN MISSION

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Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom • Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will • Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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DAVID MARTIN

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Pope Benedict's cardinals—More Roman, less catholic: **DAVID GIBSON, ECUMENICAL NEWS INTERNATIONAL**

Salvation comes to a rich house

Unpacking first-century management practices for the 21st century

BY BRUNO DYCK

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Instead of using money to make more money, or instead of following the increasing first-century tendency towards conspicuous consumption, Zacchaeus institutes organizational structures and systems that decrease the gap between rich and poor, and that promote social justice.

Money, business, salvation and the kingdom of God. You won't often find these words sharing the same sentence, but they do belong together in the Gospel of Luke. It turns out Luke has a lot to say about how we manage organizations that produce goods and services, and about how this is very closely related to salvation and God's kingdom.

Luke's passage about Zacchaeus provides an excellent example of this, although it may not be obvious at first for many modern readers. In this passage Jesus visits the house of a rich chief tax collector named Zacchaeus. When Zacchaeus says that he will give half his money to the poor, and repay fourfold anyone whom he has defrauded, Jesus responds by saying: "*Today salvation has come to this house*" (Luke 19:9).

To unlock how passages like this one are exploding with meaning for management, it is helpful to examine three key words—"house," "rich" and "salvation"—in the larger context of Luke and first-century Palestine.

House

Consider the word "house." The Greek word for "house" is *oikos*; the Greek word for management, *oikonomia*, is the source of the English word "economics."

It is a travesty that the word *oikos* is translated as "house." The modern word "house" has a very different meaning than the first-century word *oikos*. Today we take "house" to be the place where we live with our families, and from which we go to our jobs in organizations that produce goods and services.

In contrast, in the first century, an *oikos* referred to the goods-and-services-producing organization of the day. An *oikos* was where you lived and where you worked. A husband and wife and their children formed an important part of an *oikos*, but it also encompassed other people who were not relatives, such as slaves. For example, the Roman Empire was sometimes called the *oikos* of the emperor. In the first century there was no equivalent word to what we call "family" to refer to a biological-kinship unit.

The Gospel of Luke mentions the word *oikos* more than 50

times! And it refers to 50 additional goods-and-services-producing organizations without using the word *oikos*.

Consider what happens if, rather than translating *oikos* as “house,” it was translated as “goods-and-services-producing organization,” or perhaps as “company.” Greater awareness of its meaning helps readers to see that an *oikos* is key to understanding how the kingdom of God is put into practice. An *oikos* is the location for 10 of the 12 passages in Luke that describe how the kingdom of God is enacted by followers or outcomes associated with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is evident when you have a banquet and invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind; when people come from the east and west and north and south; when people are willing to leave the *oikos* of their parents and siblings to join a new kind of *oikos*.

An important part of the message in Luke is that conventional first-century *oikos* structures and systems were not working well. In fact, Luke consistently challenges classic ideas about *oikos* management regarding the nature of husband-wife, parent-child and master-slave relationships. In particular, in first-century Palestine there was growing disparity between rich and poor, and about 10 percent of the population did not belong to an *oikos*. This included many of society’s sick people, who were cast out due to their leprosy or other conditions. Without the security that comes from being a member of an *oikos*, the average lifespan of these social outcasts was between five and seven years. One of the consistent and dominant themes in Luke is that new forms of *oikos* should be developed that are inclusive of the 10 percent of the population who are outcasts, who do not belong to a conventional *oikos*.

This message is certainly as pertinent today as it was two millennia ago, since there is now also growing disparity between rich and poor within organizations and countries, and between countries.

Rich

Zacchaeus is about as close as we get to a rich businessman in Luke. He was sort of like a district manager of tax collectors in



“The Conversion of Zacchaeus” by Bernardo Strozzi, 1581 – 1644.

the area around Jericho. And because of this, he was despised by just about everyone. The crowds did not want Jesus even to visit the *oikos* of Zacchaeus because Jesus would be guilty by association.

There are 18 passages in Luke that talk about money, wealth or possessions. Nine of these passages do not use the word “rich.” In these nine passages, the use of money is seen as normal and a non-issue: the Good Samaritan pays the innkeeper, women provide resources for Jesus, and soldiers are to be satisfied with their pay.

The other nine passages about money that do use the word “rich” are very different in tone: The rich will be sent away empty, woe to the rich, the rich should sell all their possessions. When read as a whole, the message in these passages is pretty clear: The kingdom of God is about reducing the disparity between rich and poor.

And the passage about Zacchaeus is one of the two passages in Luke that both uses the word “rich” and describes how the gap between rich and poor is actually being reduced. This is a special passage. Rather than condemn the rich, the

passage ends with salvation coming to Zacchaeus’s *oikos* because of the way he manages it.

Zacchaeus essentially turns conventional management thinking on its head. Instead of using money to make more money, or instead of following the increasing first-century tendency towards conspicuous consumption, Zacchaeus institutes organizational structures and systems that decrease the gap between rich and poor, and that promote social justice.

Salvation

Which brings us to the third keyword in the Zacchaeus passage: “salvation.” Two insights are particularly helpful to understand what Luke says about salvation:

- **FIRST**, IN the first century salvation usually meant either being saved from something, or being saved for something. The former meaning was associated with the Jews, who were waiting for a saviour to save them from their oppressive Roman overlords. The latter meaning was associated with the Greco-Romans, and referred to the advent of a new blessing. So, for example, the Roman emperor was called a saviour because he provided Pax Romana for the people.
- **THE SECOND** insight that is helpful for understanding what Luke meant by salvation is that Luke uses the verb form of salvation differently than the noun form. Luke uses the noun form eight times, which includes references to “salvation” or a “saviour.” And Luke uses the verb form 17 times, which refers to people “being saved.”

This is where it gets interesting, and a bit complicated. Seven of Luke’s eight references to the noun form of “salvation” occur prior to Jesus’ baptism (Luke 3:21); in each case it refers to a group of people—house of David, Gentiles, all people—receiving both dimensions of salvation (saved from/saved for).

All 17 subsequent references use the verb form of “salvation,” and each refers to individuals being saved. In passages where specific people being saved are

identified, they are usually being saved from something, from being social outcasts, for example, when they are healed. In passages where people being saved are not specified, they are being saved for something new, which usually involves establishing a new, more inclusive *oikos*.

There is only one time in all of Luke where Jesus uses the noun form of salvation, which is this Zacchaeus passage. And this passage is also the only time Jesus refers to salvation coming to an *oikos*, rather than to a person.

Why did Jesus not use the same phrase he used on four other occasions: “Your faith has saved [verb] you [person]”? Why use a strikingly different phrase in the Zacchaeus passage: “Today salvation [noun] has come to this *oikos* [goods-and-services-producing organization]”?

Is this merely a case of adding some variety in word choice to keep things interesting? Or does it underscore the fact that salvation is something that happens in community? And, more to the point, does it suggest that salvation is something that happens in the goods-and-services-producing organizations of the day? Perhaps salvation is something that happens when managers enact organizational structures and systems that decrease the gap between rich and poor, and that foster social justice.

Reading the Bible through a first-century lens helps to see it in a new way. In regard to what Luke says about management, there are three implications for the church that may be especially important:

• **DON’T OVERLOOK** the role of organizations that produce goods and services. Such organizations are an important part of everyone’s lives today, just as they were in biblical times. To ignore them is to do a great disservice to understanding the Bible, and to do a great disservice to people who seek to integrate their faith in their everyday lives.

• **DON’T OVERLOOK** management, which plays an important role in all organizations that produce goods and services, whether they are businesses or church-based organizations. Failing to deliberately think about what a biblical

approach to management looks like makes people vulnerable to follow mainstream management practices, perhaps thinking they are value-neutral. Because there has been very little research on what the Bible teaches about management, we are left with books with titles like *Jesus CEO* and *Jesus on Leadership*, which have been criticized for doing little more than citing Bible verses to “bless” mainstream business practices.

• **DON’T IGNORE** people who manage goods-and-services-producing organizations. Don’t ignore the Zacchaeuses in your church. Don’t treat them as outsiders, as people who do not have much of a role in the church or in the kingdom of God. Don’t dismiss them as a necessary nuisance. They have an important role to play in the kingdom of God. Indeed, if the Gospel of Luke is any indication, they play a much more central role than any religious leaders. It is Zacchaeus, not a Jewish leader or someone in Jesus’ inner circle, whose managerial actions prompt Jesus to say: “Salvation has come to this *oikos*.” It is a Roman centurion of whom Jesus says: “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith” (Luke 7:9). And it is the Good Samaritan, who was probably a trading

merchant, whose actions prompt Jesus to say: “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37).

May we all become more like Zacchaeus, and do our part to help salvation come to the organizations of our day. Go and do likewise in deed. ✎



Bruno Dyck is a business professor at the University of Manitoba; his research contrasts and compares mainstream management, which focuses on maximizing the financial well-being of owners,

with multi-stream management, which is based on balancing financial, social, ecological, spiritual and physical well-being for owners, employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, neighbours and future generations. This article is based on meditations given at a Mennonite Economic Development Associates event, Eastern Mennonite College and Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va., in October 2011, and draws from a book Dyck is completing, tentatively entitled Luke on Management: A First-Century Analysis for 21st-Century Readers.

/// For discussion

1. Do you consider yourself wealthy? What level of assets or income is required to make a person rich? When you consider the people you know, are the wealthy as generous as the poor? What is the role of management when it comes to wealth and poverty?
2. Bruno Dyck says that the “kingdom of God is about reducing the disparity between rich and poor.” Do you agree? How much income disparity is there in your community? Do you consider this an issue of social justice? Are there ways for the rich to assist the poor in your community or congregation? Does mutual aid help to reduce inequality?
3. Dyck suggests that salvation is something that happens in community and something that happens in goods-and-services-producing organizations. What do you think he means? How is this different from a more traditional understanding of salvation? What is the role of justice within salvation?
4. Who are the Zacchaeuses in your church? What are the organizations that produce goods and services? What role do they play in your church and what role is Dyck suggesting they should have? What should we learn from the Zacchaeus story?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

✉ Gender identity not just based on biology

RE: "LETTERS TO my sister," Oct. 31, Nov. 14 and 28.

These letters reflect an honest attempt at informed dialogue which is often missing when discussing how to view homosexual persons. I agree with Joyce Gladwell's statement, "Our understanding of homosexuality is a work in progress."

This reality became more apparent to me when I read Ross Bender's book *Christians in Families*. He notes that gender identity is not based just on biology (looking at the genitals). He says that to grow up masculine "nature counts on a heavy helping hand [though not exclusively] dependent on the socialization

process." He also says that "nature apparently prefers Eve as the basic model"

He also says sexual identity is not clear-cut male and female, but runs on a continuum. Some clearly exhibit one type or the other, with others less clearly defined, which is especially true in adolescence. At this stage of development, socialization is very significant. Gladwell's reference to being in an all-girls school is an example of my point.

Bender was dean for many years at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He was a clinical member of the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy. During one of his sabbaticals, he served part-time as a research associate to the office of Family Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. His book, published in 1982, helped me view sexuality in a new light.


RALPH LEBOLD, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Sex is proper for everyone in lifelong loving relationships

RE: "UNWRAPPING SEXUALITY," Oct. 31, page 4.

I agree with Keith Graber Miller, that infidelity, too-early sexual engagement, promiscuity, sexual objectification, sexual exploitation and sexual violence are more of a threat to our churches than same-sex sexuality.

In my view, too often these things have been ignored, trivialized, winked at, covered up or denied in our churches in the past. We have been so anxious to fit in with the rest of society, so careful to protect our good reputation and good names of "prominent" and "important" people, that we have muffled ourselves from speaking out and addressing or dealing with



Pontius' Puddle



these problems. As a result, people have been hurt or damaged for life; they have given up on the church and been given up on by the church. Our testimony to the world has been badly damaged.

These things are sinful, whether engaged in by heterosexuals or homosexuals, as God's plan for our happiness and well-being requires sexual intimacy to be reserved only for relationships of lifelong commitment. Same-sex orientation is no excuse to live promiscuously.

I believe we have spent so much energy debating

this subject that we have lost sight of God's true plan for our happiness. So let's respect our sexuality for the beautiful God-given gift that it is, and—whatever our gender preference—reserve sexual intimacy for a committed lifetime relationship. And let's respect and love those who are different from us, as God would have us do.

FRANCES WEBER, ELMIRA, ONT.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Start with why

PHIL WAGLER

On a rainy Lower Mainland Friday night my son and I hit the slopes. It turned out to be a beautiful evening on the mountain, where the rain turned to snow and the coniferous trees hung with powder. The line-ups were short and the runs long.

I ski. My son snowboards. As the night drew to a close, he put out the challenge that we swap equipment. I have never snowboarded. I am an old dog; don't teach me new tricks. But pride is capable of grinding clear thought to a halt and I agreed. I took off the familiar two sticks and strapped myself onto that one board. Perilous. Stupid. How would my Sunday sermon go with a concussion?

I managed one run down the hill. Okay, I was a human snowball. Painful! I never knew falling could happen in so many different ways. Sheer German stubbornness and insulation overcame a multitude of good reasons to quit.

The whole way down one burning question echoed through the apparent empty cavern that had become my skull: Why am I doing this? I knew what I was doing, but that "what" was meaningless without the why. And the why was simple: I needed to show my son I could do it. That why was inspiration enough.

That why was the starting place for what I never thought possible.

Author Simon Sinek developed "the golden circle" from his study of what motivates humans, to help us understand how the best and most inspiring leaders and organizations function. He notes they consistently start with why, then ask how, and only then get to what they do or produce. Why are we doing this? Why do we exist? Why? It's a huge question that we don't ask often enough—because it's too hard. It's too threatening a query. It's too revealing.

In our churches we would do well to



Once we ask why, it can initiate some rather unsettling soul-searching and angst.

learn from Sinek's golden circle insights. We generally spend time talking endlessly about what we do, what we should do, what we wish we could do and almost zero time asking why. Perhaps we assume the why is a given. But go ahead and ask the question, and see what type of responses—or non-responses—you get.

Once we ask why, it can initiate some rather unsettling soul-searching and angst. Is what we are doing and how we are doing it even remotely connected to the why of our existence as the people

of God? There is no end of what can be done for good in this world. Furthermore, plenty of good is being done by organizations whose starting point of why is not the same as that of Christians. Are we unique? If so, why?

I have to agree with Sinek: those who inspire and make the biggest impact always start with why. And if the church exists because Jesus Christ has risen from the dead to form a citizenship of another world in this present one, then what might emerge from our local fellowships if we had the courage to ask why?

Our early inquisitiveness as children begins with why, so why not live a child-

like faith that seeks this understanding always? Start with why and get ready for a healthy struggle that will make learning how to snowboard a comparative walk in a prairie park. But it might begin new inspiring adventures for the glory of God.

Phil Wagler (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca) lives in Surrey, B.C., because God called his family there. He is indebted to a dear friend, Tim Doherty, for engraving the question "why?" in his grown-up vocabulary.

✉ Homosexual controversy 'may not last a whole lot longer'

THANKS TO *CANADIAN Mennonite* for its thoughtful articles on homosexuality (Oct. 31 issue). I realize that this issue is still a minefield within the church, and I'd ask individuals on all sides to demonstrate respect and love towards those who disagree with them.

I also think, however, as the younger generation often considers homosexuality to be a non-issue, that the controversy may not last a whole lot longer. Another divisive issue may simply take its place. I can only hope that conflict will ultimately end in understanding.

ROBERT MARTENS, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Less brag-worthy wisdom

AIDEN ENNS

In my last column, "Yet another outspoken white man," Nov. 14, 2011, page 10, I tried to indicate my struggle with male dominance among us Mennonites. I listed 21 white men that have influenced my thinking as a social-justice, activist-oriented follower of Jesus. It was one good man after another.

Indeed, the men helped my spiritual and intellectual growth. But, as I said at the end, "It seems something is missing." By which I meant, "Wake up, people! Not enough men listening and women speaking!" I thought I'd get an outpouring of support for this soft feminist expression.

Instead, I got but one letter.

Harold Schilk of Springridge Mennonite Church, Pincher Creek, Alta., noticed that I listed only men and suggested a few female authors on his list.

He added, in regards to "whiteness and maleness, that does not affect me as much as I am increasingly trying to regard people within the fullness of their humanity [or '*menschen*'-heit]." When I called to thank him, I also said it's too easy for us to overlook the male bias that surrounds us.

If I learned from the pens of men how to be courageous and correct, I learned a more difficult and less brag-worthy

wisdom from women: How it's sometimes better to listen, even to the point of discovering my own complicity in wrong-doing.

From a female student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., many years ago, I learned that it may not be nice to open a door for a woman. In fact, it can be offensive, as it was for her. That pained my chivalrous nature, given to me by a problematic culture that favoured women as the weaker sex.

From New Testament theologian Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, I learned the power of naming. For example, when feminists call themselves Christian, all

facilitate group learning; the teacher steps down and helps question official wisdom.

Poet and cultural critic bell hooks repeatedly uses the phrase "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" to describe our current reality. I'm both persuaded and indicted.

Dorothy Day, a journalist, activist, Roman Catholic pacifist and front-line advocate for the hungry and homeless in New York in the 1930s, demonstrates how it's possible to stand up to factory owners and spurn the dehumanizing effects of the machine. My Mennonite capitalism quivers when she preaches in the pages of *The Catholic Worker*, a newspaper she co-founded that reprints her writings.

From Joanna Macy, a Buddhist teacher and activist, I learned how to embrace despair and personal failings. I learned that hope is not dependent upon immediate results, but stems from the contemplative awareness of our interconnectedness with all things. This



[W]hen feminists call themselves Christian, all of a sudden Christians are feminists.

of a sudden Christians are feminists. It's meant to rival authority.

From theologian Sallie McFague, in *Life Abundant*, I learned the limits—and even destructive dimensions—of a personalized version of the gospel. We need social and economic dimensions for the sake of humans and the planet.

From Karen Ridd, a conflict-resolution trainer and Menno Simons College instructor, I discovered that groups don't learn best when a man stands in front and dispenses official wisdom. It's better to

brings new meaning to the "still small voice" of God and what we Christians call salvation.

Suffice it to say, if it weren't for the tough words of women who challenge me and my participation in male privilege, I'd still be self-assured in my pontifications.

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

✉ Parents, churches should be talking about sexuality

RE: OCT. 31 issue on sexuality.

I acknowledge your courage to tackle the topic of sexuality. I found it especially courageous to bring up homosexuality, a topic that has alienated families and split churches in the past, and still does.

Talking about sexuality was very much taboo in Mennonite churches and families during my younger years, and when it was attempted it was done in such a stilted language that we adolescents didn't quite know what it meant.

Now schools have taken over to enlighten students

about sexual behaviour, which churches and parents should have done. I hope they are now doing more, encouraged by your articles.

The series of "Letters to my sister" were very sensitively and thoughtfully written; they were not confrontational, condemning or condoning. They referred to Scripture in context and are applicable to our present way of life and research in science. I hope they will give troubled people, parents and church members more insight into this still difficult topic of sexual orientation.

HELMUT LEMKE, BURNABY, B.C.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Who's in charge of the house?

DAVID MARTIN

One of the things that I enjoy most about winter is that it's curling season. Each Monday morning I join our local clergy curling club for some spirited fun on the ice.

Curling is a great sport. All that vigorous sweeping helps me to stay physically fit, and the "chess on ice" aspect of the game keeps my mind sharp. As curlers, we are constantly "reading the ice" as we try to figure out how much curl it has, how fast it is today, and where the spots are that the ice is "running straight" or is simply cantankerous and unpredictable.

Good curlers need to be attuned to the environment on their particular sheet of ice. In order to play the game well, we must figure out "what is going on out there." Without that, our best efforts are for naught and our best shot-making will be woefully inadequate.

On top of all that, there is the constant decision-making. Curling is a tactical sport and requires some strategic thinking in order to execute a good game plan. This is normally the job of the skip, who

is "in charge of the house" and is responsible for calling the shots that each player contributes to the overall team effort.

When I returned home this morning and plopped down my curling bag in the front hallway after a hard-fought game, a disturbing thought went through my mind. When it comes to the church, who's in charge of the house of God? Who's calling the shots?

My observation is that many churches are executing great "shot-making," but there is no skip at the helm who is directing the play. Churches can produce



I wonder if we, as Mennonites, have a deep-seated fear of having anyone 'in charge of the house.'

a wealth of worship, caregiving, service, sacrifice and hard work, but is there any overall focus or strategy to all that activity? Is anyone out there "reading the ice" and asking what is happening in the social context in which we minister and how God is calling us to respond?

A deep concern of mine is that we take

the best leaders in our churches and then ask them to make decisions about fixing the boiler and how much to spend on carpet and new paint. In fact, there are days that I wonder if we, as Mennonites, have a deep-seated fear of having anyone "in charge of the house."

I wonder what would happen if congregations invited their councils and pastors to start skipping the game plan for their church? Skips can sometimes be autocratic, but good skips are quite democratic and actively seek the input of other players at key points in the game. Having someone in charge of calling the game can still include the many voices of the congregation.

Here's an idea. Why not send your pastor and church council down to the local curling rink to observe a game or two? Better yet, maybe they should take up curling!

David Martin is executive minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

✉ Charges of proof-texting marginalize the Bible

I WOULD LIKE to enlarge the discussion of proof-texting to include how we cite authorities in general, biblical or otherwise. In the “What about proof-texting?” editorial, Dec. 19, 2011, page 2, you cite two biblical scholars and a humanities professor to support your case. This is a normal part of our discourse; I do the same in my preaching and teaching.

I have some thoughts about our use of sources and appeals to various “authorities” in discussions of sexuality and other issues:

- We need to honour the integrity of the text, representing its intended meaning as best we can.
- In short letters or editorials, it is a challenge to cite any source without appearing to proof-text.
- Humility and love are crucial, whether citing Scripture or a scholar’s social analysis.
- Consciously or not, we determine the weight of an authority’s testimony based on how trustworthy we perceive it to be. Christian faith gives primacy to the Bible as the revealed Word of God.
- When the charge of proof-texting is limited to our use of Scripture, it marginalizes the Bible in our conversations.

I am particularly troubled by your statement that includes a quote from Walter Brueggemann: “We must acknowledge that none of us has the final authority to say that the Bible says anything definitely because the God revealed by the text is a ‘living, breathing, constantly changing God.’”

It is indeed important to understand how our passions, convictions and perceptions shape our interpretations, and we, of course, cannot claim to be “final authorities” on anything. Still, I believe that with careful study we can have confidence in what the Bible says about a great many things, including homosexual relations.

I disagree with Brueggemann that God is “constantly changing.” My understanding and experience of God changes, but the character and purpose of God is consistent. Overstating the uncertainty of biblical teaching and defining God as “constantly changing” sets our conversation about sexuality on a shaky foundation.

Without intending to proof-text, I accept the testimony of the Apostle James, who insists that “*the Father of the heavenly lights . . . does not change like shifting shadows.*” This is not an isolated conviction within Scripture: God is indeed living, but not evolving, our designer whose word is eternal and stands firm in the heavens (Psalm 119:89).

BRENT KIPFER, BRUSSELS, ONT.

✉ Rethinking our violent salvation

RE: “SAY NO to the logo,” Oct. 3, page 4.

Thank you for publishing these articles that prompted us to examine our acceptance of the depiction of violence in our sports logos and violence in the sport itself. There is no doubt in my mind that Don Cherry, who was offered an honorary degree from the Royal Military College, embodies the long-standing relationship between sport and militaristic nationalism.

I once attended a hockey game at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto and watched with horror the way Tie Domi pummelled his opponent and viciously threw him down, smashing his head hard on the ice. Fans were up on their feet, giving their last breath with each blow. Yet when the player lay motionless on the ice, the crowd suddenly turned deathly quiet, as if something sacred had touched their hearts.

I feel it is very appropriate that we, as a pacifist church, should challenge the sanctification of murder in the act of war and the legitimization of violence and abuse in our national sport. After all, we have made cockfights, dogfights and bullfights illegal in our society, yet we send our young men in the prime of their life into the arenas to bash each other’s brains out, all in the name of entertainment. While Cherry may do a lot of good, his pleasure in another’s pain is abuse; it’s criminal and should be addressed at that level.

Surely the recent suicides of several NHL “enforcers,” and the extent of brain injury to players, should alert us to the fact that these players are not unlike combat soldiers who, when they come home from war, experience post-traumatic stress disorder and often turn to drugs and alcohol. Are these players just collateral damage, a price to pay for the way the game has evolved?

It has occurred to me that in our endeavour to address violence in hockey, maybe we should first address the way theologians have embedded warfare and child abuse in the Christian doctrine of salvation. How can we say that God is love if that God uses threats of torture and death if we don’t worship him? How is this God different from Satan in the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness? We need to rethink this

/// Correction

Dave Neufeld is the secondary school principal at Mennonite Educational Institute, Abbotsford. He was incorrectly identified in the “Majority of faculty at Mennonite colleges, high schools are Mennonites” article, Dec. 19, 2011, page 43. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

story of how Jesus saves us if we wish to communicate to the world that God suffers long to save us from our sin in order to create shalom.

ERNIE MARTIN, DURHAM, ONT.

✉ Peace is not possible through the use of propositions

RE: "FAITH BEYOND belief, Oct. 31, page 15.

The development of doctrinal statements or confessions as collections of primary "beliefs" goes back to the early church as it adjusted to the Constantinian establishment of Christianity in the early fourth century. In the late 19th century, challenges to Christian "beliefs" by scientific doctrines expressed as theories and laws resulted in the cementing of the practice of making written propositions of the basic truths affirmed or held by the various Christian churches. These statements are not the faith of people; they are not trustworthy in the way that we think when we trust God or another person. At best, one could say they are derived from the Bible and the faith community.

Often these documents are used as gatekeepers for church leadership positions. All this work is understood as "beliefs" made explicit. The statements are not Scripture, but usually try to show that they are derived from Scripture. They are not linked with the faith of real people, although we often say these are faith statements.

It is well known that, over the centuries, the various church traditions have rewritten and revised their belief systems or doctrinal statements to respond to changing contexts in different times and locales. There has been, in recent times in North America, a penchant for a "personal faith statement" that is called for when applying for certain jobs. Another pattern is the notion that there are core beliefs and non-essential beliefs, thus allowing for an abbreviation of the doctrinal statement for use in non-denominational or multi-denominational contexts. But none of these is tied to the faith of people in community. They are all one step removed from the faithful, yet the common practice for outsiders is to look first for a community's list of beliefs.

I would suggest that our next confession will inevitably be influenced by our contact with people of other faith traditions. People of faith will avoid primarily emphasizing their beliefs and their religion in the course of seeking to live harmoniously and peacefully with all men and women. Our true radical confession is to seek not only to love our neighbours, but also our enemies. This cannot be done by propositions!

DAN JACK, CALGARY

✉ What really happened in Durban?

SINCE I ADVOCATE on behalf of smallholder farmers who are especially vulnerable to climate changes in my daily work at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, I've been asked what really happened at the climate change talks in Durban, South Africa, a lot recently.

Foodgrains Bank staff and supporters were busy in the run-up to the conference, calling for policy decisions that help vulnerable people adapt to climate change. But as important as the meeting was, we weren't convinced it was worth the financial and carbon cost to travel to Durban to continue those efforts.

One of our partners, the Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief, did feel that it was important to send senior staff to Durban. I was moved to learn of their desire to bear witness to the plight many communities are experiencing in India due to climate change. It was a powerful statement of how important an issue climate change is for our southern partners.

For some, Durban represented a bitter disappointment, as urgent action was again postponed for another year. For others, the Durban Platform—which calls on nations to work towards a global climate change agreement with legal force by 2015—represented a hopeful breakthrough.

As for the Foodgrains Bank, we celebrate any movement in the direction of addressing climate change, however incremental. We were particularly pleased to see the Canadian government confirm in Durban that it will give \$1.2 billion to a global Fast Start Finance Fund between 2010 and 2012 to help developing countries address climate change. The government did not share any details about how this money will be spent. As in the past, we are urging it to make sure these funds go to the most vulnerable who are affected by climate change.

Also at Durban, countries agreed to get the Green Climate Fund up and running in 2012. This fund should provide longer-term funding for poorer countries to respond to climate change. Unfortunately, there was no agreement on how to fill the fund with money—and an empty fund won't help anyone. At the Foodgrains Bank, we believe that Canada could take a leadership role by being one of the first to concretely express support for the Green Climate Fund. This would signal Canada's concern for those who suffer the consequences of climate change and provide meaningful assistance to them.

CAROL THIESSEN, WINNIPEG

Carol Thiessen is a Canadian Foodgrains Bank public policy advisor.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Hardman—Atlas Monroe (b. Nov. 25, 2011), to Lindsey Gingrich and Shayne Hardman, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Kasdorf—Jillian Kate (b. Dec. 20, 2011), to Dennis and Kristine Kasdorf, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Keely-Dyck—Caellum Sean (b. Dec. 6, 2011), to Andrew and Eimear Keely-Dyck, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Thiessen—Noah Jacob (b. July 25, 2011), to Kevin and Andrea Thiessen, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Wiens—Henry Dixon (b. Dec. 16, 2011), to Devin and Jimme'e Wiens, Ebenfeld Mennonite, Herschel, Sask.

Marriages

Ewert/Langelotz—Nicholas Ewert and Naomi Langelotz, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 29, 2011.

Lamarche/Morse—Kate Lamarche and Rowan Morse, at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., Dec. 17, 2011.

Parr/Simms—Pepper Parr (Toronto United Mennonite) and Pia Simms, in Burlington, Ont., Dec. 19, 2011.

Roth/Thornton—Kyle Roth (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) and Meghan Thornton, in Saskatoon, Aug. 6, 2011.

Deaths

Berg—Peter P. 93 (b. Feb. 26, 1918; d. Nov. 7, 2011), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Dirks—Victor Alexander, 90 (b. Aug. 11, 1921; d. Dec. 8, 2011), Harrow Mennonite, Ont.

Enns—Margaret Herta (nee Toews), 78 (May 14, 1933; d. Dec. 24, 2011), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Ens—Martha, 82 (b. March 15, 1929; d. Dec. 25, 2011), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Epp—Victor, 78 (b. Sept. 7, 1933; d. Dec. 17, 2011), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Ewert—Agnes (nee Regier), 104 (b. March 9, 1907; d. Dec. 16, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Frey—Lawrence, 82 (b. Oct. 13, 1928; d. Sept. 19, 2011), Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont.

Gerber—Michael, 92 (b. March 17, 1919; d. Dec. 23, 2011), Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Harms—Sally, 87 (b. Sept. 17, 1924; d. Dec. 4, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Adeline, 86 (b. April 18, 1925; d. Sept. 25, 2011), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Lena, 90 (b. March 28, 1921; d. Dec. 15, 2011), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Martens—Anne (nee Harder), 89 (b. Jan. 2, 1922; d. Dec. 27, 2011), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Martens—Helen (nee Fehr), 91 (b. Sept. 21, 1920; d. Dec. 30, 2011), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

/// Obituary

Anna Ruth Funk (Toews)

Feb. 19, 1918 – Nov. 23, 2011

Our family is deeply saddened to announce the passing of Anna Funk on Nov. 23, 2011 at the age of 93. She passed away at the Peter Lougheed Hospital in Calgary with family by her side. Anna was born Feb. 19, 1918, to David and Margarete Toews in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Anna enjoyed a happy childhood as part of a large family. She attended school in Rosthern, completing high school at Rosthern Junior College. It was during that time that she met the love of her life and future husband, Syl Funk. Anna and Syl were married in Rosthern on July 27, 1940. They settled in Drake where she was active in their home, church and community. Anna loved gardening, curling, tennis and family vacations. She taught Sunday school, sang in the choir, and opened her home and heart to all. Her kind and welcoming spirit, her fabulous cooking, and her relaxed and loving nature made everyone feel at home. After their children were grown, Anna and Syl moved to Saskatoon. The loving circle of her life grew to include her grandchildren for whom she has always been a role model. Her faith in God and her commitment to the church was evident in all aspects of her life. Following Syl's death, Anna moved to Calgary to be close to family. Although she missed her friends and cousins at Bethany Manor in Saskatoon, she enjoyed the caring residents and staff at the Harbours of Newport. Anna is survived by her children: Marilyn (Jack) Janzen, Doreen (George) Reynolds, Gwenyth (Richard) Epp, and John (Vera) Funk, and seven grandchildren: Christine, Mark and Trevor (Elisa) Reynolds, Gillian and Jonathan Epp, and Michael and Anika Funk. She will also be greatly missed by many other relatives and friends. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Sylvester L. Funk; her parents, David and Margarete (Friesen) Toews; her brother Benno (Catherine) Toews; and seven sisters: Irene Toews, Marie (Herman) Riesen, Dora (Peter) Schellenberg, Margaret (Jake) Sawatzky, Elma Toews, Elsie (Abram) Hooge, and Louise (Blake) Friesen. We will all remember Anna for her sense of humour and her smiling eyes. Her kindness and unselfish love will never be forgotten. In lieu of flowers, memorial tributes may be directed to Mennonite Central Committee, 600 45th Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9. Funeral Services were held at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, 1701 Ruth Street East, Saskatoon on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011, at 1:00 p.m. with interment at Hillcrest Memorial Gardens Cemetery.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

The uninvited guest

BY JACK DUECK

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Until a few years ago, both in teaching and in business consulting, my dominant focus with clients had been solution-oriented. Again and again I confidently hammered home, “There’s a solution to every problem.” And there was!

Then Eleanor, my wife, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. This brought me up short: There’s no cure or traditional solution here, only inexorable illness, ineffable sorrow. It’s an entirely new and radically disorienting encounter. Suddenly I seem to be moving in an opaque bubble, removed from someone potentially vanishing from me and even becoming a different person. Painful memories surge in face of the looming dissolution of a loved one’s personhood.

Poet William Butler Yeats comes to mind: “O heart, O troubled heart / If she’d but turn her head, you’d know the sorrow of being comforted.” Hamlet’s cry echoes in the long nights: “What is this quintessence of dust?”

The experience is attended by temptations: self-pity; patronizing; pathological frenzy for solutions (Internet, opinions, and experiments); rage: “Do not go gentle into that good night / Humans should rave and burn at close of day / But rage, rage against the dying of the light”; and stimulants, but these, like alcohol, only irrigate, not ameliorate, the issue. How to deal with the incipient loneliness threatening two people who may become gradually isolated from each other’s love and living?

But what to do with depression and the attending fatigue? What recourse when rational responses no longer obtain? Some mutual pleasures, formerly shared,



now become only randomly accessible, fading at times into forgetfulness.

My workshop/seminars—solution-oriented—were on managing change. In large part these approaches no longer obtain for me now. To change, one asks, “What can I do?” In transitions—outside external solutions—one is wrenched from “what” to

“how.” There’s a poignant line emerging in literature throughout the ages: “Where do we go from here?” This is where the Memory Clinic at the Centre for Family Medicine in Waterloo Region comes in. A family friend in Pennsylvania, who also works in geriatrics and with Alzheimer’s patients, noted that they envy the focus and wide-ranging professional care attending Alzheimer’s disease realities in Ontario.

The Memory Clinic is uniquely in the transitions and “how to” business. I found the professional objectivity never divorced from objectivity and compassion; the emphasis on relational aspects of it all reassuring; the relational timbre in people like Sharon visiting on the home front and being accessible at all times, a good example; the medical professionals of all branches inter-connected in this ordeal, providing a doorway into the uncharted solution-transition shift towards a new way of loving and living. These all provide a marvellous anchoring in the turmoil. Founder Dr. Linda Lee should be supported and funded in bringing this service to other communities.

But life must be lived. Three initial benefits from the Memory Clinic were:

1. **RECEIVE PERIODIC** tests and evaluations for both of us.
2. **A RELIABLE** locus where we could

express our disorientation and find focus.

3. **RECEIVE THE** encouragement for us to engage in disclosure. One beneficial result of this was, when asked whether we had support people in our lives, I told Dr. Gagnon, Canada’s top specialist in Alzheimer’s, we had a large family, more than 100 people. Really, in K-W? Yes, it’s called Rockway Mennonite Church. How wonderful! To whom we made full disclosure and now have had various people walking the road with each of us.

One acquaintance, after a lengthy isolated struggle with Alzheimer’s, was asked, “Why didn’t you tell us this?” She replied, “I was so ashamed.” Ironically, humans are not ashamed of other body illnesses. Disclosure can open doors to a new way of living and loving. But I’ve discovered society has some incredibly lonely and isolated people locked into Alzheimer’s without support networks spiritually, psychologically, communally.

And, of course, humour is grace: When I mislaid the chequebook, Eleanor told some friend, “I have Alzheimer’s, but Jack has an advanced case of sometimes.” When losing her license—even though she is angered by the event—she commented, “Now you’ll be driving Miss Daisy.”

Thanks to you for entering our living with Alzheimer’s. You’re significant help for us in practising *carpe diem*: seize the day. It is not easy for me as caregiver; and, to put it mildly, it’s not easy for Eleanor; and surely not for you as professionals, since there’s no magic surgery or medication in this implacable transition from what to how? There’s the rub, I think.

Allow me to quote that ancient sojourner, Ulysses, through his extended vicissitudes of living, as penned by poet Alfred Lord Tennyson:

“Come, my friends, / ‘Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

“Though much is taken, much abides; and though / We are not now that strength which in old days / Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are, — / Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will / To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.” ❧

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Joy in Jesus' presence

BY MYRNA SAWATZKY AND NAOMI UNGER

M.S.: Last summer, I was struck by two stained-glass windows in the former Mennonite church in Obernessau, Poland, now used by a Catholic congregation. The windows—one of Jesus' baptism and the other of Jesus with Mary and Martha—connected me to my Mennonite history. They seemed “so Mennonite” and reminded me of my Sunday school lesson papers from the 1950s. I was at peace, I was home.



Mennonite
Women
Canada

N.U.: *Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-48 reminds us to find peace and joy in his presence. In the midst of his teaching and healing ministry, Jesus takes time to linger with dear friends. He accepts Martha's generosity in opening her home and welcomes Mary into his teaching circle as she sits at his feet listening. Jesus is stepping outside Jewish law and tradition in order to affirm the various gifts and temperaments of these two women.*

When Martha comes to Jesus with her criticism of Mary for not helping in the kitchen, Jesus is affectionate but blunt: “Martha, dear Martha, your zeal in preparing supper is overdone. It's distracting you and making you abrasive. Mary, by being with me and learning from me, has chosen the better thing.”

Jesus is not belittling Martha's role as a homemaker. Rather, he stretches her understanding of what honours him. For her, that meant actively serving him. But the very good she wants to do for her Lord is keeping her away from him. What truly honours him is being fully present to him, and partaking of the spiritual food that he offers.

Earlier in this chapter, after telling the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus instructed the lawyer to “go and do likewise.” Now, his implied instructions to Martha are, “Sit with me, listen and reflect,” like Mary.

These stories indicate that quiet fellowship with Christ and practical service are both part of living faithfully. One is not better than the other. But as we make our choices, whether active or reflective, Jesus invites us to focus on our relationship with him. Communion with Christ, and being attentive to God's purposes, is “the better part,” and leads to joy which lasts for eternity.

However, this “communion and attentiveness” is hard

to practise and maintain. Often we miss the point and vacillate between being like Mary or Martha, instead of knowing we can always be in Jesus' presence.

When our first child was born, I focused on the baby more than on other people or on Christ. Daily Bible reading and a scheduled prayer time ended. I struggled to spend time with God until I gradually realized that raising a family and homemaking did include fellowship with, and service for, Christ.

While on a Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Nigeria, I was ill and could not teach for three months. A missionary told me that God was telling me to “be still and know that I am God.” The enforced rest nurtured the Mary part of me.

PHOTO BY MYRNA SAWATZKY

M.S.: Naomi's words ring true for me in my own work as a nurse. I have worked on both surgical and medical wards, where things move quickly and are very task driven. An IV here, a needle there, or maybe a racing heart or someone going home. The Martha in me was very driven, but I did say a silent prayer for the patients I cared for.

These days I'm more of a Mary nurse. As a palliative care coordinator, I listen to patients' life and faith stories, their sorrows and their fears. I continue to pray for my patients, but now they know I am there for them as the minutes tick by.

My hope for the new year is that many stained-glass windows may open our eyes to new understandings of our faith history both in our personal and collective lives within Mennonite Women Canada. And also that each of us will accept Jesus' invitation to find joy and peace in his presence as we practise “the better part” through attentive communion in our daily lives. ☸

Myrna Sawatzky, a member of Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, is president of Saskatchewan Women in Mission. Naomi Unger, a member of Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church, Glenbush, sits on the Saskatchewan Women in Mission's program committee.



These stories indicate that quiet fellowship with Christ and practical service are both part of living faithfully.

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Candid questions, contemplative leanings

BY WILL BRAUN
SENIOR WRITER

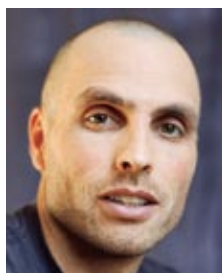
I am not new to the pages of this magazine—having written columns and occasional articles for five years—but allow me to begin my new role as a regular staff writer by offering some personal comments on faith and journalism. I think journalists should generally keep themselves in the background, allowing their writing to speak for itself, but perhaps there is a time to share something of what goes on between the lines, even at the risk of appearing self-indulgent.

First, a confession: In a world cluttered with words, it is hard to improve on silence. Looking at it from the other end, I believe the best words arise out of silence. The call of a writer is to pause, ponder

deeply, pause again and then write. I aim for that distant goal.

Second, I believe in candid, caring discussion. We have to talk about the tough stuff. A senior member of a Mennonite institution recently told me that important issues remain unaddressed within that institution because people are uncomfortable raising contentious issues with colleagues who are also old church friends. Like the person who shared this, I think friendships and joint membership in a faith community should enable—rather than prevent—honest discussion.

Conflict avoidance should not be



mistaken for Christian harmony, nor should the raising of tough issues be mistaken for an attempt to undermine the church.

Candid discussion means asking incisive questions both of faith leaders and of ourselves as a whole. This must be done respectfully, out

of genuine concern for the betterment of the faith community, not to prove someone wrong. Over my years of writing for various religious and mainstream publications, I have acted at times out of the lesser of these motives. My goal now, as it has been for some time, is to act out of the greater. This requires that I ask

OBITUARY

A shepherd after God's heart

Gene Herr

May 11, 1932 – Jan. 1, 2012



Over a lifetime of ministry Gene Herr served as a wise, lively and ever-affirming companion to many pilgrims on the path to deeper spiritual wholeness. Along with his wife Mary, who survives him, Herr helped introduce Mennonites to the ancient tradition of contemplative spirituality.

He died of complications related to cancer on Jan. 1 in Hesston, Kan., at the age of 79.

Growing up in Lancaster County, Pa., Herr lost his father, grandfather and pregnant mother to illness within a two-week period. From the time he was four, he was raised by an aunt and uncle, both single.

In his early 20s, Herr did voluntary service at a

Mennonite church in inner-city Chicago. While there, he met Mary Yutzi, a volunteer from Ohio. They married in 1955, the year he was ordained.

Herr went on to pastor churches in Pennsylvania, Kansas and Indiana. He also directed youth ministry for the Mennonite Church in the U.S. from 1958-66, and, with his wife, co-led an innovative Mennonite discipleship program for young people in Phoenix, Ariz. Herr's calling was to help people find deep spiritual healing and authentic relationships with others and God.

He pursued studies and training in theology, prayer and spiritual direction at various institutions throughout his life. He drew from the largely Catholic tradition of

incisive questions of myself also.

In a 2001 essay in *Harper's Magazine*, the late writer, David Foster Wallace, speaks to the importance of self-examination. As a writer, he wrote, "You have to be willing to look honestly at yourself and your motives for believing what you believe, and to do it more or less continually."

He also called for an honest attempt to understand as fully as possible the beliefs of others, especially those with whom one disagrees. Foster Wallace admonished writers to exhibit utmost "rigour and humility" in their efforts to understand opposing views. He called for "sedulous respect for the convictions of others," fully admitting the great challenge of the task.

For me, this means that every interview must be an attempt to understand the strongest arguments and most important messages the person brings, whether or not those views suit my fancy. Personally, I find this yields surprises, a softened approach to people and deeper understandings. This is my hope for readers, too, that whatever their views are, they will not simply become further entrenched in existing opinions, but will learn

[C]hurch and church publications are . . . about a quest for inner wholeness, oneness with God, love.

something new about themselves and others by reading *Canadian Mennonite*.

Among the tough issues that I think require attention are:

- **THE POLARIZATION** that debases the politics of our age, and how the church can avoid it;
- **CLIMATE CHANGE**, over-consumption, global disparity and their respective spiritual implications; and
- **THE PROSPECT** of a sharp decline in church numbers in coming decades.

I am pleased to work for a publication that promotes open, caring dialogue about issues such as these.

All that said, church and church publications are about more than the discussion of issues. They are about a quest for inner wholeness, oneness with God, love. Indeed, deep calls to deep, but such things are harder to write about than hot-button issues. To talk about spiritual quest in ways that avoid dull clichés, intellectualization and strictly theological

perspectives is an important challenge.

How exactly do we become better Christians? How exactly do we become more forgiving, more humble, more loving, and better able to see the divine glimmer in everyone we meet? What do we do with our doubts, with the scars religion sometimes leaves, or with those elements of orthodoxy we may find hollow?

The recent death of Gene Herr—who, along with his wife Mary, introduced me and many other Mennonites to the riches of contemplative spirituality—emphasizes for me the need to explore what spiritual elders in our tradition and other traditions can teach us about prayer, contemplative silence and spiritual formation. (*See my tribute to Herr, who influenced my understanding of faith as much as anyone, below.*)

All these things, from greenhouse gas emissions to mystical union with God—and especially the points at which these two realms intersect—I shall ponder and invite others to ponder. ☿

contemplative spirituality, which emphasizes silence, prayer, spiritual companionship and attentiveness to God's presence in all of life.

"I had tried like crazy to be a good Mennonite pastor in the current model of Anabaptist ministry of the day. I took every class, read every book," Herr wrote in 2010. "But the enduring hunger for a more contemplative ministry" continued to beckon him.

This desire led to the establishment of the Hermitage in 1985, a retreat centre in southern Michigan where the Herts welcomed guests into silence, prayer and renewal. In their lives, the Herts had found few such resources for pastors. The Hermitage, which consists of 25 partially wooded hectares and a barn remodelled into a guest house, became such a place both for pastors and others, including some Canadians.

The Herts directed the Hermitage until 2001, when they retired to Newton, Kan. Leaving the ministry and the woods, which Herr loved to walk with Julian, his beloved little dog, was difficult.

The Hermitage continues under new leadership.

Duane Beck, who has been a Mennonite pastor for 40 years, is one of many who benefitted from Herr's personal guidance through regular spiritual-direction sessions. In a written tribute, Beck described Herr as a "spiritual father," saying that "Gene's encouragement, blessing, love, prayer and direction, coupled with modelling the inner path of discipleship, have been transformative."

Over a rich lifetime, Herr harvested an abundance of stories, which he shared generously and often humorously.

Countless times in his life, Herr prayed for fulfillment of God's promise to Jeremiah—"I will give you shepherds after my own heart"—words reflected in the daily Hermitage prayers. Herr's own life helped fulfill this promise. He was a skilled and caring shepherd to many, and he enabled others, in turn, to be better shepherds themselves.

Herr is survived by his wife, three children and their families, and a sister and brother-in-law.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Lutherans, Mennonites study together

BY MARGARET LOEWEN REIMER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Why did the Lutheran World Federation issue an apology to Mennonites in July 2010? This question is at the heart of a congregational study guide commissioned by Mennonite Church Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada last summer. Entitled “Healing Memories, Reconciling in Christ: A Lutheran-Mennonite Guide for Congregations,” the publication is intended to bring people from each tradition together to study the history and theological conflicts behind Lutheran-Mennonite relations.

As writers of the guide, Allen Jorgenson of St. Matthews Lutheran Church and I, a member of Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., tested out the four-session guide with members of our congregations last fall. Meetings alternated between the two congregations. Within the group of about 15 were many with ties to both denominations, resulting in a rich and lively exchange

of experiences and observations. The pastors took us on tours of each other’s church buildings, giving us the chance to learn more about present-day beliefs and practices.

Session 1 of the study set the context. The road to the 2010 apology began in Germany in 1980, when Lutherans invited Mennonites to join in celebrating the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, a foundational statement of the Lutheran church. Mennonites were taken aback by the invitation, knowing that the confession “condemns” Anabaptists five times for heretical beliefs. This exchange led to Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue in several countries, and eventually to an international study commission established by Mennonite World Conference and the Lutheran World Federation in 2005. The result was a report entitled “Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ,” and the Lutheran apology in 2010. This congregational study guide is based on that report.

Session 2 traced the emergence of Lutherans and Anabaptists during the Reformation, and their bitter conflicts over baptism and participation in civil affairs. Martin Luther saw Anabaptists as blasphemous and seditious, threatening the stability of society, and thus he encouraged civil authorities to punish and even execute them, although Protestant magistrates did not implement his recommendations.

But condemnatory language was not confined to Luther. Menno Simons employed equally harsh language against Lutherans, calling infant baptism “blasphemy,” “harmful superstition,” and of the “Antichrist and the bottomless pit.” The Lutheran focus on grace, said Menno, leads to “a fruitless and unregenerate life,” and is “of the devil.”

Session 3 asked what it means to seek forgiveness for the sins of our forbears. As an example close to home, the group discussed a video of the Canadian government’s 2008 apology for Indian residential schools. The Lutheran apology and the Mennonite response commit both churches to making members aware of this joint history and the desire for reconciliation, and to seek greater cooperation between the two bodies.

Session 4 looked at ongoing theological differences, especially on baptism and participation in society. Lutherans and Mennonites often rely on the same Scripture passages, but interpret them differently. Both welcome infants into the church family, but with different theological understandings. Both speak of living in two kingdoms, but have different versions of what that means. Both focus on grace, but with different emphases.

In closing, the group recited I Corinthians 12:12-13: *“For just as the body is one and has many members . . . so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews, Greeks, slaves or free, [Mennonites or Lutherans]—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”*

Congregations can get the “Healing Memories” study guide from the MC Canada Resource Centre online at mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre. ▮



Tree plantings mark deepening of Menno-Lutheran relations

BY RON REMPEL

Mennonite World Conference

Mennonites planted two trees in the *Luthergarten* in Wittenberg, Germany, in early October to mark the deepening of Mennonite-Lutheran relations.

The project, initiated by the Lutheran World Federation, is being developed in anticipation of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's posting of his 95 theses

on a church door in Wittenberg in 1517. Churches from around the world are being invited to sponsor a tree and also to plant a corresponding tree in a significant place for their own church.

Larry Miller, then general secretary of Mennonite World Conference, planted a red maple next to a tree planted nearly two years ago by the Lutheran federation, when it invited a number of other global church communions—Anglican, Methodist, Reformed and Catholic—to participate in the garden project.

In his remarks, Miller recalled that when the Lutheran planners for this earlier event asked whether Mennonites should be

invited, they said, "No, not yet." He added, though, that "the 'fullness of time' in Lutheran-Mennonite reconciliation was drawing near, but had not yet come in power, as it did in Stuttgart less than one year later," referring to July 2010, when Lutherans issued an official apology for the historical persecution of Anabaptists and discrimination against Mennonites.

A second tree was planted in the *Luthergarten* by Frieder Boller, president of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Germany. The German Mennonite church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany have engaged in ecumenical dialogue and joint communion for the past 15 years.

The tree plantings in Wittenberg preceded a German Lutheran/Mennonite symposium on the topic of "Healing of Memories: Reconciliation in Christ," which both celebrated recent advances in Lutheran/Mennonite relationships and discussed new possibilities for their future. ❧

/// Briefly noted

100th MWC member rooted in ministry among the poor

SANTIAGO, CHILE—"The magnitude of what has just happened has scarcely sunk in among us," said pastor Samuel Tripainao, after the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Chile was accepted into membership of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) last year. The approximately 1,200-member conference of 14 congregations was the 100th body—and the first in Chile—to become a member of MWC. According to Tripainao, Chilean church leaders see this new connection to the world family of Anabaptists as "a recognition of the work they have done for some 20 years." Youth minister Christian Bustos sees it "opening greater possibilities for the exchange of our gifts, while putting them in the service of God's kingdom." The Chilean conference is one of several independent Anabaptist-Mennonite groups in the country that have come into being mostly as "native" initiatives. With coaching from Jorge Vallejos Sr., an expatriate Chilean church planter in Canada, the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de Chile embraced its Mennonite identity in 1989 and received official government recognition the following year. —Mennonite World Conference

MWC PHOTO BY FRIEDER BOLLER



A plaque marks the Mennonite tree in the *Luthergarten*, in Wittenberg, Germany.

Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure

Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure seeks to live out servanthood ministry as modelled by Jesus Christ.

www.mvsa.net

Lethbridge Winnipeg
Edmonton Montreal

Conference explores expulsion of Anabaptists from Bern

STORY AND PHOTO BY HANSPETER JECKER

Mennonite World Conference

LIESTAL, SWITZERLAND

The 300th anniversary of the “great exodus” of Anabaptists from Bern in 1711 was acknowledged last fall when more than 80 participants from seven countries met at the Bienenberg Theological Seminary and Conference Center in Liestal for an international colloquium.

Ten presenters examined the facts and background of the event, in which more than 350 local men, women and children were forced by the Bernese authorities to permanently leave their homes. This expulsion was the climax of a long series of efforts to make the region “Anabaptist-free.” The Swiss authorities had regarded Anabaptists as heretics and rebels since the 16th-century Reformation and continued to label them hypocritical religious nonconformists.

As in the past, such a “final solution of the Anabaptist question” proved a failure. But the price individuals had to pay for this cleansing was extremely high. The fact that words like “expulsion” and “purging”

continue to appear in the daily news makes it clear that questions regarding the status of minorities and the costs of violating social norms continue to persist as highly conflictual and deeply emotional topics, even today.

The conference advanced the argument that violent, coercive expulsions and deportations are almost never good solutions. Rather, they represent, now as then, missed opportunities to recognize and analyze deeply rooted problems, to learn from each other, and to develop solutions characterized by mutual good will and respect, thereby creating a more just and peaceful world.

In the meantime, conference participants found it encouraging that representatives of the “official” church and Anabaptist-Mennonite communities, who once lived alongside each other as enemies, have now found a way to come together in peace, saying that it is crucial that these groups build on the momentum of various

bilateral theological dialogues of recent years, including the Mennonite-Catholic and Lutheran-Mennonite dialogues at the global level, and the Reformed-Mennonite dialogue in Switzerland.

The presentations of the colloquium will be published in the *Mennonitica Helvetica*, the yearbook of the Swiss Association of Anabaptist History. ☸

Hanspeter Jecker is professor of church history and social ethics at Bienenberg Theological Seminary, Switzerland. Translated into English by Lyndell Thiessen.

Staff change

Ron Rempel appointed as MWC news editor

Ron Rempel, a member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., became the new Mennonite World Conference (MWC) news editor on Nov. 1, 2011, replacing Byron Rempel-Burkholder, who had written and edited MWC news releases since 2010. Rempel brings a wide range of experience to the position. In July, he retired after eight years as executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network, just as it was merging with Third Way Media to become MennoMedia. Prior to that, he had served for 24 years as editor and publisher of *Canadian Mennonite* (previously called *The Mennonite Reporter*). “Combining church theology and journalism has always excited me,” says Rempel, a B.C. native who did his undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia, Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) and Goshen College, Ind.; he holds master’s degrees from both Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and Carleton University, Ottawa.

—Mennonite World Conference



Rempel



The castle and Reformed church of Trachselwald formed a century-long expression of unholy alliance for the Bernese Anabaptists.

Pre-breakfast Christmas at Peace Church

'First gift of Christmas' has family feel

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
RICHMOND, B.C.



Christmas morning 2011 at Peace Mennonite Church began like no other, with members arriving in the pre-dawn darkness clad in their pyjamas and bathrobes. They sat casually in the Fireside Room for the service, instead of the sanctuary, with candlelight their only illumination and music provided by simple instruments with no amplification.

With a theme of "The first gift of

Christmas," the church family realized in a new way what it means to be just that: a family together on Christmas morning. Heidi Epp, a member of the worship committee, prepared and coordinated the service; her inspiration, she said, was "to invite and instill the kind of childhood joy we have for Christmas."

Epp's innovative idea to have a service at 7:30 a.m. was not without controversy.

/// Briefly noted

Saskatchewan churches fill pastoral roles

While the Hoffnungsfelder group of Mennonites in the northern Saskatchewan towns of Glenbush, Mayfair and Rabbit Lake are still looking for a pastor after Don Unger recently retired, three Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations have recently filled pastoral positions. They include:

- Gary and Margaret Ewen Peters are serving Herschel Mennonite Church and Fiske Mennonite Church. Garth and Claire Ewert Fisher worked in the same roles until last spring, then Lois Siemens helped with pulpit supply until the end of August 2011.
- Craig Neufeld, who was serving as youth pastor at Rosthern Mennonite Church, will now step into the role of lead pastor there.
- Bernie Wiebe is now serving at Warman Mennonite Church.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

MC Canada leadership staff change titles

Mennonite Church Canada's General Board approved a recommendation to change the job titles of top-level leadership staff in the national church office in Winnipeg at its fall 2011 meeting in St. Catharines, Ont. The recommendation, from general secretary Willard Metzger, said that in many circles the term "general secretary" is not clearly understood. "Although the term 'general secretary' has a fond memory for some, it became clear that it had lost meaning and significance for many people," said Metzger. While Metzger becomes "executive director," other members of the executive staff team have also seen their titles change. "Executive secretary" is now "executive minister" followed by the ministry program responsibility. Dave Bergen, executive minister of Christian Formation, reported that some board members felt the word "minister" in job titles helps retain an ecclesial identity for the national church, especially for those with direct responsibility to oversee ministry programs.

—Mennonite Church Canada

Some people wondered if she wasn't scheduling it early for her own convenience, to which Epp responded that such an early hour isn't really "convenient" for anyone.

"Is the whole Christmas story about convenience or about sheer joy?" she asked. Her intent was to create a feeling of a family gathering casually together by the fireplace on Christmas morning, thus the invitation for people to come in nightclothes if they wished. To her surprise, about the half the 100 worshippers did so.

The service, held in a room set up like a stable, began in darkness, replicating the darkness as shepherds would have arrived at the stable in Bethlehem. Three different people dressed as biblical characters each spoke: first, a shepherd following Jesus, learning to see himself as God sees him; the innkeeper, learning to be part of, and tell, a good story; and Mary, recognizing God is a God of the "in between," as Jesus comes in between heaven and earth and young and old. These three then helped serve communion to the gathered worshippers, Mary with the swaddling clothes turned to burial cloths, the shepherd with bread from his bag, and the innkeeper with wine from his cellar.

To conclude the service, everyone sang carols, enjoyed hot cider and croissants together, and each person received a star ornament to take home, symbolizing taking the light of Christ with them. Leaving in daylight after people had arrived in darkness added to that symbolism.

"Our job is to spread the light and love in the world," explained Epp. "We wanted to unwrap the real gift first [by coming to church first thing in the day]."

Despite initial misgivings, many who attended expressed delight at the unexpected blessings of the early morning service. Families with children came in greater numbers than ever had for a mid-morning Christmas service, and some children later said it was the highlight of their day. Others who had not initially intended to attend the service woke up early and said they just knew they had to come. Many told Epp later, "It was a wonderful way to start the day," and were hoping for something similar next Christmas. ❧

PHOTO BY MICHAEL WIEBE



Seven of Grace Mennonite Church's founders were on hand in Steinbach, Man., for the church's 50th anniversary celebrations in early November. Pictured from left to right: Elbert Toews, Lorraine Toews, Marie Dyck, Gerald Dyck, Art Baerg, Vi Kreutzer and Gordon Kreutzer.

Quilt depicts church's first half-century

BY MARYLOU DRIEDGER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
STEINBACH, MAN.

“A church is like a patchwork quilt,” says 75-year-old Linda Klassen, who spent two-and-a-half years creating a special quilt for the 50th anniversary celebrations of Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, on Nov. 5 and 6. “With good leadership, the showy, the subtle, the neutral, the intense can be pulled together to form a harmonious whole.”

Two unique and colourful stained glass windows on the quilt symbolize the two buildings that housed Grace Mennonite as it grew from 43 members in 1961 to 244 in 2011. Some quilt squares are reminders of the refugee families sponsored by the church from Vietnam, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Croatia, Rwanda and Central America.

A bowl of soup represents Soup is On, founded by Grace member Joy Neufeld in 2004. The congregation and community have rallied around this project that continues to serve hot meals to needy people in the church basement two nights a week, and provide nutritious school lunches for children.

The quilt's design includes the logos of Mennonite Disaster Service, Camps with Meaning, Eden Mental Health, Mennonite Central Committee, Ten Thousand Villages and Mennonite Voluntary Service, recognizing the many people from the

congregation who have served these organizations and the financial support Grace has given them.

A quilt section featuring treble clefs and various musical instruments pays tribute to the congregation's reputation for fine choirs and concerts, and *Daughters of Z*, a musical written, directed, performed,

costumed and staged by church members for the local community in 1999.

The bottom border of the quilt has a myriad of smaller squares cataloguing the church's many programs past and present. Symbols near the quilt's heart note the acceptance of Grace into the Conference of Mennonites in Canada in 1963, the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1965, and the Manitoba Conference of Mennonites in 1966.

Former pastors Leonard Epp, John Braun, David Bergen, Randy Grieser and Phil Campbell Enns were special guests at the November festivities. G.S. Rempel, the congregation's first pastor, died in 1969. Donald Sawatsky brought greetings on behalf of his father, Peter G. Sawatsky, who served the congregation from 1971-81, but could not attend the anniversary due to health concerns.

Current pastor Mel Letkeman was the worship leader for the celebration and assistant pastor Kyle Penner gave the meditation.

The festivities included a banquet, a concert of special music, skits, a slide show of photos, the sharing of personal stories and lots of visiting. Hundreds of former members and friends of the church attended the anniversary events. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Isaaks set to begin ministry in Bolivia

BURNS LAKE, B.C.—After ending a three-year term as co-pastors of First Mennonite Church on Dec. 31, 2011, Helmut and Eve Isaak have answered the call to minister to the approximately 80,000 Low German-speaking Mennonites in Bolivia under the auspices of EFree Missions. Their leaving is somewhat bitter-sweet, says Helmut, after having been invited into the lives of the congregation, the First Nations and many new friends. “We know our assignment in Bolivia will not be easy,” he says, “but after a short-term assignment there in August, we feel we need to answer their invitation.” Eve will use her experience and training in pastoral counselling, psycho-social care and bereavement counselling to serve the people in the women's shelter and rehab centre, among other duties. Helmut has been invited to provide pastoral leadership training and radio Bible studies, and to preach and teach in Low German or Spanish. In 1958, when his brother Kornelius was killed by the Ayoreo Indians on a missionary assignment in Paraguay, Helmut says he promised God that he would go where he sent him, to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

—BY DICK BENNER



Eve and Helmut Isaak

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Women of four faiths share on suffering

BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

SPECIAL TO *CANADIAN MENNONITE*

I had the opportunity to participate in a symposium hosted by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community women in Surrey, B.C., late last year. The meeting took place in a store-front temple in a strip mall, where we all had

to remove our shoes because it had been consecrated as a place of prayer.

I was one of four speakers, each representing a different religion: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. We were each given 15 minutes to answer the

question “Why is there human suffering in the world?”

As each of us shared, I was struck by the similarities of our faiths, rather than our differences. We all spoke of the need to take responsibility for our own actions; of surrendering our will to God or some concept of the divine, since we all came to that slightly differently; and of the need for forgiveness and redemption. I heard common phrases like “as you sow, so shall you reap,” and different versions of the Golden Rule.

Of course, there were differences. The Sikh and Hindu speakers spoke of their belief in reincarnation and karma, which should influence how people act towards others and how they respond to suffering in the world. They shared my view that God did not intend for the world to suffer, but that suffering comes because of the actions of humankind. Only the Muslim speaker indicated that suffering was part of Allah’s original design, arguing that since God is perfect and, therefore, his creation is perfect, so suffering must be part of that design and must be there to teach us something.

I was grateful for the opportunity to share my faith both theologically and personally, offering some stories of my own experience with suffering. There was great openness to receiving what I shared.

There was a formal time for questions afterwards, but most of the interaction happened afterwards as we shared wonderful food, tea and coffee. Several women approached me and asked me about Mennonites in particular, since they had not heard of them before, or, if they had, they were surprised to see me there without a horse and buggy and with my head uncovered.

I was able to talk about my personal faith and I learned a great deal as each of the speakers, and some of the guests, shared their faith experiences with me. ▮

Angelika Dawson works as a communicator for Mennonite Central Committee B.C. and a former B.C. correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.



The New Hamburg (Ont.) Mennonite Relief Sale website got an overhaul recently thanks to a grant from the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and design work by PeaceWorks Technology Solutions. The new site (nhmrs.com) hopes to attract people year-round to ongoing news, a quilt catalogue, opportunities to volunteer, and a link to be able to donate.

MCC supporting Cambodian flood recovery efforts

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE

Mennonite Central Committee

As the worst flooding in a decade begins to recede in Cambodia, the work of obtaining food and clean water, and the long-term rebuilding of livelihoods is underway with assistance from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

During September and October, heavy monsoon rains in Cambodia caused the deaths of more than 240 people and displaced as many as 32,000. Rice fields in several entire provinces were destroyed after being underwater for more than four weeks. The loss of the crop not only affects the farmers, but also the people who work in the fields and sell produce at roadside stands. Grazing areas for animals have been washed away, forcing people to spend money they don't have to feed animals.

Some people in Prey Veng Province, one of the poorest, most-populated and hardest-hit areas in the country, are being forced to sell off their assets and use what little savings they have to buy food, clean water and medicine, and pay school fees.

MCC is responding to targeted areas of

need in Prey Veng with \$30,000 for rice distribution, clean drinking water, school repairs and education.

"It is a quiet, slow-moving disaster now," says Michael Bade, an MCC worker in Cambodia. "It will hit the poor hard, and it will take most people years to rebuild. . . . Fruit trees are dead, houses are damaged, irrigation canals and ponds collapsed; infrastructure that took a decade to build up after the last big flood will have to be repaired and replaced in many areas."

In partnership with Angkhearhdei Primary School, where MCC has a Global Family education sponsorship program, MCC is making structural and furniture repairs to the school damaged by flood waters that rose halfway up the first floor of the two-storey building. In addition, MCC is providing daily breakfast and clean water at the school to keep students attending. An additional stipend is being paid to teachers, so they will make up four to six weeks of class time lost to the flooding.

On Dec. 2, Red Cross Cambodia

distributed 261 water filters, purchased by MCC, to families whose land is still surrounded by flood waters. The problem is acute because the same water used as a latrine is used for washing and drinking, according to Bade.

Dirty water, sick animals used for food and other unhealthy eating conditions are causing health issues in other parts of Prey Veng, too, so MCC's response includes cleaning wells, distributing hygiene kits, and training teachers at Angkhearhdei about hygiene and sanitation practices. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Abbotsford tops Canada in charitable giving

Citizens of Abbotsford, B.C., can give themselves a pat on the back for being named "most generous community in Canada," according to Statistics Canada. This is the ninth consecutive year that StatsCan has recognized the metropolitan Abbotsford and Mission census area for giving the most per capita nationally in charitable donations, an average of \$620 in 2010, well ahead of Victoria, B.C., and Calgary, that tied for second place at \$390 per capita. Charitable donations claimed on tax forms in 2010 by Abbotsford area residents totalled \$74 million. Could the large Mennonite population in the area be a factor? Sometimes called the "Bible Belt of Canada," with the highest church attendance in the country, Abbotsford is home to 14 Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren-affiliated churches, with additional Mennonite congregations in nearby Aldergrove and Mission. Wayne Bremner, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee B.C., noted in the *Abbotsford News* that the large Mennonite population in Abbotsford is generous in supporting MCC programs around the world. "Of course, it's not just Mennonites," he is quoted as saying. "It's people in the community. Other faith groups have a similar story."

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

MCC PHOTO BY MICHAEL BADE



Sao Som, a worker with the Cambodian Red Cross, shows residents of five villages in Prey Veng Province how to use, clean and maintain water filters supplied by Mennonite Central Committee. Villagers came by boat and on foot to get the water filters.

'Kill the bill'

Manitoba rally joins national opposition to crime omnibus legislation

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

The federal government's Bill C-10—part of a wider crime omnibus bill—had already met opposition in Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia by the time Manitobans rallied in opposition.

The Nov. 8, 2011, rally organized by the John Howard Society was sparked in part by comments from Andrew Swan, minister of justice and Manitoba's attorney general, who said that Manitoba favours Bill C-10. The social services community believes Bill C-10 will aggravate already overcrowded Manitoba jails and siphon much-needed money away from social programs and other proactive crime-reduction initiatives that could have far-reaching, longer-term benefits. More than 350 people attended the rally at the provincial legislature in Winnipeg, said a John Howard Society spokesperson.

John Hutton, executive director of the Manitoba John Howard Society and a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, addressed the crowd. Citing several sources, he stressed that more time in prison results in more—rather than less—crime, and wastes taxpayer dollars that could be used more effectively to reduce crime by supporting restorative justice models and funding preventative social and educational programming.

Hutton's themes were echoed by other speakers, including Jacquie Nicholson, literacy program coordinator at the John Howard Society who works directly with inmates at Winnipeg's remand centre, who spoke on behalf of her incarcerated students to ensure their voices were heard.

Nicholson quoted one inmate, who predicted that increased incarceration rates will only benefit organized crime: "Gangs thrive on your misconception that locking them up will stop them. Jails become

PHOTO BY ROBERT MCGREGOR



Shaun Loney, executive director of Building Urban Industries for Local Development, at the microphone, addresses a Nov. 8 rally in Winnipeg against the federal government's crime omnibus bill.

a type of headquarters. Splitting up gangs and transporting them to different jails across the country in an effort to divide

and conquer only creates and multiplies the problem on a national level, creating a syndicate, a network, an organization, the very thing you are trying to combat. You will be brought to your knees through the billions of dollars you spend following your own recipe for disaster."

Mennonite Church Canada representatives Elsie Rempel and Vic Thiessen attended the rally. Rempel, together with her husband, has been involved in restorative justice programs for 16 years. The couple has befriended "a lifer," she said. "I have seen first-hand the degeneration of training and visitation opportunities from the inside. I wanted to add my voice to those who wish to defeat the bill. I see it as very expensive and counter-productive to the goal of rehabilitating criminals."

While applause frequently affirmed the thoughtful presentations, the chants from Building Urban Industries for Local Development to "kill the bill" did the most to energize the polite crowd.

The rally concluded with a solidarity walk to Winnipeg's nearby remand centre, to show its incarcerated residents that others were speaking out on their behalf and investing in restorative, rather than punitive, justice models. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Manitoba pastor to chair MennoMedia board

As of Jan. 1, Melissa Miller, pastor of Springstein Mennonite Church, Man., and *Canadian Mennonite's* Family Ties columnist, took over as chair of the eight-member binational board of MennoMedia. She succeeds Phil Bontrager, president and chief executive officer of Sauder Manufacturing Company, Archbold, Ohio. The Formation Council of Mennonite Church Canada appointed Miller to the MennoMedia board last October; her appointment was ratified by the MC Canada General Board in November. She was then appointed as board chair by the Joint Executive Committee of MC Canada and MC U.S.A. A native of Pennsylvania, Miller earned her undergraduate degree at Eastern Mennonite University. She has lived in Canada since 1978 with her husband Dean Peachey. Her work over the years has included counselling, pastoring, mediation and conflict resolution, teaching and writing. She authored *Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds*, a 1994 release by Herald Press, the book imprint of MennoMedia, and co-authored, with Phil Shenk, *The Path of Most Resistance* (1982). She was also a writer for all six years of the Venture Club curriculum.

—MennoMedia



Miller

GOD AT WORK IN US

Sudermans find a gift in return to AMBS

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Robert J. (Jack) and Irene Suderman say it was a gift to spend five weeks at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), where they studied almost 40 years ago.

Jack was a student at AMBS in the early 1970s, earning a master of arts in religion degree with a focus on peace studies. Irene audited classes at that time and worked in the seminary's daycare. The return to the seminary last fall gave them opportunities to reflect on their earlier study and the ministry that followed.

"I realized how much of what we have done post-seminary was profoundly shaped by what we learned here," Jack said. "At the time—like students today—we wondered about the value of some of what we studied, but after 35 years of work I realize how very valuable this was, even though we didn't know it at the time. It's been a surprising re-engagement and new

appreciation."

During their visit, which began Oct. 1, 2011, Irene participated in classes and shared from her experiences in pastoral, hospice and palliative care. She found opportunities for meaningful conversations with students as she spent time in the AMBS library and the gallery near the library.

Jack had a busy schedule during the couple's five weeks at AMBS. He led a full-day workshop on discernment in the congregation, led a webinar on teaching the Bible in the congregation, and gave presentations in several classes. In addition, he joined Mennonite Mission Network staff and friends for discussions on current challenges in mission.

Together, they led a chapel service on Canadian Thanksgiving and shared reflections on their ministry in a colloquium. Their time in Elkhart also allowed them to

reconnect with many people they know. One of those opportunities came when they participated in the Shenk Mission Lectureship, which brought together historians and missiologists from many parts of the world to celebrate the Global Mennonite History Project. They knew a number of other participants from earlier teaching ministries in Bolivia and Colombia, and from serving as resource people in Indonesia, India, the Philippines and Cuba.

"It's been important for someone of their stature to bring their wide experiences into our community," AMBS academic dean Rebecca Slough said. "It's been good for me—and I hope for the seminary—for them to reflect back what they see for AMBS right now, what might we pay attention to?"

One obvious change that Irene observed is in the nature of the campus community. Because fewer students live on campus now, they don't share as many common experiences. "I would think it's more difficult for students wrestling with issues to not have a close community accompanying them," she said.

Jack indicated that "an understanding that highlights a compelling vision of the nature, identity and vocation of the church in God's plan has been strongly eroded in our society and church. A sense that this vocation is foundational for all ministry is indeed very weak," he said.

However, Jack observed that AMBS is one of the places where this erosion hasn't yet happened, or at least not to the degree as elsewhere. So the task for AMBS is to continue calling the church to this vocation. "This will be increasingly important and increasingly difficult," he said. "But it needs to be a priority for the next 20 years. My hope is that every student would leave AMBS having come face-to-face with a compelling and passionate vision for the purpose of the church in God's desire to restore creation to its original intentions."

The Sudermans' time at AMBS was made possible, in part, by the support they receive from Mennonite Church Canada in their ongoing ministry. ❧



During a lunch gathering on their last day at AMBS, Irene and Robert J. (Jack) Suderman reflect on 40 years of ministry. A prevailing theme, Jack noted, is the important role of the church in the lives of Christians and in the world. 'The peoplehood of God is the primary strategy God wants to use to heal the world,' he said.

'An activist in entrepreneurial clothing'

By SANDRA REIMER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WATERLOO, ONT.

Business leader Nolan Andres put his faith into action when he joined a group of entrepreneurs who harness the power of business to make a positive social and environmental change. These companies are known as "B Corporations."

By law, traditional corporations are required to maximize profits for shareholders without necessarily taking into account social and environmental consequences. By contrast, B Corporations must make decisions that are good for both shareholders and society.

Started in the U.S. in 2006, there are currently 468 B Corporations. PeaceWorks Technology Solutions of Waterloo, led by Andres, is one of 20 such companies in Canada.

In order to achieve certification, companies must complete a free online B Impact Assessment quiz by answering 170 questions measuring performance in five categories: accountability, employees, consumers, community and the environment. Businesses that score at least 80 points out of a possible 200 have their assessment reviewed by B Lab, the certifying body. Companies must also enshrine B Corp values in their articles of incorporation and pay an annual fee to be certified.

Andres' company provides affordable information technology consulting and software development for charities, social enterprises and businesses. One project PeaceWorks worked on was designing software used for managing the distribution of mosquito nets to vulnerable populations in Tanzania.

PeaceWorks immediately met enough of the stringent standards to qualify because the B Corp principles reflect the way it has done business since the company was founded 15 years ago. Structurally, the 40-person company is essentially a worker cooperative.

"I have often described myself as an activist in entrepreneurial clothing," jokes Andres, who attends Waterloo North Mennonite Church with his wife and three children.

One thing that inspired Andres to do business differently was a trip to Guatemala. There, he and the group he was with prayed, "Break our hearts with the things that break God's heart." As he met people in poverty and experienced their lives, his perspective was changed.

But Andres doesn't spend all his time in other countries. He believes North America is the mission field. "This is where things need to change," he says. For Andres,



Nolan Andres, the founder of PeaceWorks Technology Solutions, says, 'I have often described myself as an activist in entrepreneurial clothing.'

having his heart broken by God means taking care of people and the earth while he runs a successful businesses. ❧

Sandra Reimer is a freelance writer and editor living in Kitchener, Ont.

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ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Poetry, paintings bring Old Orders to life

Winterberries and Apple Blossoms: Reflections and Flavors of a Mennonite Year.
By Nan Forler and Peter Etril Snyder. Tundra Books, 2011.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Peter Etril Snyder is known the world over for his sensitive paintings of Old Order Mennonites in the Waterloo Region. Although he had just retired from his gallery and painting for health reasons, he was intrigued when Tundra Books came to him with Nan Forler's poems of an Old Order girl's life over the course of a year, feeling that they epitomized the world he knew so well.

The result is *Winterberries and Apple Blossoms: Reflections and Flavors of a Mennonite Year*.

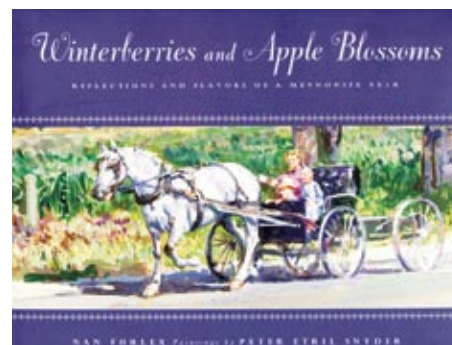
At a book signing at Uptown 21, a restaurant in downtown Waterloo, Ont., Forler and Snyder read parts of the book to diners who were enjoying foods through the seasons of the book. (Included in the book are 12 seasonal recipes for adults and children.)

Forler did careful research on Mennonites to add to her knowledge from growing up in Elmira, Ont., in the heart of Mennonite country, as well as talking to Old Order friends and her own Mennonite relatives. She explained that the singing of "Silent Night" at a service in the December poem is the only place she "fudged" on the truth; the song would not have been sung in worship, but at a youth and young adult "singing" held after worship on a Sunday evening.

Naomi, the heroine of the stories, pushes the boundaries of what is allowed in her community, making her a kind of Old Order "Catherine, Called Birdy," from a 1994 book of the same name by Karin Cushman. Naomi longs after flowered material for a dress when only plain material is allowed; and "borrows" a boy's bike, only to have her skirt get caught

in the chain. In the paintings Naomi is styled after Forler's daughter Maia since Old Order Mennonites do not allow images of themselves to be created.

Both Snyder and Forler have been overwhelmed by the positive response from the Old Order community. One of the tensions in material about Mennonites in the secular press is between the cultural and religious natures of the communities. In *Winterberries*



and *Apple Blossoms*, Naomi sings, prays, goes to worship, and submits herself (*Gelassenheit*) to God as the community understands God.

While styled as a children's book, the stories, recipes and Snyder's artwork make this a great coffee table and discussion book for young and old alike. ❧

Dave Rogalsky is the Eastern Canada correspondent for Canadian Mennonite.

/// Briefly noted

Festschrift honours CMU professor emeritus

WINNIPEG—Harry Huebner, who retired from his full-time role as professor of philosophy and theology at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in 2008, was honoured with the publication of a festschrift in celebration of his long and distinguished career. *The Church Made Strange for the Nations: Essays in Ecclesiology and Political Theology* was co-edited by CMU professors Karl Koop and Paul Doerksen, and published by Pickwick Publications in its Princeton Theological Monograph Series. A celebratory launch and reception took place on Nov. 25, 2011, at CMU. Huebner, who graduated from the University of Manitoba with a bachelor's degree in philosophy/psychology and a master's degree in philosophy, earned his Ph.D. in theology at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. He came to Canadian Mennonite Bible College, one of CMU's founding colleges, in 1971, and remained at CMU throughout his career, taking time to do Ph.D. work in Toronto from 1974-75 and serve with Mennonite Central Committee in Jerusalem from 1981-83. In his spare time, Huebner enjoys travelling, especially to the Middle East. He and his wife Agnes attend Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

—Canadian Mennonite University



Huebner

A theology based on four-part singing

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

Sound in the Lands was held two-and-a-half years ago. But such is the busyness of academics that the book of essays from the event wasn't launched until Oct. 28, 2011. *Sound in the Lands: Mennonite Music Across Borders* from Pandora Press includes many of the high points of the June 2009 festival and conference.

At the launch at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Maureen Epp, one of the book's four editors and a freelance editor and musicologist from Winnipeg, said that Philip E. Stoltzfus's essay, "The Performing God: Toward a theology of Mennonite hymn singing," alone was worth the price of the book. Agreeing with her were two of the three other editors in attendance: Carol Ann Weaver, a music prof at Grebel, and Anna Janecek, interim worship minister at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Doreen

Klassen, an associate professor in social/cultural studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland, was unable to attend.

Stoltzfus explains that four-part a cappella singing is a late and far-from-universal form of Mennonite singing, but he uses it to define a theology of hymn or congregational singing for Mennonites in five motifs: the priesthood of all believers, in which all sing; the ecstasy of Christian community, in which music takes congregants outside themselves; the diversity of gifts, in which participants offer their unique voice; discipleship, the theme of so many favourite hymns; and the performing God, in which Mennonites see God as many things, just as they borrow much of their music from other Christian traditions with their multi-faceted visions of God.

But the book does not stay rooted in



Editors Anna Janecek, left, Carol Ann Weaver and Maureen Epp examine Sound in the Lands: Mennonite Music Across Borders, at the book launch on Oct. 28, 2011.

four-part a cappella singing. *Sound in the Lands* contains essays on the growth of world music in Mennonite song books, pushed along by the growth of Mennonite communities around the world, and the singing at Mennonite World Conference assemblies, as well as essays on South African peace music, Middle Eastern music, and James R. Krabill's essay, "I want to become a Christian, but do I have to learn your music?" Finally, six stages of music development in African churches move the reader into the many places where the sound is heard in the lands.

The book launch included readings and an extensive soundscape of music and found sounds, as well as visuals from Africa, the main conversation partner with western music at the conference. ❧

/// Briefly noted

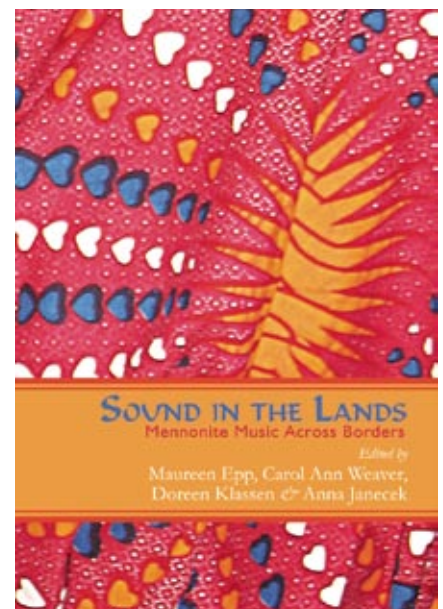
Mary Castello receives Abner Martin Music Scholarship

Mary Castello is the recipient of the \$3,500 Abner Martin Music Scholarship for 2011-12. Castello, who is from Kitchener, Ont., completed her music studies through Conservatory Canada in 2010, receiving an associate diploma in piano pedagogy. Now in her second year at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., she is working towards a bachelor of music degree in piano performance; last year, she was a finalist in Laurier's annual concerto competition. Castello has contributed in many ways in her church and community. At her home church, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, she has served with the worship and music ministry for the past several years, accompanying congregational singing and the choir there, and has been a regular participant in community music events. She sang with Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir and Menno Youth Singers for 10 years, and is now a sectional leader for the children's choir. In 2009, she participated in the Explore program through Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and travelled to Paraguay to attend Mennonite World Conference. In preparation for the trip, she organized and led a service of music and gave a piano recital at Stirling.

—Abner Martin Music Scholarship Committee



Castello



TELEVISION REVIEW

Promoting peace

Person of Interest.

An American crime drama series airing on CBS (Citytv in Canada), 2011.

REVIEWED BY ALLAN REMPEL

At a time when people in our society—and even our church—have developed an increased taste for violence, retribution and harsh punishment, the new series, *Person of Interest*, provides a refreshing counterpoint. It firmly inhabits the genre of action-thriller, but transforms it by demonstrating a more peaceful and constructive way to solve our problems, while also being a touchstone for issues in our post-9/11 world.

Over the past 15 years, shows like *24* have whetted our collective appetite for violence, retribution and torture, dehumanizing our society and bringing us back to the era of the Crusades, where we employed violence in the name of religion in order to assert our political regime or beliefs. We've said we want our cops to be like Jack Bauer—the protagonist of *24*—who's willing to do whatever it takes to obtain information from suspected terrorists, for whom due process is an unnecessary luxury. We see this sentiment in statements supporting Republican and Conservative political

interests on both sides of the border. And what's worse, we see it from Mennonites, who are called to be a people of peace, but sometimes act like a people of war.

Person of Interest provides a refreshing antidote to the violence of *24*. The premise is that, in a post-9/11 world, the government has commissioned a computer system that ties in all the traffic cameras and other surveillance devices everywhere, looking for activities that suggest future large-scale terrorist actions.

But the reclusive billionaire genius who designed the system also secretly gave it the ability to detect future small-scale crimes. This genius teams up with an ex-soldier to try to prevent those crimes before they occur, by connecting with the individuals involved, determining the motivations behind the potential future crimes, and finding alternate solutions to those problems so that the crimes need not be committed.

And the violence that is employed in dealing with such events is often the minimum necessary to deal with it,



Jim Caviezel, left, and Michael Emerson star in Person of Interest, a crime drama that promotes a message of peace while depicting a world at war.

rather than the excess that is so often depicted both in fiction and in reality. It recalls past eras of TV shows, in which much less violence was depicted or suggested than is the case today, as well as old superhero cartoons in which the hero never killed anybody, but only restrained the bad guys until the police could capture them.

Person of Interest also brings to mind the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu, who, in his book *The Art of War*, is an ironic advocate for peace by arguing that the best way to win a war is to not have to fight it in the first place.

The series deals seriously with the dehumanizing effect that violence has, especially on the perpetrator; the necessity of repentance and redemption for those who live by the sword; and the need to protect the still-innocent from making bad decisions and losing their innocence. It does all this in addition to providing exciting mysteries, good performances by Michael Emerson (Ben Linus of *Lost*) and Jim Caviezel (Jesus in *The Passion of the Christ*), and powerful societal themes relevant for our post-9/11 world.

Sometimes when we Christians and Mennonites lose sight of our true values and ideals, we can be reminded of them in the unlikelyst of places. *Person of Interest* may depict a world at war, but it promotes a message of peace. ❧

Allan Rempel is a Ph.D. candidate in computer science at the University of British Columbia, working on the next generation of high-contrast display technologies; before that, he worked in the computer animation industry. He attends Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., and is a member of Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask.

/// Briefly noted

Herald Press devotional named 'best of best'

HARRISONBURG, VA.—A Herald Press devotional book has been selected as *Worship Leader* magazine's "best of the best" in the team devotionals category for 2011. The devotional is *Take Our Moments and Our Days, Vol. 2*, published in 2010; subtitled *An Anabaptist Prayer Book, Advent Through Pentecost*, it was compiled by Paul Boers, Barbara Nelson Gingerich, Eleanor Kreider, John Rempel and Mary Schertz. *Worship Leader's* annual guide for the world of worship includes the best music resources, software, visual and presentation technology, worship training, musical instruments, apps, sound and recording equipment, books and devotionals, lighting, screens and projectors. "The special annual issue has evolved from a general buyer's guide and bonus issue to one of the year's central issues for *Worship Leader*—and the most back-ordered," says Daniele Kimes, vice-president for sales and marketing.

—MennoMedia



Waging Peace features Muslim-Christian interaction

BY MELODIE DAVIS

MennoMedia

Last year's 10th-anniversary commemorations of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks examined how the world has changed as a result, with many commentators noting profound distrust and animosity among some Christians and Muslims. However, a new one-hour documentary from MennoMedia's Third Way Media, *Waging Peace: Muslim and Christian Alternatives*, examines courageous threads of peace also quietly being sown around the world.

In the documentary, Lynne Hybels, an author, speaker and activist from Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, Ill., says, "The rising rhetoric of hatred was just becoming deafening, and I thought whatever your politics, whatever your religion, that just can't be right."

A wide variety of other people add their perspectives in the documentary, including Shafiq Hudda, a Shi'a imam in Kitchener, Ont.

Stories in the documentary include Muslim-Christian interaction in Ontario. A Mennonite pastor and Hudda began having breakfast together, which led to getting their faith communities involved in conversation, meals and volunteer projects, including making and knotting comforters together to give to refugees. Mennonites and Muslims worked together in settling Muslim refugees in Ontario.

Muslim students have also begun attending Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, and students and parents alike appreciate the opportunities to share friendship as well as discuss

similar interests in faith, world history and politics.

The documentary is intended to help communities find creative ways to build peaceful and just relationships, says producer Burton Buller. "The basic concept is that, while Christianity and Islam both have warrior-like histories and those who take up the sword in the name of faith, another reality exists. In this time of mistrust and war, some Muslims and Christians are dedicating their lives to the pursuit of peace."

Waging Peace is available for purchase on DVD at WagingPeaceAlternatives.com. ☸



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“We are delighted with this commitment by management and boards to provide funding for Mutual Aid Ministries that is linked to the growth of the organization,” says Nelson Scheifele, executive director of

PHOTO COURTESY OF NELSON SCHEIFELE



Nelson Scheifele, right, presents a plaque to Dan Troyer, congregational chair of Mannheim Mennonite Church, Ont., from MAX Canada Insurance and Mutual Aid Ministries in honour of the congregation’s 175th anniversary, on Dec. 11, 2011.

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Young adults conscientiously consider financial matters in light of the kingdom of God

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEAH REESOR-KELLER



When it comes to charitable giving, Leah Reesor-Keller is excited. 'My money can go out and do all kinds of things that I myself could never do, but that I think are really important,' she says.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNIKA KRAUSE



Annika Krause, a member at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, believes Christians have a responsibility to give what they can to their church.

Like many people his age, Joel Wiens would like to buy a smartphone. He could probably afford to buy one now, but that would mean taking from the money he and his wife Jacquelyn typically earmark for their church donation.

"We'd both like iPhones, but we don't want to get them at the expense of our church contributions," he says. "I think giving should make things somewhat uncomfortable for the giver. I don't think we should be giving our fiscal table scraps, giving what's left to the Lord only after we've covered our own wants and desires."

Deciding how much of their income to

is what Christians should do. "There was always the idea . . . that it was just expected and standard and normal that you should give," says the 26-year-old who attends Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

Reesor-Keller works as a resource development coordinator at Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support in Kitchener. She and her husband Luke, a mechanical engineer, believe that being generous is important, so they try to give more than 10 percent of their income to their church and organizations like Mennonite Central Committee. "As I've gotten older and also

'We'd both like iPhones, but we don't want to get them at the expense of our church contributions.'
(Joel Wiens)

donate, and where to donate it, is something all young adult Mennonites must do as they grow up in the church.

For Wiens, a 22-year-old business analyst for TransCanada Pipelines who attends Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, how people use their money is an indicator of their spiritual maturity. "I would say [money] is a kind of barometer of how you see the world and what you place value on," he says. "Money is neutral. It could be an end for self-fulfilment and aggrandizement, or it can be used for the kingdom [of God]."

Growing up in the church, Leah Reesor-Keller learned that giving a 10 percent tithe

been more involved in the non-profit community . . . I've really seen the importance of steady, ongoing [giving]," she says. "So rather than once a year making a big gift, I've tried to be more diligent in setting up monthly payments of donations."

This past fall, she and her husband sat down to create a budget for their household. Reesor-Keller says that when it came to talking about charitable giving, it was fun to think and talk about what organizations are doing good work that they would like to support financially. "It's important to us to give to some organizations that are meeting very immediate, basic needs, but it's also important for us to give to

organizations that are working toward more long-term development,” she says. “We also try to balance local and international giving.”

Like Reesor-Keller, Annika Krause grew up with the idea that 10 percent of one’s income should be given to the church. A member at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, Krause acknowledges that there are non-financial ways that people can give to their church that are very important, whether that be by serving on a committee, helping with a worship service, or praying for the church’s members and ministries.

At the same time, Krause believes all members have a financial responsibility to give what they can to their church. “It is our responsibility to give financially, and sometimes that means cutting back on [spending on ourselves],” says the 24-year-old who, at the end of January, will begin studying at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., to become a youth pastor. “That’s hard for me, too. I’m not saying I do it 100 percent of the time either,” Krause continues. “But I think that a lot of the time, especially for young people, it

seems like we could [give more].”

Krause admits that money is a taboo subject that she and her friends rarely discuss.

Wiens echoes the sentiment. He realizes that, in some circles, it may be impolite to talk about money, and that people sometimes feel judged by others when discussing how much they do—or do not—give. Still, he believes that finances are an important matter that Christians should discuss: “People in the church should talk about money. It’s a part of everyone’s life, and if you’re going to do something with your money, it should be purposeful.”

Reesor-Keller recalls the attitude towards giving that she witnessed in her home growing up. There was never any kind of negativity about giving—or any feeling of obligation—just excitement about the opportunities and programs that are out there to support. “That’s one of the incredible things about giving money: that money can be turned into all kinds of things,” Reesor-Keller says. “My money can go out and do all kinds of things that I myself could never do, but that I think are really important.” ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOEL WIENS



Joel Wiens, pictured with his wife Jacquelyn, believes that how people use their money is an indicator of their spiritual maturity.

VIEWPOINT

Don't worry about retirement . . . yet

Financial advice for young adults and those who don't have much money and aren't sure what to do with it

BY TOBIN REIMER

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

I was recently asked by a friend in his 20s if I could offer some financial advice before he got married. Without knowing the specifics of his situation, I offered some financial pointers.

You can simplify personal finances by seeing them in three parts: You earn money, you spend money, and you deal with money. This article will touch on the

last two parts, and avoid the first part like the plague.

The best piece of financial advice I’ve ever heard is: Spend less money. It’s useless advice because it’s so obvious. It’s great advice because it’s the area of our finances where we have the most control. The benefits of spending less money are also obvious: More money for saving,

PHOTO COURTESY OF MSCU



donating and reducing debt.

Often the focus of dealing with money is savings, especially for retirement. Many young adults, however, will experience several major financial events before we get to retirement. We may change relationships, have kids, buy a home, sell a home, change jobs or inherit money.

The following list is intended to be a guide to actions you can take to deal with your money. Working on and learning about these things will give you a good

paying to borrow the money you owe?

• **CONSIDER MAKING** lump-sum—also known as “one-time” or “principal”—payments on your debts. Before making lump-sum payments on your debts, carefully consider the implications: Will this make my finances less flexible? Will my monthly payments on this debt be reduced by making this payment? How much money will I save in interest?

• **EXPAND YOUR** budget to an entire year, including once-per-year items such

The best piece of financial advice I've ever heard is: Spend less money. It's useless advice because it's so obvious. It's great advice because it's the area of our finances where we have the most control.

head-start when the time comes to actually think about retirement planning.

A financial to-do list

- **READ EVERY** bill that is sent to you.
- **PAY ALL** of your bills by the due date.
- **CREATE AN** emergency savings account. Save three months of living expenses. It is important to have this money available in case you lose your job/scholarship/other income.
- **MAKE A** one-month budget. List the money you earn and the money you spend.
- **MAKE A** statement of net worth. List the money and large assets that you own (bank account, car) and the money you owe (student loan, credit card balance, money owed to parents). Total both lists and subtract the amount you owe from the amount you own. This is your net worth. Remember that regardless of what this number says, God loves you and you're worth much more than that to him.
- **TAKE YOUR** budget and look at it after a month. Is it accurate? Are you spending more than you're earning? If so, take all reasonable steps to spend less. This is also the best time to consider how saving and donating fit into your budget.
- **TAKE YOUR** statement of net worth. How much interest are you being paid on the money you own? How much are you

as extra expenses at Christmas, vacations and tax returns.

- **CONSIDER OPENING** Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). Contributing to an RRSP may increase your tax return significantly. You can withdraw money from an RRSP to buy your first home or pay for a return to school. Learn about the Home Buyer's Plan and Lifelong Learning Plan, respectively.
- **IF YOU** have kids, consider opening a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) to save for their education. To get some free money from the government, learn about the Canada Education Savings Grant and the Canada Learning Bond.
- **EVALUATE YOUR** insurance needs. Do you have enough life insurance, and short-term and long-term disability insurance?
- **REVIEW THE** health and dental benefits available to you from your employer or your school.
- **CREATE A** will. This is important for all adults, especially parents.
- **PLAN YOUR** retirement income. %

Tobin Reimer is an investment specialist with Mennonite Savings and Credit Union. He and his wife Meghan live in Waterloo, Ont. They don't have kids yet, but they are budgeting for a puppy.

Work with First Nations inspires CMU students

By EMILY LOEWEN

Young Voices Co-editor

When Kelsey Enns started at the North End Family Centre, Winnipeg, he stood out from everyone else using the drop-in centre. So as a young white man serving at a facility that aims to develop healthy interpersonal relationships to combat the gang problem prevalent in the area and that serves mostly First Nations people, he was certainly obvious to the parents and grandparents who use the facility.

Enns, a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, worked at the centre for his work placement that is required of every student graduating from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). He chose the centre because, of all the missions in the city, its size and ambitious goal of fighting gangs in the First Nations population stood out for him.

Bethany Abrahamson, a member of Christian Fellowship Church in Birch River, Man., was also very interested in working with aboriginal people. She spent the summer as program director at Steeprock Bay Bible Camp, Swan River, Man.

Both Enns and Abrahamson felt God's call to serve within Manitoba's First Nations communities and both remained connected to their work after their placements finished. They hope to further serve those groups going forward.

While he intended to serve the community, Enns found he also benefitted from the experience. The opportunity to hear stories from the people visiting the drop-in was a highlight for him. It took some patrons a while to open up to him, but once they did, he says, "I heard some stories about the residential schools and the experiences they've had with that." He continues to volunteer at the centre once a week while he completes his final year of studies.

But the work also came with a set of challenges because of the difference in values. "There's a bit of a culture shock when you

go there, because some of the values that are held are very different than what you see in a suburban area," Enns says. Many of the men believe in more traditional gender roles and people at the centre often relate to each other in sexual ways.

While Abrahamson worked with children, instead of adults, she, too, learned important lessons from her summer. She found her work got exhausting by the end of the week, the busy job of program director compounded by the high number of kids who either were diagnosed, or had symptoms of, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Often by Thursday she felt worn out, and realized that she had to delegate more tasks. "That was tough," she says, "but I think it was probably good for me also just to recognize that I can't do everything, and I have to let people step in and help me out sometimes."

The work may have challenged them at times, but both Abrahamson and Enns believe their work and the programs themselves serve an important purpose.

"Most of [the kids] come from pretty rough reserves, and just giving them a chance to see that there are people out there who love God and who love them" makes it worthwhile, says Abrahamson. And in some ways the difficult work comes with more rewards than other camps, she says. "It's exciting because you feel like you're really making a difference and you're really somebody different to them than what they're used to."

For Enns, the drop-in centre provides one way he can fulfill the call to demonstrate God's love to the world close to home: "I think we view service work as something that's done far away, but with this one it's right in a very poor area of our own city that is neglected by a lot of people." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF BETHANY ABRAHAMSON



Bethany Abrahamson, left, worked at Steeprock Bay Bible Camp, a summer camp designed for First Nations kids like Dori.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELSEY ENNS



Kelsey Enns continues to volunteer at the North End Family Centre, Winnipeg, even though his CMU work placement is completed.

UpComing

MC Manitoba to discuss constitutional change

Mennonite Church Manitoba is holding its annual delegate sessions on Feb. 24 and 25 in Winnipeg. Continuing with the theme of the MC Canada assembly last summer, "Building the faithful church," MC Manitoba will look at "How do we read the Bible and what is the authority of the Word of God in our midst?" Willard Metzger, executive director for MC Canada, will speak on this theme at the leadership seminar hosted by Hope Mennonite Church on Feb. 24 and at the worship service that evening at Home Street Mennonite Church, and at the business sessions on Feb. 25 that will be held at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. One of the key issues to be discussed is the constitutional change regarding reference groups and the creation of subcommittees that will give more flexibility in creating subcommittees to assist the board in its work, and to give shape and direction to various ministries.

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Spreading Lenten prayer across the country

This is the fifth year that the Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada have offered a Lenten Guide to Prayer, but the first year that it has been picked up by Mennonite Church Canada for wider use. Based on a contemplative prayer pattern using the lectionary verses week by week, the guide also includes guidance for groups to gather and share their experiences. With the Mennonite focus on corporate spirituality, the spiritual directors have worked hard to keep the guide from being a solitary experience. Praying with Scripture three or four days each week, participants allow God's Spirit to deepen their experience of the Lenten season, preparing for Holy Week and Easter. "Where do I sign?" follows the MC Canada and MC U.S.A. worship materials for Lent. It can be downloaded by visiting mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1693; all the registration details and costs are included in the packet. For more information, e-mail mennospiritdir@gmail.com.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Foodgrains Bank youth study tour in the works

WINNIPEG—Young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who are interested in global hunger issues, and in putting their faith into action, are invited to apply for the May 1-15 Canadian Foodgrains Bank youth study tour to Nicaragua. Participants will learn more about issues affecting people in the developing world and international development, make new friends, and meet Nicaraguans who are working to improve their lives and communities. For more information, contact Roberta Gramlich, youth engagement coordinator, at rgramlich@foodgrainsbank.ca.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Calendar

British Columbia

March 2: MC B.C. LEADership Conference at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

March 3: MC B.C. annual meeting and 75th anniversary celebration and banquet.

Alberta

Feb. 24-26: Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Valaqua at 403-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

Feb. 24-25: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

March 11: RJC Guys and Pies fundraising event.

Manitoba

Feb. 9-10: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior high presents three one-act plays at the Franco-Manitoban Centre, Winnipeg.

Feb. 16: CMU opera workshop.

Feb. 22: Adults with Disabilities Venture Camp at Camp Koinonia. For more information, call the Camps with Meaning office at 204-895-2267.

Feb. 22: CMU open house for prospective students.

March 2: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate gala concert.

March 4: Mennonite Community Orchestra and CMU Choir in concert.

March 8-10: MCI, Gretna, presents its spring musical, *The Pirates of Penzance*, at Buhler Hall. For tickets, call 204-327-5891.

March 9-11: CMU Peace-it-Together.

For more information, visit cmu.ca/pit.

March 12-13: CMU presents the Proclaiming the Claims of Christ Lectures.

March 16: CMU campus visit day.

Ontario

Feb. 17: 31st annual Heifer Sale sponsored by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc., at Carson Auction, Listowel, beginning at 11 a.m. Proceeds of the auction go directly to MCC relief, development and peace work around the world. For more information, visit heifersale.org.

Feb. 17: Sawatsky Lecture at Conrad Grebel Great Hall, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Julia Spicher Kasdorf. Topic: "Mightier than the sword: *Martyrs Mirror* in the new world." For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/Sawatsky.

Feb. 20: Family Day open house at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Possible activities include sledding, skating, building a snowman, floor hockey, making pretzels, and a campfire. Bring your own outdoor equipment. Light lunch provided at noon. For more information, or to register, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca call 519-625-8602.

Feb. 22-24: MC Eastern Canada School for Ministers, "Living into the future: Anabaptist convictions, the missional church and a post-Christian world," with Stuart Murray, author of *The Naked Anabaptist*; at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

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.



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Contact *Canadian Mennonite*
Ad Representative
Lisa Metzger
1-800-378-2524 x.224
519-664-2780
advert@canadianmennonite.org

Employment Opportunities

LEAD PASTOR

"**Springfield Heights Mennonite Church**, a Christian community growing and serving together in the spirit of Jesus," invites applications for a full-time position of Lead Pastor.

SHMC, located in **Winnipeg, Man.**, is a church of 491 members. We are prayerfully seeking a full-time lead pastor. We are asking God for a pastor who is strong in Biblical teaching, has an understanding of contemporary Anabaptist theology and is a spiritual team leader who inspires and encourages the congregation to walk the Christian walk. We are seeking a pastor who is strong in the relational life of the multi-generational aspects of church life, a good listener, approachable, an encourager and sensitive to the needs of the congregation. Fluency in German would be an asset.

Starting date: Any time after Spring 2012.
Please direct resumes and/or inquiries to hilydyd@shaw.ca or phone: 204-669-5199 or mail:

Attn: Search Committee,
Springfield Heights Mennonite Church,
570 Sharron Bay, Winnipeg, MB R2G 0H9
www.springfieldheightsmennonitechurch.ca

YOUTH MINISTRY PASTOR

Joint Ministry of **Markham/Stouffville Mennonite Congregations**. Beginning: immediately.

The Youth Ministry Pastor will partner with Pastors, Youth Sponsors, Sunday School Teachers, and Mentors in these 5 Churches to call, equip and send High School aged youth to be fully engaged participants in God's mission in the local congregations and in the world. This community, historically a farming area, is now facing increasing opportunities of multi-cultural richness, and urbanization.

The qualified applicant will demonstrate a passion for Jesus Christ and His Church, and a desire to see others grow closer to God. More information and a detailed job description can be obtained from:

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E
Kitchener ON N2P 2G2
Tel: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356
Fax: 519-650-3947 / E-mail: mcec@mcec.ca
Resumes and Inquiries may be directed to:
Muriel Bechtel at mbechtel@mcec.ca.



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MENNO PLACE

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MENNO HOME

With the retirement of our Menno Home Chaplain, we are searching for an experienced Chaplain to serve 196 residents at Menno Home and, as needed, residents at Menno Hospital and Menno Housing. Reporting to the Senior Chaplain, Menno Place, the Menno Home Chaplain is an ordained Christian minister with a degree in Theology and/or Behavioral Science, Clinical Pastoral Education certificate (preferred), relevant experience, and – mostly importantly – a calling to serve residents with physical or mental challenges and those receiving end-of-life-care.

For full job description,
please respond before
February 15th to:

Art Beadle, CHRP,
at A.R. Beadle & Associates
1.888.330.6714 • Email art@arbeadle.com

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

Canadian Mennonite is seeking an approximately 40% time Advertising Representative for the biweekly magazine. Potential pay can be approximately \$15,000 per year, based on commission on sales. The majority of work can be done from home if desired. Resumes will be considered starting immediately with the position starting February 1.

This person is responsible for managing, caring for and growing Canadian Mennonite's advertising base, including online advertising. Specific tasks include providing excellent service to advertisers; developing and carrying out ad marketing campaigns; responding to ad inquiries; organising the production of ads from development through to print and/or online publication; growing our advertising base; and working with the publisher to develop our overall advertising business plan.

Applicants should be self-motivated idea people with strong sales and communication skills; the ability to understand customer needs and match our offerings; support Canadian Mennonite's ministry and mission; and be able to work independently.

Send your resume to editor@canadianmennonite.org:
Dick Benner, Editor and Publisher, Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

And the things of earth . . .

BY LINDA MATTIES
SPECIAL TO *CANADIAN MENNONITE*

Gareth Brandt began his sermon about God's call to Jeremiah at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., on Jan. 8 with a comment on the hymn that had been sung just prior to the sermon: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus / Look full in his wonderful face / And the things of earth will grow strangely dim / In the light of his glory and grace."

He suggested that the opposite was just as true. When we turn our eyes upon Jesus, the things of earth will—or should—grow strangely clear.

This illustrates both the power and weakness of using metaphors to express important ideas.

Metaphors have a picturesque way of portraying ideas, but at some point they cannot be sustained.

Instead, they break down in a way that demonstrates the limitations of a word picture to express a particular idea. I believe that Brandt and the song are both right.

There are times when the things of earth need to recede from the screen of our minds, so that we can hear the voice of God, just as Jeremiah did. There are other times when the things of earth need to be strangely clear, so that we know how to act in the light of what we have heard the voice of God say. While the dimming of background noise is necessary for clear hearing, a sharpening and clarity of focus is needed to develop action plans for our life on earth.

There is room to sing the song both ways as we open ourselves up to God's call and respond to it. We can even change the last line from "in the light of his glory and grace" to "as we live out his glory and grace!" ❧