

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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The world comes  
to the farm

pg.22

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## inside

Killing her softly 4

Legacy of a holy hostess 12

Church anniversaries 18-19

## EDITORIAL

## Gift discernment?

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

“Gift discernment,” as practised in many of our congregations, is neither.

This sometimes agonizing ritual of finding enough willing members to fill the slots needed to keep the faith community functioning on an annual basis is often an arduous task for those assigned to find those volunteer bodies.

It is neither an in-depth look at the various spiritual gifts of the congregation nor a serious process of discernment that takes into account the Spirit’s nudging and “calling” for congregants at various points of their spiritual journey, nor is it a careful look at the cutting edge of changing needs in the development of a congregation.

More and more “gift discernment committees” hear that dreadful response that “I am just too busy to take anything else on” when attempting to fill positions each fall. This appears to be a recent pattern emerging in several congregations.

It would be far too harsh to imply that much of the language in our covenants of commitment and membership vows are so much high-sounding rhetoric, but there is a need to take a new look at what has become not a joy, but a burden of management, as we attempt to function as the body of Christ in a congregational setting.

Have we forgotten what we said as individuals, either at baptism or in joining a new fellowship of believers, when we committed to:

• **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION** in the life and

work of the congregation;

• **OPENNESS TO** giving and receiving counsel;

• **SEEKING TO** be good stewards of our time, personal gifts and money;

• **PARTICIPATING IN** congregational discernment and decision-making; or

• **RENEWING OUR** membership in an annual celebration and renewal of our covenant?



Has the congregational leadership forgotten its promise to:

• **BE A** discerning community that identifies congregants’ gifts and calls, and supports them in the exercise of these gifts in the service of the church and to others in need?

“Gift discernment,” as we too often vaguely both describe and practise it, is a two-way street: namely, the responsibility of church leadership to intentionally work at identifying the spiritual gifts of the congregation and the commitment of the members to then use those gifts in equipping the saints for the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

Neither congregations nor their individual members stand still in this ongoing discernment process. Congregations change from year to year, demographically, in leadership and in what they hold as priorities in worship and service. Individuals are on a spiritual journey, defined and refined by their

personal experiences of struggle, perhaps grief and loss, perhaps new spurts of growth and joy, or new insights and knowledge, the latter sometimes coming from their fellow travellers, sometimes from outside sources and influences.

And so it should be. Healthy congregations are in dynamic development mode. But it is a dynamic that is self-conscious and intentional, not one driven by default or the tired refrain of “we always do it this way.” Developing gifts and using gifts should be part of the same process. Perhaps before asking anyone to fill any spot, the congregation should take account of where it is in this development process and set up specific new goals for the new church year.

I am reminded of an encounter with one of our Anabaptist cousins several years ago when I was working with an inter-Anabaptist group. A Church of the Brethren pastor in Dayton, Ohio, told our group he had no problem with “filling the spots with volunteers.”

Fred Barnhart, a person with a vision for planting a new church on the outskirts of this southwestern Ohio town, who grew his flock from some 50 congregants to more than 600, told us with a confident smile, “I have no problem getting the work of my church done.”

His strategy?

“Whenever a newcomer shows signs of committing to regular attendance [and, consequently, membership], the first thing I do is spend an hour with him or her talking about their gifts. I take careful notes and put this into a database that becomes an ‘inventory of spiritual gifts,’” he said. “Then, when it comes time to fill all those volunteer spots and positions, I just go to my inventory list and the spot is filled. The person has already told me his or her gifts, so they can hardly say no!”

## ABOUT THE COVER:

The world comes to the farm. Gerald Dyck of 4-D Farms, Springstein, Man., talks about oats to women from Somalia and Egypt, part of a class of English-as-an-additional-language students who meet at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, who made the trip out of the city this spring. See story on page 22.

PHOTO: REYNOLD FRIESEN, BETHEL MENNONITE CHURCH, WINNIPEG

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**Guiding values:**

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

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# contents



## Killing her softly 4

Domestic abuse is still abuse even when it leaves no physical scars. B.C. correspondent **AMY DUECKMAN** discovered while investigating this troubling topic that is as prevalent in church circles as it is in the general population.

## CMU announces \$11-million capital project 16

Canadian Mennonite University hopes to begin building a new library and learning commons, and a pedestrian bridge over a busy Winnipeg thoroughfare next year.

## The world comes to the farm 22

Our cover story reports on a visit by students from 11 different nationalities to a Manitoba farm this spring, where the owner, **GERALD DYCK**, recounted how his ancestors had once been newcomers to this country like them.



## Suspicious hospitality 24

Senior writer **WILL BRAUN** reports on the federal government's decision to reduce health coverage for refugees, while Eastern Canada correspondent **DAVE ROGALSKY** covers the 25th-anniversary celebrations of the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support.

## Investment in ministry pays off in Argentina 29

Missionary Mario Snyder fondly remembers the Canadian support he received for his education in return for his promise to continue his parents' work in South America.

## The responsibility of youth 34

**DAVID ZENTNER** writes of the need for Mennonite young adults to take seriously their responsibility for the sins of their forebears in this country's residential school abuse scandal.

## Regular features:

For discussion **7** Readers write **8** Pontius' Puddle **11**

Milestones **15** Schools Directory **33**

Calendar **38** Classifieds **39**

## Gift discernment? 2

**DICK BENNER**

## Where goes the neighbourhood? 9

**PHIL WAGLER**

## Pondering covenant 10

**HENRY KLIEWER**

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'Love of God' tops most-sung in song survey:

**MICHAEL SPORY, MENNOMEDIA**

Wiens: RISING POLITICAL STAR IN PARAGUAY: **DICK BENNER**

# Killing her softly

*Domestic abuse is still abuse even when it leaves no physical scars*

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. CORRESPONDENT



*'I wish he would just hit me,' is a common sentiment among victims of verbal or emotional abuse, who long for either concrete proof of abuse or a perceived justifiable excuse to leave the relationship.*

It's Sunday morning, and you greet Sandy\* and Bob\* as they sit in the pew behind you. You smile and shake hands. What you see is a nice couple, good parents who are active in the church. What you miss are the emptiness and pain in Sandy's eyes because her husband is abusing her.

What, Bob—an abuser? Surely not. He's a successful real estate agent, an affable, outgoing man, chair of the church finance committee. And Sandy does not fit the image of the battered wife who has to explain occasional bruises by muttering lame excuses about running into a cupboard door. It's true that Bob has never laid a hand on Sandy, but she is abused nonetheless. Her bruises are on the inside.

Sandy is confused. Bob is really a nice guy—most of the time, anyway. He presents one picture to the outside world, but at home he can be very different. He puts Sandy down with mean, sarcastic comments, then, when she cries, he says he's just kidding. He laughs at her when she makes the least little mistake. Sometimes he hurts her so much she wonders if she can stand it, then the next day he is affectionate, even apologetic, and all seems well again. Sandy wonders if she's going crazy.

Although most people tend to associate domestic abuse mainly with physical violence, situations like Sandy's are much more common. Writes Dr. Jill A. Murray in her book *But He Never Hit Me: The Devastating Cost of Non-Physical Abuse to Girls and Women*, "Popular wisdom suggests that all abuse is physical, so if a woman doesn't have a black eye or a broken arm, she doesn't consider herself abused—and neither does the outside world. In fact, physical abuse—hitting, shoving, choking, grabbing and assaulting by any means—constitutes the vast minority of abuse. The vast majority consists of verbal, emotional, psychological,

PHOTO BY MAURO GRIGOLLO, ISTOCK



financial and spiritual abuse.”

### ***The phases of abuse***

Typically, an abusive relationship cycles between three phases:

- **HONEYMOON:** In the honeymoon phase, the relationship seems to be going well. The abuser can be attentive, affectionate and positive.
- **TENSION:** This is followed by the tension building, in which the abuser can display moods such as silence and moodiness to withdrawing from the relationship. This phase can be days, weeks or months long.
- **EXPLOSION:** Finally comes explosion, when the abuser reacts with angry, brutal attacks against his partner, whether it be striking her, swearing at her or throwing objects in a fit of rage.

Then it’s back to the honeymoon phase, and the cycle begins once again. A woman caught in this cycle feels she

is constantly walking on eggshells, not knowing what to expect from her partner or when, not knowing how he will react. She may find herself thinking that if she just tried harder, if she just did something different, he wouldn’t treat her this way.

“I wish he would just hit me,” is a common sentiment among victims of verbal or emotional abuse, who long for either concrete proof of abuse or a perceived justifiable excuse to leave the relationship.

### ***Christian experience mirrors that of the general public***

According to Karen McAndless-Davis, co-author of *When Love Hurts*, one in four Canadian women will experience some kind of relationship abuse in her life. Sadly, the incidence among Christians is no different than the general public, so chances are very good that any congregation has someone who is experiencing some form of Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA). These people—almost

always women—are often invisible. They are too ashamed to speak up, or they become experts at covering up. Often they convince themselves that they are not really being abused.

Wendy\* is one such woman. She never considered herself abused until friends pointed out the disrespectful ways her husband treats her. She never knows when to expect an outburst of temper.

“We don’t fight or anything, but once he angrily scolded me in front of guests and I was so embarrassed I wanted to crawl into a hole,” she admits, adding, “He sometimes implies I am stupid or ignorant, and he expects me to attend to him when he asks. But most of the time he’s quite normal and he tells me he loves me. It’s not that bad. Is this really abuse?”

### ***Why men abuse their partners***

The reasons why a man abuses are varying and complex. Whether as a result of his own experience with abuse, feelings of failure and inadequacy, or a need to

## Help for victims

• Many resources exist to help victims of domestic abuse. For more information, visit the Government of Canada website at [www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/facts-info/sa-vc.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/facts-info/sa-vc.html).

• For help in each province:

**BRITISH COLUMBIA:** Victimlink B.C.: 1-800-563-0808.

**ALBERTA:** Family Violence Information Line: 310-1818 toll-free from anywhere in the province.

**SASKATCHEWAN:** Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services (PATHS): 306-522-3515.

**MANITOBA:** Family Violence Prevention Program: 1-877-977-0007.

**ONTARIO:** Women's Crisis Line: 1-800-263-3247.

**QUEBEC:** S.O.S. Violence conjugale: 1-800-363-9010.

• Abuse victims of both genders may call the Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women: 1-888-743-5754.

• Printed resources include [www.theraveproject.com](http://www.theraveproject.com), which is Christian, and has links to resources in Canada.

• Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) offers several printed resources, including the "Home shouldn't be a place that hurts" brochure, and "Abuse: Response and prevention: A guide for church leaders," which is also available as a download from the MCC website. Also visit <http://abuse.mcc.org>.

put others down to build himself up, at the heart of an abusive man's behaviour is a need for power and control over his partner.

As explained by Jill Cory and McAndless-Davis in *When Love Hurts*, the abusive man feels he is central, superior and deserving. There is no room in the power and control belief system for the man to treat the woman with respect. Although he may not admit it, or even consciously realize it, he sees the woman in his life as a means to serve his needs. If he is central, she is on the periphery; if he is superior, she is inferior; if he is deserving, she is undeserving. The balance of power in the relationship is in his hands, and he uses that power to intentionally control or dominate his intimate partner.

### Abuse in the church

Women who are active in the church have a particularly difficult time dealing with IPA. Traditional views of male-dominated roles in church and the marriage relationship often serve to perpetuate the sense of powerlessness an abused woman feels. While an egalitarian model of marriage promotes equality of values, authority and mutual decision-making, a traditional model has husband and wife

with different roles, with the husband in authority over his wife. Abused Christian women who are told, "Woman is the heart of a marriage, but man is the head," feel that if they oppose what their husband says or does, even if hurtful or disempowering to them, they are disobeying God.

Julie\* found this to be true. "Many of the people in my church hold to the belief that women are to be submissive to their husbands, and that means not complaining," she says. "I felt that I was to be quiet and that if I said anything I would be looked down upon. Another belief commonly held [in my church] is that the man is to be head of the household and that any decision made is to be determined by the husband."

Further, women experiencing abuse who seek help from the church community often find they are abandoned by the very people who should be helping them. Emotionally abused, Monica\* recalls a time when her family began attending a new church, and she approached the pastor to express a need for counselling. A church elder—who knew her husband—came to visit. "My husband is well liked, a happy, social person, and had him laughing in no time," she says. "[The elder] saw

no further need for counselling, as he considered all was well."

Monica's husband used Christian teachings to keep her in her place. "When he did or said something that emotionally hurt me and I would mention it to him, his reply was almost always, 'You're a Christian; you're just supposed to forgive.' So, of course, I wondered why I had difficulties forgiving and what a weak Christian I was in not understanding God's love."

Julie also found the church community not to be a safe place, painful because her church and spiritual life are extremely important to her. "I had little support from where I needed it the most," she says. "I felt that I was not able to confide in my pastor or church leaders, as the church I attend frowns on couples separating and divorce is considered a great sin."

### Support services available

Women who do not find support in their churches may feel alone, without a place to turn. Organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) do offer help in some regions. MCC Manitoba has Voices for Non-Violence, and MCC B.C. has Abuse Response and Prevention.



MCC B.C. sponsors a When Love Hurts support group for women experiencing abuse in their intimate relationships, a place to share their stories and gain strength from the encouragement of others. Facilitator Elsie Goerzen says that women who attend her group, who may not have realized what was wrong in their relationships, are relieved they can finally find a voice.

The often-asked question of abused women is, “So why don’t you just leave?” This, too, is complicated, with answers that vary from woman to woman. Some are dependent financially on their husbands. Some don’t want to disturb their children or break up their family unit. Others fear the reactions of family and friends. Many find the thought of a major life change too overwhelming. For Christian women, another factor is the admission of marriage failure and possible rejection by the church in case of divorce.

So what is an abused woman to do? Should she stay, should she try to change her partner, or should she encourage him to go to marriage counselling with her?

“We don’t tell women what to do, whether to leave or stay,” says Goerzen. “We give them the resources to make the decision that is right for them. We teach women that they are their own best advocate, and only they can decide what is best for them.”

Goerzen says that many women feel great guilt over leaving a marriage because of Christian teaching that divorce is sin, and they genuinely want to honour their marriage vows. “We point out that a husband who abuses his wife has already broken the marriage vows,” she says. “Christians now have the same divorce rate as non-Christians. The only difference is, Christians stay in the marriage longer.”

Although couples counselling seems like a logical step, Cory and McAndless-Davis say that, for an abusive situation, this is not recommended. A woman may not feel safe being completely honest about the relationship when her partner is present, for fear of later repercussions. If she is unable to be honest about the extent of the abuse, and if at the same time her partner is free to tell the worst

stories about her, the counsellor will get a skewed picture of the relationship. Also, it should be noted that joint counselling works best when both parties are equally committed to improving the relationship. In the case of an abusive marriage or intimate relationship, the problem is solely that of the abuser. The abused woman is not to blame.

While it is difficult for an abuser to change, he can, with commitment and dedication. As Cory and McAndless-Davis explain, “[The abuser] must acknowledge that the problem is abuse and he is responsible for the abuse. He has to register himself in appropriate counselling and then he has to work hard in his counselling program.”

However, most abusive men will resist counselling, as this challenges the balance of power they have enjoyed in the relationship and it means admitting they have a problem.

In B.C., reports Goerzen, a pilot group will be launched in the fall for men who are abusing their partners and want to address their abusive behaviour. “This is very hopeful, because, in our region, the groups available for [abusive] men are those offered through probation, and only court-mandated men are eligible for those,” she says. “This faith-based group will be such an excellent resource for men who truly want to change, and there are men who

do!”

In Nanaimo, B.C., men who have abused their partners and want to address their abusive behaviour can attend a Beyond Blame program, and those who have successfully completed the program do report success.

“I have become far more responsible for my decisions,” say Roy\*. “When I make a mistake, I more readily own up to it, leading me to more peace and far less drama.”

And Micky\* says it has made a difference with his partner. “I am [now] able to stop myself before acting poorly,” he says. “I am more understanding. I’m a better listener, and more interested in how she feels and her opinions.”

There is also hope for Julie, Wendy, Monica and other women in our churches who continue struggling, often in painful silence, with how to handle their abusive situations. Like Wendy, they want to develop the self-esteem to stand up to verbal abuse. Like Julie, they don’t want to be judged or blamed for their decisions. Like Monica, they just want to be believed.

It is up to our churches to acknowledge there is abuse among us, and to respond with compassion and love in a non-judgmental way. ❧

(\* Pseudonyms)

### ❧ For discussion

1. How is the role of women understood in your congregation? Are women taught to be subservient and submissive? Are women given proper respect? Why might submissive women be more vulnerable to emotional abuse? What do you understand to be Paul’s message in Ephesians 5:22-33?
2. What factors provide power in sibling or spousal relationships? Under what circumstances can a sister or a wife hold more power than a brother or a husband? How does a healthy relationship negotiate a balance of power? Do you agree that abuse is about the misuse of power?
3. If someone in your congregation claimed to be a victim of abuse, how would the church respond? What would you do if you were suspicious that a fellow church member was abusing his or her spouse? At what point is it appropriate for the church to get involved? What might that involvement look like?
4. How can we teach our children to build good relationships? What can the church do to work at preventing abuse?

## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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

## ✉ MCC must now compete for CIDA grant money

**RE:** "MENNONITES CAN serve Jesus Christ . . . or Stephen Harper" letter, May 28, page 8.

I must admit that I was a bit disturbed by the tone of Walter Quiring's letter regarding the actions of our Canadian government. It sounded more like American evangelists Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson.

I was always under the impression that it was a strong Mennonite tradition to separate church and state. We are fortunate enough to live in a free democracy, where each of us has a regular chance to confidentially exercise our national voting right. Leveraging our equally important right to freely practise our religion for some political agenda is definitely a slippery slope that should be avoided.

Regarding the Canadian government support of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs, I checked with some MCC people I know, and they indicated some programs, like in Haiti, continue to be well supported by our national government. There are others where government support has been withdrawn because a number of changes have been made in the way it operates and approves grants. These grants are now approved through a competitive process, meaning not all applications submitted to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) are approved. MCC indicated its plan to meet with CIDA in order to make future applications for this kind of aid more in line with new guidelines, thus making them more competitive.

I know from personal experience that Mennonites have an excellent reputation worldwide for quiet

but strong meaningful action, and I'm sure that will continue. Like many wise people have said before, "Actions speak louder than words."

**RICHARD PENNER, CALGARY**

## ✉ No place for religious systems of exclusion and division

"**THE ENTIRE HISTORY** of man is war," the speaker told us, "conflict driven by racial, religious and territorial ambition." He sounded regretful, as if he wished it could be otherwise, but knew it was foolish and negligent to trust any force other than violence for the common good. As he went on, outlining the dangers of Islamic immigration to western countries, he branded those who disagreed with his analysis as "naïve," even "traitors." I saw that most of the crowd agreed.

*Waging Peace*, the MennoMedia DVD, is one example of telling a different story. This film, which I watched at another event exploring the Muslim presence in North America, shows diverse communities in North America reaching outside their comfort zones with joint programs of learning, peacebuilding and fun. The film examines projects as varied as quilting, summer camps and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) as places to confront the idea that Christianity and Islam are bitter, implacable enemies, and crafts an alternative.

The *Waging Peace* screening featured speakers from both Muslim and Christian communities, promoting respect, instead of hostility, as a starting point. Participants came prepared to listen and learn without any one voice needing to be in control of the dialogue, while at the first event there was no room for opinions beyond the speaker's message. That message was exclusion, and anticipation of a bleak future of violence and suspicion towards anything defined as "different." By contrast, the vision that rose out of *Waging Peace* and the discussion around it opened up possibilities of peaceful coexistence and celebration of difference.

Following the film and discussion, I found my conviction to build peace through partnerships strengthened. It was not a "light" feeling, like optimism, but a realization that this work was hard, necessary and part of God's plan for creation. In response to those who put their faith in systems of exclusion and division, I remember CPT's vision statement—"Building partnerships to transform violence and oppression"—and commit to this process.

**PETER HARENAPE, TORONTO**



## ✉ Teaching—not DNA—the reason for Mennonite worship practices

RE: “INTIMATE WORSHIP part of Mennonite DNA” letter, June 11, page 8.

Metaphors have the habit, if repeated often enough, of being confused with reality. The “it’s part of our

DNA” metaphor has been introduced to explain the intimate form of worship associated with most Mennonite congregations. I have no problem with this as long as everyone understands that it is only a metaphor. But Richard Penner takes it a step further and states it as a truth.

This cannot be so. Let me explain:

## OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Where goes the neighbourhood?

PHIL WAGLER

“Howdy ho, neighbour!” were the famous words of Wilson on that 90’s sitcom, *Home Improvement*.

“Hi dilly ho neighbourinos!” That’s what Ned Flanders happily blurts to Homer in *The Simpsons*.

“When I got married, I didn’t just get a husband, I got the whole freak show that set up their tent across the street.” Those are the frustrated words of Debra Barone about her in-law neighbours on *Everybody Loves Raymond*.

Television loves to portray the highs and lows of the neighbourhood, painting the optimistic picture that, at the end of the day, neighbourliness wins out. Our family has lived in different parts of Canada—in villages, towns and cities—and we’ve always been able to say we have had good neighbours. At the same time, it is also true that we have known surprisingly few of them well. There’s always been that over-the-fence Wilson-esque “howdy ho!” that gives the appearance of neighbourliness while denying its power.

The statistics reveal that being a neighbour is increasingly necessary. The Vancouver Foundation surveyed almost four thousand “Lotuslanders” and discovered that in one of the most densely

populated and diverse cities in Canada, one in four people find it difficult to make friends and one in three categorize their lives as lonely.

The stats may be different where you live, but the study should cause us to reconsider our TV-shaped assumptions. Truth is, most of us view neighbourliness on reruns while rarely engaging in neighbourliness in the raw . . . because it’s too uncomfortable.

The survey also found that most respondents knew only two neighbours by name. Most did not do simple favours for their neighbours and few visited their



*The Scriptures repeatedly call the one who knows God to more than “howdy ho” neighbourliness.*

homes or invited them over.

On the disturbing side, roughly 30 percent rated Middle Eastern, South Asian and Asian immigrants as the least desirable neighbours; almost two-thirds did not have close friends from another ethnic group, and 65 percent preferred spending time with people who are like them.

None of this should really shock us. It smells familiar. However, if we’re Christians, it should be different.

Nikolai Berdyaev said, “Bread for

myself is a material question. Bread for my neighbor is a spiritual one.” The Scriptures repeatedly call the one who knows God to more than “howdy ho” neighbourliness.

Jesus speaks, “If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect” (Matthew 5:46-48).

The call to love the neighbour, even our enemy, is a call to reflect the perfection of God. The neighbourhood is to be more holy, complete and whole because the disciples of Jesus reside there.

To the lawyer asking, “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). The one you wouldn’t want in your neighbourhood becomes the one most neighbourly. “Go and do likewise.”

In the end, Jesus doesn’t really answer the lawyer’s cross-examination. He simply flips the question on its head: “What kind of neighbour are you?” And that remains a very good question.

*Phil Wagler (phil\_wagler@yahoo) is a pastor in Surrey, B.C., a city growing by a thousand new neighbours each month. He and his church have a lot of holy to practise. He is also a commentator on MennoMedia’s Shaping Families and the author of Kingdom Culture.*

1. **DNA, IN** solid form, is a crystal molecule containing the elements carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and phosphorus, and is of interest to no one except perhaps a first-year physical chemistry student.

2. **PUT DNA** in the aquatic environment of a cell with its assorted organelles and enzymes, and it becomes the most interesting molecule because its sequence of nitrogen bases provides coded information. This coded information is used to manufacture RNA, which, in turn, is used to manufacture proteins that are essential for the structure and functioning of the cell and the organism.

3. **NOTE THAT** the flow of information is always from DNA to RNA to protein. The reverse flow of information has been rarely documented, and only in microorganisms. Trying to introduce the flow of cultural information to DNA presents even greater problems, especially in a timeframe of less than 500 years.

4. **SURELY, THE** norms announced by Moses and Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, are the products of reason. Once adopted and interpreted, these norms become part of a cultural tradition—such as the Anabaptist—that can only be transmitted from one generation to the next by teaching.

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# Pondering covenant

HENRY KLIEWER

**D**ecline easily gives rise to lament and worry. Is there an alternative? Perhaps this is the time to consider exploring renewal of our covenant with God.

At a recent Mennonite Church Manitoba staff meeting, Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service ministries, began his opening devotional with the words: “I love my [Mennonite] church.”

He had just returned from Chiara House, where he had been helping alongside others of “my church” to clean up the mess left by an arsonist’s fire. Chiara House is a project of MC Manitoba and Little Flowers Church in downtown Winnipeg, creating housing for those with residency difficulties.

“Not everything about the church is nice,” he said. “But these are my people, my covenant community. I love my church.”



All of us staff were moved by the simplicity of the statement and the quiet conviction with which it was said.

It was a moment for all of us to do our own soul searching. Not everything was going smoothly with summer camp preparations, with many vacancies yet to be filled. Not everything was heavenly in

the church leadership department, with pastor vacancies, church conflicts and other matters to be dealt with. But in the end, I suspect that not one of us would have uttered anything different than Voth in saying, “I love my church.”

“I love my church.” In reflecting on that devotional, I wondered where the ability to make that statement came from. I couldn’t help but think of God inviting people into covenant over and over as an expression of his unending love: *“I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

### **Biblical foundations**

Covenant begins and ends with God. God calls people out of slavery and into covenant using stone tablets (Exodus 19-20). God is faithful when people are not.

*I suspect that not one of us would have uttered anything different than Voth in saying, ‘I love my church.’*

Renewal of covenant happens repeatedly through God’s grace and forgiveness. Jesus fulfills Jeremiah’s prophecy of a new covenant of the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34) by inviting into covenant all that would follow him as his disciples: *“Abide in me, and I will abide in you”* (John 15.4).

The resulting covenant

community—throughout the generations—is invited to renew broken covenant by worship and communion, *“the new covenant in my blood.”* One day faithfulness to covenant will result in God’s face-to-face fellowship with all who responded to his invitation to be in covenant with him.

### **What gives us hope?**

One author, reflecting on Menno Simons, indicated, “When we renew our baptismal vow, all other vows have a way of falling into place.” As baptism is the individual’s submission to Christ and his body, so the Lord’s Supper is renewal of the covenant community with the head of the church: a reminder of the *“new covenant in my blood.”* Hence, the call to covenant renewal involves both the baptized individual and the church communally.

Pondering covenant making, breaking and renewing is leading me to a

deepening personal journey of covenant relationship with Christ, but also lovingly inviting our MC Manitoba community and beyond to consider doing the same.

*Henry Kliewer is Mennonite Church Manitoba’s director of Leadership Ministries.*

To conclude: If one wants an account of how Anabaptist/Mennonite beliefs and practices are passed on, and become part of tradition, disciplines such as education, psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology will provide better and more fruitful explanations. Reference to DNA need not be part of the explanation.

EDWARD BERGEN, TORONTO

## ✉ Becoming the men 'we might become'

WHEN DOUG KLASSEN, author of "Shifting male roles," May 28, page 4, was pastor-in-residence at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg, I was teaching a unit on "Men and masculinities" in a course called "Gender and politics." From the conversations that Klassen was leading, students brought questions into dialogue with the materials we were considering in class.

Reflecting on such challenges is precisely what takes place at universities such as CMU, where we are learning together—men and women, youths, adults and elders—not only what we might do, but also who we might become.

I found that students in my course were challenged by more and more complex images of contemporary masculinity. The types of men most in our view were neither the overweight bumbling buffoon nor the over-muscled fighter/warrior that Klassen identified from popular culture.

Instead, we considered Ryan Bingham in the 2009 film *Up in the Air*, among others. Played by George Clooney, Bingham is a handsome, highly successful professional. He flies a half-million kilometres a year,

trades on his elite status, lives out of a suitcase, and fires people on behalf of their employers. This image of success values egocentrism, conditional loyalties and a diminished sense of responsibility to others, as well as hedonism, individualism and competition.

Bingham is successful in terms of financial wealth, status and career competence, and yet is isolated, almost completely cut off from human connection. This is the crux of 21st-century gender roles for men and for women. How might financial security and meaningful relationships be integrated? Our thinking and conversation need to include images of the work-lives that can embrace and integrate material wealth and relationships.

I want to affirm the importance of the challenging issues that Klassen raises in his article for the men we are, the men we love, and the men-yet-to-be whom we wish to encourage. Many images and role models in popular culture remain so dominant as to be almost invisible, making them hard to scrutinize and question. It is harder still to present alternatives.

Doug helpfully points to multiple models for the many ways in which it is possible to "be a man." However, without models of work and livelihoods linked to gender roles and relationships, biblical examples will not be as helpful as they might be. To see Paul or David or Elijah as alternatives to "successes" such as Bingham, we need to see how they model material success and sustainable work, as well as living in connection with others. We need to see how Jesus exemplifies work that provides sustenance as well as builds meaningful relationships.

JON SEARS, WINNIPEG

*Jon Sears teaches at Menno Simons College and Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.*

## Pontius' Puddle





PHOTO BY HELEN FEDERAU



*In the kitchen of Douglas Mennonite Church, Helping Hands members Maria Neufeld, left, Maria Loewen, Katharina Bergen, Anna Kroeker and Ruth Vogt prepare platz for a Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale in Winnipeg.*

## VIEWPOINT

# Legacy of a holy hostess

BY CARL DEGURSE

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

If ever a holy hostess invites you to *faspa* (a light meal), jump at the chance.

She will bring out the good china because you're worth it. And she will have baked, of course. No store-bought mixes for a valued guest like you. You will be doted on with lavish personal attention such as abundant smiles and gentle touches on your hand or shoulder.

You will think she's a great conversationalist, but if you observe more closely, you will note it's you who are talking the most, primed by her perceptive questions. She will skilfully steer the conversation to topics that interest you, such as yourself, and she will listen with full attention.

You will leave her home feeling more interesting and important than you actually are, which is her take-away gift to you.

White-haired now, these gracious ladies have coddled our congregations for more than a half-century with hospitality that is considered old-fashioned

today. They have graced our church families with countless casseroles from their ovens; with greeting cards penned in cursive; with flowers grown in their gardens and quilts stitched by hand; and with prayers, lots of prayers.

They are the kind faces behind pot-lucks, bake sales, teas and other food-based events that structure the social side of church life. They also visit the sick, settle immigrants, find furniture for the poor, help young mothers with their newborns and advise pastors on who needs a visit. They notice when you wear a new outfit to Sunday service.

In many churches, holy hostesses are an endangered species. Their energy is waning and it's time to finally untie their aprons and rest. Unfortunately, not all church members will immediately appreciate the full extent of the loss. Too many of us take them for granted.

The people who usually get attention in our churches are the eloquent orators, the gifted singers, the complainers

and loud people with bold personalities. These categories seldom include any holy hostesses; they're not in the spotlight, they're in the church kitchen doing our dishes.

The level of hospitality honed by these church ladies is perhaps only possible because most did not have full-time careers outside the home. They came of age before gender roles were blurred by feminism. Serving got a bad name during the angst of women's liberation and many women rebelled against being servile, a rebellion that was overdue in many ways. The unfortunate aspect, though, was that some people also became liberated from unselfishness.

Some holy hostesses took jobs when their families needed money, and many taught Sunday school and volunteered at Mennonite Central Committee thrift shops and Ten Thousand Villages outlets, but their priorities were God, family and friends. The time they devoted to their families and their churches was a luxury that is rare in 2012, a harried age of double-income or single-parent families.

It would be a mistake to assume that, because the gracious ladies keep so busy, they believe in a works righteousness. The truth is, many have both a Martha side and a Mary side (Luke 10:38-42). Many women of their generation seem commendably dedicated to Bible study, prayer and a loyal circle of church sisters. Such spiritual disciplines can foster a contemplative outlook and infuse their every action with God. That prayer shawl she sewed? You may have thought it was a gift to you, but actually she sewed every stitch prayerfully as a gift to God.

It's rare to encounter people who have developed godly graciousness into a fine art. So when this bedrock of benevolence is gone, our churches will be colder places. ❧

*Carl DeGurse lives in Winnipeg and is a member of Douglas Mennonite Church, where a group of gracious ladies called The Helping Hands recently disbanded after more than 40 years of church service. To no one's surprise, they continue to help serve church lunches even though they have officially retired.*

## THE WAR OF 1812: PART II OF III

## On the margins

BY JONATHAN SEILING

The previous article, “Landscapes of war, a people of peace,” June 25, page 12, noted the challenge of identifying “the Mennonite experience” in the War of 1812, and the fact that the war was significant as the first testing of conscientious objection in Canada. But how diverse were those experiences, and did Mennonites in 1812 pass the test?

Short answer: Some did, some didn’t. Mennonite history is full of such examples of voluntary enlistment, especially in North America. Unfortunately, it is still difficult to assess to what degree “resistant” Mennonites—those listed in militia roles—were excluded from the church. Some joined other faith traditions, some remained, and, based on inter-marriage with other Mennonites, appear to have been accepted as Mennonites.

Mennonites officially claimed the Dordrecht Confession as their statement of faith (English translation printed in Upper Canada, 1811). However, doctrinal and ethical norms were far from stable, possibly due in part to the influences from such other religious movements as Methodists, Baptists, United Brethren, Brethren in Christ and Quakers. Some of these Christians officially shared a commitment to nonresistance.

The challenge of identifying which Mennonites failed to remain nonresistant is about equal to the challenge of knowing who were the “official” Mennonites in that era. Membership records do not exist for that era and genealogical data or census records are presumptuous substitutes at best. Migrations to the three main regions—Niagara, Markham and Waterloo—happened gradually and ministerial leadership generally followed settlements, not the other way around.

**Waterloo Region**

The War of 1812 never reached the Waterloo settlement, although after the

autumn of 1813 Waterloo was threatened by the marauding invaders pillaging homes in the Western District of Upper Canada and further east. Beginning with the American conquest of Lake Erie in the summer of 1813, and the advance of troops from Detroit up the Thames River, the British/native forces began to retreat.

Waterloo Mennonites, and at least one more from the Hamilton settlement, were conscripted to haul supplies toward Detroit, and to help evacuate the forts and the approximately 7,500 British and native people stationed in the Western District.

Prior to this transport operation, some Mennonites resisted complying with officers who could legally requisition their boats, wagons, sleighs and men to drive them for the journey that lasted several weeks. One conniving Mennonite, Cornelius Pannebecker, removed the wheels of his wagon and actually convinced the officer it was broken! Elizabeth (Gabel) Bechtel stood up to an officer at sword-point, who threatened her life until she finally showed him where she was hiding the team of oxen.

At the Battle of Moraviantown on Oct. 13, 1813, the group of Mennonite men accompanying the transport operation fled for their lives, leaving at least 14 wagons behind, which they would never see again. The collective loss of those wagons and the exorbitant wartime prices required to replace them were massive burdens for the Waterloo community. Their efforts to gain compensation from the government continued for more than a decade, and they only received a fraction of their original value.

One Mennonite living at Long Point, John Troyer, claimed as a doctor to have treated wounded soldiers. His claim for compensation was flatly rejected.

**The North York settlements**

Although most of the Markham community, including Vaughan and

Stouffville, would never experience the same proximity to live warfare as either the Waterloo settlement or Mennonites throughout the Niagara Region, their losses were noteworthy as well.

Some of them complied with the authorities, as Mennonites did elsewhere, but several were sentenced in district court and fined for their refusal to provide teams of horses, wagons or sleighs, among other items. Such resistance to the demands of the colonial government was surely related to their practice of non-resistance, but there were other factors.

Like Mennonites elsewhere, they lived amid a general population that also refused to support the war for various reasons. Noncompliance by some Upper Canadians arose from a complex range of motivations, not the least of which included a desire for a democratic republic over their continued servility under a Crown dominion.

Settlers in the Markham and Waterloo areas, although marginal to the conflict, struggled to uphold their hopes for a peaceful life while adjusting to the demands of the new frontier, its governing authorities and their faith tradition.

**Niagara Region**

The settlements in Niagara were older, more established and closer to the colonial administrative and key industrial centres. The presence of Mennonites in the various Niagara settlements today represent a small fraction of their original size compared to their proportion in 1812.

Relative to the District of Niagara, the Mennonite settlements in Waterloo and Markham have endured the test of time; yet we might note that the war spared their homes and livelihoods, for the most part. That was not the case in Niagara.

The third article of this series will focus on the details of the Niagara Mennonites’ experiences in the war, including Rainham, Port Colborne, Vineland-Jordan and Willoughby-Bertie (around Fort Erie), and Hamilton, and a possible relationship between the level of suffering during the war and Mennonite settlement patterns over the long term. ❧

**WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER  
IN FAITH**

## Showers of blessing

BY ESTHER NIKKEL

Summer is such a wondrous time. It feels like some kind of a miracle every year after we've endured winter, especially in Manitoba! So it's not surprising that this magical season of tiny seedlings gingerly peeking through the soil, of buds bursting with new life, and of stems heavy with new blossoms, is chosen by many couples as the perfect time to take that all-important step of marriage. Two shall become one: another miracle and mystery, this time of the human experience.

Coming from a large family, I have been witness to many of my nieces and nephews taking this holy step. My fortunate task has been to write a blessing for the couple to be read together by the guests at the bridal shower.

Following is a blessing given recently. While written specifically for a treasured family member, my



PHOTO BY JO DUECK



*Jane Heinrichs of Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Man., married Mark Rutherford at Bishopswood Anglican Church, Hereford, England, on Oct. 16, 2010. The couple currently live in Capetown, South Africa.*

hope is that it will reach beyond its original intent, to bless others in the way that only blessings can, in an ever-widening circle of love. Not because of the words spoken, but because of the Giver of the blessing, the One moving behind the scenes, that One who comes in unanticipated ways, surprising, sometimes stunning us with generosity.

My thoughts are especially with those who will take this significant step of marriage this summer. May you experience many "showers of blessing," created and written personally by family and friends offering their love and support as you begin your life together.

### **Blessing for Naomi Margaret Ann**

We have come together to bless you,

Naomi Margaret Ann,  
those present and all the women of the family:

Your mother Ann and your grandmothers:

Annie, who is still with us,

and your other namesake, Margaret,

that good woman who has gone before us to the other side and blesses still.

All of us join in blessing you.

We bless you in this important life transition  
of your marriage.

May this time of preparation be a time of peace.

May it be a time of listening to the still, small voice,  
as well as a time for spontaneous exuberance.

May your relationship be blessed with joy  
and your home be a place of peace and contentment  
as well as a place of joyous celebration.

As you weave an intricate pattern from the sometimes  
complex strands of your two lives,  
may all the threads find a welcome place.

We are aware of God's hand in leading you both  
to this day,

and we know that our very breath comes from  
the Creator's hand,

and so with gratitude we commit your path,  
and all of our paths, to the grace of God.

Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy.

May the Lord bless and keep you.

May the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and give you peace. Amen. ☩



*Esther Nikkel of Selkirk, Man., is a retired marriage and family therapist. She and her husband, Herb Heppner, attend Aberdeen Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, where she is active in music and occasional preaching.*



## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Bigham**—Hazel Jean (b. June 1, 2012), to Daniel and Meredith Bigham, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.  
**Hunter**—Chance Ryan (b. April 23, 2012), to Amanda and Tee Hunter, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.  
**Klassen**—Kendal Elyse (b. May 28, 2012), to Justin and Martha Klassen, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.  
**Roen**—Lincoln Narve and Kade Jacob (b. April 11, 2012), to Sharla and Ryan Roen, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.  
**VanderBurgh**—Daniel Robert Hugh (b. May 31, 2012), to Ian VanderBurgh and Carolyn Neumann VanderBurgh, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Tina Neufeld, Rebecca Tiessen**—Crystal City Mennonite, Man., May 27, 2012.  
**Lydia Epp, Nicole Kasdorf, Alexa Thiessen**—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 3, 2012.  
**Lindsey Banman, Jackie Koop, Ryan Penner, Dan Travers**—Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man., June 10, 2012.  
**Taresai Ngangura, Katrina Wagner, Charlotte Unger, Chris Warkentin, Shane Klassen, Brenna Epp, Olivia Dean**—Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 27, 2012.  
**Edwine Lwamba**—Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 17, 2012.  
**Lucas Bauman, Hannah Bender, Sarah Brubacher, Madeline Weber**—St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., June 10, 2012.  
**Karl Klassen, Todd Metzger, Melissa Metzger**—St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., June 17, 2012.  
**Sarah Hunsberger, Amanda Plumtree, Jeremy Plumtree, Naomi Turner**—Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., May 6, 2012.  
**Lisa Cressman, Maxine Koehler, MegAnne Koehler, Michael Pavey, Colin Shantz, Rebekah Winter**—Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., June 10, 2012.  
**Alyssa Hildebrand, Alex Tiessen**—Trinity Mennonite, Mather, Man., May 27, 2012.  
**Whitley Enns, Aaron Epp, Nicholas Pauls**—Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., May 27, 2012.

### Marriages

**Beam/Montgomery**—Karri Beam and Aaron Montgomery, at Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., June 2, 2012.  
**Brubacher/Mellinger**—Joel Brubacher (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.) and Catherine Mellinger, at Steckle Heritage Farm, Kitchener, Ont., June 16, 2012.

**Epp/Jordon**—Wes Epp and Jodi Jordon, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 16, 2012.

**Harms/Penner**—Bryson Harms and Whitney Penner, at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 16, 2012.

**Horst/McDonald**—William Horst (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.) and Anne McDonald, at Walper Terrace Hotel, Kitchener, Ont., June 3, 2012.

**Kasdorf/Neufeld**—Brianna Kasdorf and Jason Neufeld, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, at Springfield Heights, Winnipeg, June 9, 2012.

**Lauzon/Shantz**—Steven Lauzon and Julie Shantz (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.), at St. Michael's Catholic, Waterloo, Ont., June 23, 2012.

**Penner/Rech**—Stefan Penner and Samantha Rech, at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 26, 2012.

### Deaths

**Boldt**—Anne (nee Enns), 93 (b. June 22, 1918; d. June 14, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Friesen**—Sara, 88 (b. Oct. 16, 1923; d. May 21, 2012), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Lichty**—Gord, 67 (b. Sept. 4, 1944; d. May 6, 2012), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Jacob, 89 (b. Jan. 23, 1923; d. June 16, 2012), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

**Nickel**—Irma, 100 (b. Sept. 14, 1911; d. June 7, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Roen**—Lincoln Narve, 7 weeks (b. April 11, 2012; d. June 1, 2012), Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

**Toews**—Jacob, 94 (b. April 19, 1918; d. May 28, 2012), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Walter**—Theodore Robert (Ted), 83 (b. Sept. 20, 1928; d. June 15, 2012), Kelowna First Mennonite, B.C.

**Welykochy**—Ed, 76 (b. Feb. 13, 1936; d. May 18, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Yantzi**—Vera, 88 (b. Oct. 25, 1923; d. May 8, 2012), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

### Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

*announcements within four months of the event.*

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

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



*Architect's rendering of Canadian Mennonite University's new library and learning commons, and pedestrian bridge.*

## CMU announces \$11-million capital project

*New library and learning commons, pedestrian bridge planned for Shaftesbury campus*

Canadian Mennonite University  
WINNIPEG

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) has made public its plans for a major new capital project that will significantly enhance CMU's infrastructure for delivering quality post-secondary education. This important new campus asset will also serve as a valuable resource to the broader Manitoba community.

"Building the new CMU Library and Learning Commons, along with a pedestrian bridge linking both sides of CMU's Shaftesbury campus, are key next steps in building a CMU for the future," says Elmer

Hildebrand, fundraising campaign chair for the capital project and chief executive officer of Golden West Radio.

"CMU is grateful for the dedicated and effective fundraising leadership of the campaign executive of 'Connect: The campaign for CMU,'" says president Gerald Gerbrandt. "We're looking forward to our public campaign in the coming months and sharing further announcements from our campaign team."

The library and learning commons will provide:

- **STUDY CARRELS**, worktables and lounge seating in an attractive setting, stimulating students to connect with ideas and thinkers from around the world.
- **SMALL GROUP** rooms that will invite students to work together in teams at important questions and issues.
- **NEW COMPUTER**, wireless and peripheral technologies that will support study, research, and collaboration.
- **A SEMINAR** room to enable small classes to meet in proximity to necessary library resources.
- **SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED** space, with natural light and controlled temperature and humidity, to allow for future expansion and growth.
- **A PROMINENT** and welcoming entrance and gathering area to invite students and the general public to make use of its resources.
- **A BOOK** store and resource centre with the most extensive selection of theological resources anywhere in the province.

• **AN INVITING** café to welcome students, faculty, staff and members of the community to gather and discuss the issues of the day.

The pedestrian bridge will link the two sides of CMU's campus currently partitioned by a busy thoroughfare, thus providing a safe, accessible route across Grant Avenue. It will also signal the presence of

CMU in the community, serving as a symbol for an institution that connects people with ideas and each other over issues that matter.

The campaign executive has been actively fundraising in support of the project and expects to publicly launch the Connect campaign within the year. CMU anticipates beginning construction on the new facility and bridge in 2013. ☘

## New crematorium to lift burden

By WIL LAVEIST

Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Mission Network

When Borabu's first Christian crematorium is finished, it will finally bring peace of mind to members of Living Water Church in this region of Thailand who have been concerned about how they will honour their loved ones who pass away.

Christians in Thailand, a majority Buddhist nation where cremation is the preferred method of honouring the dead, have had to use Buddhist crematoriums for services. With financial help from Mennonite Church Canada and Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb., the crematorium, located on the grounds of Living Water Church, will enable Christians there to perform those ceremonies for fellow Christians.

Not having a crematorium at the church has prevented believers from performing Christian funeral ceremonies, and may even repel potential converts, says Pat Houmphan, whose wife Rad is a mission worker jointly supported by MC Canada and MC U.S.A.'s Mennonite Mission Network. Pat was also supported by both agencies until recently, when he resigned to focus on a new business and ministry initiative in the area. He continues to work closely with Living Water Church.

"If you want to become a Christian, then you get threats and mocking that 'you won't be allowed to use our [Buddhist] crematorium,'" Houmphan says. "Maybe this is a silly issue for the westerner to understand, but it has a psychological impact when they hear that. It discourages them from

wanting to become Christians."

Houmphan says that several years ago a woman who was a member of Living Water Church made it clear that upon her death she wanted a Christian service. However, her relative had to take her body to a crematorium at a Buddhist temple because the church lacked one. "We didn't have a chance to do a Christian service in our church," he explains. "We were able to do a very limited service in her village."

Building of the crematorium began in February and was finished in June, according to Houmphan. The final stages involve the construction of a wall with individual compartments where urns can be placed. There will also be an area where loved ones can leave flowers.

Living Water Church contributed about 25 percent of the costs and the majority of the labour, but financial and labour support from Mennonites in North America was essential, Houmphan says. The Living Water Church council will oversee the crematorium's operations, which will be available to non-Christians as well.

"We also want to use it for witnessing," he says. "In the village where we are, they don't have a Buddhist temple. We want them to know that they can use our crematorium without problems. We want to show love and care, and that we respect the Buddhist faith. We want to have friends and have harmony in the community." ☘

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIVING WATER CHURCH



*The construction of the crematorium at Living Water Church, Borabu, Thailand, began in February and was finished in June.*



## CHURCH ANNIVERSARY



*Charleen Jongejan Harder, standing left, current co-pastor of Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, Ont., chairs a panel of past and present pastors at the church's 50th-anniversary celebrations on June 9. Seated from left to right: former pastors Ralph Lebold, Glen Horst, Millard Osborne, Mary Burkholder and Harold Peters-Fransen, and current co-pastor Kendall Jongejan Harder.*

# God continues to work in the city

*Valleview Mennonite celebrates half-century of service, worship*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
LONDON, ONT.

Valleyview Mennonite Church can trace its roots back to the middle of the last century, when Wilfred Schlegel led a group of Amish Mennonites from Waterloo Region to plant hectares of rented land in wheat in the fall of 1949 in order to provide funds for the purchase of facilities necessary to serve and house homeless men in London to the southwest.

Through the work of a summer day camp program and a winter Sunday school, the Goodwill Rescue Mission—later, the London Mission—soon spawned a worshipping group named King Street Mennonite Church under the leadership of Alvin Roth.

By 1960, the work of leading the mission and the congregation was too much for one man, and the congregation looked for a pastor. It found one in Ralph Lebold, one of the first Amish Mennonite leaders to get a higher education. Under Lebold's leadership, the church moved from the centre of London to the north end, buying

a number of lots in a new subdivision. Renamed Valleyview, the church had a sense of mission as well: to reach out into its neighbourhood, which it has done for the past 50 years.

A key part of Valleyview's mission has been sponsoring up to three pastoral interns a year. A supervised pastoral education program linked with local hospitals and service agencies was the first taste of practical work for many young Mennonite pastors.

The congregation also supported a Voluntary Service (VS) unit for many years, giving Mennonite young adults a taste of city life and service through the tumultuous 1960s.

The mission to the community continued as Valleyview shared its building with the Korean Vision Mennonite Church until it closed, and continues to share its space with Agape Fellowship, ministering together with Agape to low-income residents of London. The congregation has

also sponsored many refugees through the years.

At the celebration of Valleyview's 50 years on the weekend of June 9 and 10, many former VSers and pastoral interns returned to worship, celebrate and laugh together. A panel of seven past and present pastors told stories of the congregation over the years.

Glen Horst remembered a particular service prepared by a pastoral intern that was designed to help worshippers feel the chaos of living on the margins of society. That service included random readings, three music groups competing for attention, people carrying dolls to garbage cans at the front of the sanctuary, and Horst crossing each doll as it was tossed into the garbage. While too much for some, many in the congregation participated fully.

The weekend celebration was blessed by the music of both the Valleyview Male Chorus and congregation member Derek Martin, who composed a new song based on Micah 6:8 for the weekend.

Former congregational chair Eleanor Good noted that the Micah 6:8 passage—*"God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"*—has long been a theme in the congregation, but that it is at a point where congregants need to *"re-image how [they] do church . . . get past the comfort of old ways."* ❧

## CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

# Trusting God into the future

*Hagerman Mennonite celebrates 75th anniversary*

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOANNA REESOR-McDOWELL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

MARKHAM, ONT.

A large group of past and present members gathered at Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham on June 10 to remember the vision of earlier leaders, to tell stories of lives that have been touched, and to celebrate God's faithfulness throughout three-quarters of a century of change. The special service ended with a litany prepared with input from current youth and congregational leaders that articulated dreams for the church and focused on trusting God into the future.

Floyd and Lillian Schmucker, with their family of nine children, were the driving force behind establishing a community-oriented church in a small hamlet called Hagerman's Corners. The congregation was formally established in 1937, with 16 charter members. While some support was given by the Mennonite Mission Board, Schmucker worked full-time at other jobs to support his family while doing church ministry. The earliest outreach efforts focused on providing Sunday school and Vacation Bible School for the many children in the neighbourhood.

Emerson McDowell came to pastor at Hagerman in 1965 with his wife Elsie and their five children. Boys and girls clubs, Christian camping and other programs for youths—both in the church and from the neighbourhood—were a focus during those years.

Nancy Dolphin Marshall, one of the local teens at that time, came to the anniversary celebration and spoke about how the church was a "safe haven" and "changed her life."

By the 1980s, Hagerman's Corners was experiencing massive change. It became part of an urban community bordering the City of Toronto with many immigrants, particularly from Asia. When Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church asked to use Hagerman's facilities as a basis to do

outreach to the new immigrants in 1990, Hagerman voted unanimously to share its space. By 1993, Markham Chinese Mennonite Church was established.

Demographic shifts were affecting the church in other ways during the same period. Property values were rising, along with massive new development and higher-density living. This had the effect of encouraging young couples and retirees to buy homes to the north of Toronto.

Many purchased homes in the Stouffville area. By 1995, there were a significant number of Hagerman members with a vision to start a new church in that community. After a challenging but healthy process of listening to each other, it was clear that there were

two distinct but equally valid visions:

- **START A** new Mennonite congregation in Stouffville; and
- **RENEW THE** congregation at Hagerman to adapt to a multicultural and urban environment.

Both groups agreed to bless the other's vision and Community Mennonite Church of Stouffville was established in 1996.

Hagerman nurtured the start of another new congregation in 2005, when space was provided to the Markham Christian Worship Centre, the first Tamil-speaking Mennonite congregation in Canada.

Four pastors who served Hagerman between 1976 and 2010 were present and spoke at the anniversary celebration: Maurice Martin, David Martin, Gord Alton and Jonathan Emerson-Pierce. Gerald Good, who also served during that time, sent greetings that were read in the service. Current co-pastors Lydia and Gary Harder are serving on an interim basis. ☸



*From left to right, former pastors Gord Alton, Maurice Martin, David Martin and Jonathan Emerson-Pierce join current co-pastors Lydia and Gary Harder at Hagerman Mennonite Church's 75th anniversary celebration on June 10.*





Former Mennonite/Brethren in Christ Resource Centre directors Anne Brubacher, left, Christine Derstine (the last director), Eleanor Snyder and Laureen Harder-Gissing stand in front of some of the centre's obsolete equipment and materials at the May 15 closing of the centre.

## Changing technology forces closure of resource centre

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**T**hirty one years ago, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario and the Inter-Mennonite Conference, which later became Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, saw a growing need for audio-visual materials for their congregations.

In the early 1980s, 16mm films, slide shows, film strips and tape recordings were the cutting edge of technology. Now the machines that ran them are so much “e-waste” and technologies that arose later—remember VHS cassettes and recorders?—are following them into the recycling bins.

The Mennonite/Brethren in Christ Resource Centre, housed at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, closed its doors on May 31, transferring what was still useful—its collection of DVDs—to the MC Canada Resource Centre in Winnipeg, with the agreement of MC Eastern Canada, the Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the Canadian

Conference of the Brethren in Christ.

At a closing celebration/wake on May 15, four of the directors were present, with Anne Brubacher, the first director, giving a history of the centre. At first, it was only a repository for materials deposited by conferences and congregations. But with incorporation as a separate entity in 1992, materials were acquired directly by the centre.

Some materials were not acquired. The resource centre decided not to distribute *O Canada, Our Home and Native Land* until a study guide was produced, and so it never made it into the catalogue.

The *Cotton Patch Parables* by Clarence Jordan was previewed by the centre’s board, which decided not to purchase it, Brubacher said, since “indirectly it raised issues of what is offensive and what is acceptable. Regarding this video, we agreed that this particular presentation took too

many liberties with Scripture and the identity of Christ for us to recommend purchase of it.” Callers requesting the material were unofficially put in contact with a couple of people who owned their own copy of the videotape.

Neither *The Gay Issue* nor *Body of Dissent*—the former taking a pro-homosexual stance and the latter, from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, which disapproved—were acquired. There was a sense that the resource centre needed to provide material on both sides of the issue, but some supporting churches threatened to withdraw support from the centre if the supportive material was made available.

Already in 1998, questions were being asked about the future of the centre, as use was declining. With the advent of direct streaming by some schools and denominations, the rise of the use of YouTube, and the timing of MCC Ontario’s new building program, it was decided to close the resource centre and transfer relevant materials to Winnipeg.

Lisa Carr-Pries of MC Canada’s Christian Formation Council was on hand on May 15 to receive the materials and thank the supporting bodies for their vision for Christian formation. ☸



# God at work in the Church

Mennonite Central Committee Ontario PHOTO



*Health, educational and social workers from across southwestern Ontario examine materials to aid them in their work with Low German Mennonites from Latin America at the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario-sponsored Low German Networking Conference in Aylmer on June 11. The 15th annual conference attracted nearly 300 participants who explored how, why and where the Low German Mennonite journey began and what these beginnings mean for the journey today. Pastor Bill Wiebe's keynote address, "The shaping of colony perspective," helped participants to learn about the Low German Mennonites from Latin America's perspectives.*

SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP PHOTO



*Nearly 70 paddlers enjoyed calm waters and warm weather on May 14 for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp's third annual Paddle the Grand fundraising event. Through collecting pledges, paddlers raised more than \$21,000, which will be used for staff wages, food, equipment and property maintenance for the summer program. Dave Erb, Silver Lake's executive director, says, 'Paddle the Grand has quickly become a favourite family event for many people connected with Silver Lake: campers, parents, grandparents, volunteers and staff. It serves as a great way for friends of Silver Lake to stay connected away from the physical camp property while raising funds for our camp ministry.'*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## COVER STORY

# The world comes to the farm

BY ELSIE M. EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
SPRINGSTEIN, MAN.

Most often people think of crops from our prairie farms going abroad to feed the world. So it was a bit of a shift on June 15, when 20 women and 15 children representing 10 different countries of the world boarded a school bus in Winnipeg to visit one of these farms in Springstein.

The group consisted of an English-as-an-additional-language class that meets together four mornings a week at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. On this particular outing, the “world citizens” came from Argentina, Israel, Egypt, Somalia, Eritrea, Iran, Afghanistan, India, South Korea, China and Russia. They were accompanied by two teachers, six volunteers and three child-minders. The field trip was organized by Reynold Friesen, associate pastor/community minister at Bethel Mennonite.

The farm visited was 4-D Farms, which is owned and operated by Gerald and Susan Dyck and their son Eric and his wife Sandra. As the third and fourth generations of Dycks on this land, they have expanded the 100-hectare farm tenfold, and diversified to include mixed grains, forage crops, leaf cutter bees, laying hens and a few broilers. This was no virtual tour, but a hands-on encounter with the sights, sounds and smells of a real farm. For most, it was a first-time experience.

The students readily entered the chicken barn to see the hens up close, to pick up an egg or two, and to hear the sound of the automated feeders. In the shop, they passed around plastic bags of grain samples and even cocoons of bees. Eric was faced with the challenge of explaining—in the most basic English words—the workings of an air seeder and sprayer. The shiny, green combine proved to be the perfect backdrop for numerous group pictures, while the most adventurous climbed up into the cab for a better view and more

pictures. Walking into a field to survey a crop of oats and to gaze toward the distant horizon probably came as close as possible to capturing the pulse of the farming experience.

Gerald said he was so pleased for this opportunity to share about farming,

identifying with the guests while briefly recounting how his ancestors had been newcomers to this country, too. He made a point of telling this group of women that, at 4-D Farms, the women are by far the best at operating the combines at harvest time!

After gathering up the children from the play structure, some of whom were reluctant to leave, the group was served a delicious lunch at Springstein Mennonite Church. Following the meal, Friesen presented a brief overview of “Who are the Mennonites?” which raised interesting questions and comments. ☿

PHOTO BY REYNOLD FRIESEN



*Eric Dyck of 4-D Farms, Springstein, Man., explains how a combine works to a class of English-as-an-additional-language students who meet at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.*



# Meeting our indigenous neighbours

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN  
SKAWAHLLOOK FIRST NATION, B.C.

Plato once said that justice and equality are not guaranteed by law, but by friendship. This is why Mennonite Church Canada has been working on its connections with its indigenous neighbours.

This also motivates the gatherings of Christians and first nations peoples at Skawahlook First Nation that have been going on for almost five years. At the recent Journeying Together event that took place just south of Agassiz, Mennonites, Baptists, Pentecostals and many other denominations gathered to reconnect, share music, tell stories and carve a residential school healing pole.

Mennonite representatives attending the event included Darryl Klassen of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C.'s Aboriginal Neighbours program; Brander McDonald, the MC B.C. indigenous relations coordinator; and Garry Janzen, MC B.C.'s executive minister.

MC B.C. and MCC B.C. have just recently gotten involved with these meetings that take place twice a year, generally at Skawahlook.

According to McDonald, the time these Mennonite organizations are spending with Indigenous Peoples in their own communities means they are being there for their neighbours who were devastated by some misguided Christians in the past. Christians have historically apologized for

the assimilation of indigenous students through Canada's residential school system, but the first nations population has wondered, "Where are you now?" He said that some indigenous ministries from various denominations are ineffective, but the meetings that happen at Skawahlook are very different.

Journeying Together wasn't technically a church service, just a time for indigenous Christians and those who want to connect with them to talk about their faith. People at the event also participated in making small carvings into the healing pole, which Isadore Charters dreamed up and oversees. Carving the wood is a chance to build relationships, heal hurts and tell the truth, Charters said.

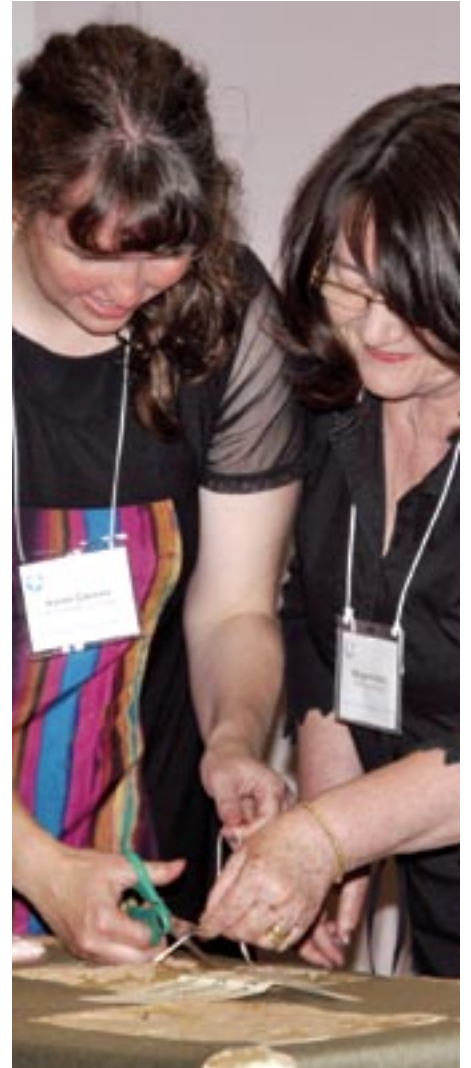
Singer-songwriter Cheryl Bear sang at the event, as did Jerry Chapman, whose sister is the Skawahlook chief.

The music, wood carving and storytelling were ways for the participants to connect spiritually in their own context.

"This is completely contextual to first nations," said McDonald. "We want to make it so MC B.C. will try to create safe, culturally relevant spaces for native Christians to gather."

MCC B.C. thrift shops provided handmade blankets for the performers to honour their participation, as it is a sign of respect to give blankets in indigenous cultures. ❧

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



**Karen Cornies, left, and Marg Nally tie knots in a comforter as symbols of their past and future service for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario at the organization's annual general meeting held June 14 at Tavistock Mennonite Church. Nally completed six years as board chair and has been replaced by Cornies. Around 200 congregational delegates came to Tavistock for a soup and sandwich dinner, music by the Tavistock Harmonica Band, worship, business, and a spell-binding story of mediation and peacemaking by Dan and Jeanne Jantzi, MCC area directors for Southeast Asia.**



*Darryl Klassen, Gary Janzen and Brander McDonald 'journey together' with their indigenous neighbours at a multicultural event at Skawahlook First Nation, B.C.*



## FOCUS ON REFUGEES

# Suspicious hospitality

*Feds reduce health coverage for refugees*

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

According to the UN, there are 10.5 million “refugees of concern” in the world. These are people uprooted from their homes, fleeing conflict, natural disaster or persecution. While roughly 25,000 of these people will be allowed to settle in Canada this year, Mennonite refugee advocates worry about recent changes to immigration policy.

Starting June 30, health services for people who come here as refugees are to be reduced. Under the pared down Interim Federal Health Program, affected groups will no longer receive dental care, vision

care, long-term care or coverage for prescription medications, except when public health is at risk. General health care will be restricted to matters of an “essential or urgent nature,” and to public health risks such as communicable diseases.

Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, said in an April release that the government’s objective is to change the immigration system “so that it meets Canada’s economic needs.” He said Canadians are “very generous,” but should not be asked to cover benefits for refugee claimants that are beyond benefits

received by most Canadians. The government hopes the changes will save \$100 million over five years.

In the last five years, Canada has accepted an average of 253,000 immigrants annually. Less than 10 percent are refugees—people forced to leave their country of citizenship. The rest are “family class” immigrants joining relatives already in Canada, or “economic class” immigrants such as skilled workers, entrepreneurs and investors.

The changes to health coverage apply primarily to the 25,000 refugees. For sponsored refugees, the sponsor—often a church—will be left to cover medical costs not eligible under the new guidelines. Unsponsored refugee claimants will have to pay for the health services themselves, if they can, or do without.

The Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, based in Kitchener, Ont., provides a range of legal, logistical and community

## Coalition celebrates 25 years of aiding refugees

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

With a swirl of skirts, the stomp of dancing shoes and the flourish of a flamenco guitar, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support celebrated its 25th anniversary with a banquet on April 21. The banquet was just part of the celebrations this spring that included an open house at the coalition’s new office space in Kitchener on May 25.

The coalition was founded in 1987 as many Latin Americans fled wars in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Many made their way to Kitchener and Waterloo just as Robert J. Suderman and his family finished a four-year term for the Commission of Overseas Missions, and moved to the area for him to work on his doctorate in New Testament studies at the Toronto School of Theology. On the Sudermans’ first Sunday at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, an El Salvadorian refugee, Luis Sandoval, attended for the first time as well.

Olive Branch Mennonite Church was already involved with Latin American refugees and soon Stirling Avenue and Breslau Mennonite churches were also involved. Although they had support, both moral and financial, from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the project

was a coalition of congregations. The first staff were hired in 1987, working out of First Mennonite. Two years later, office space was generously supplied by The Working Centre, a multifaceted group that cares for the needs of poor and isolated people.

From the beginning, people who had been refugees themselves have been in leadership. In 1989, Celza Bonilla, a recent social work graduate who had been working in a similar fashion under the auspices of Olive Branch, was hired as a settlement and education worker.

MCC, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, the Mennonite Foundation of Canada, and Mennonite churches and individuals provided financial support. MCC also provided book-keeping, administrative and volunteer support.

In 1993, Eunice Valenzuela, herself a former refugee, began to work with the coalition and became executive director in 2002.

While the coalition has incorporated and has become more ecumenical, it still honours its Mennonite roots and the support it continues to receive from Mennonite congregations and individuals. Today, it continues to provide support to refugee claimants, advocacy,

## FOCUS ON REFUGEES

supports to about 400 unsponsored families. Eunice Valenzuela, who heads the organization, says, “Every human being has the right to have access to health care.” She disagrees with the changes and is troubled that community groups were not consulted.

Medical professionals were not consulted either. In a letter to Kenney, eight national healthcare associations slammed the government’s plans, asking, “Are we as a country willing to risk the health of a pregnant mother who is receiving required medications before June 20 by telling her she is no longer eligible after June 30?”

Valenzuela is concerned about what she sees as Ottawa’s increasingly “negative” attitude towards refugees. Similarly, Ed Wiebe, who works on refugee issues for Mennonite Central Committee Canada, talks about a “hardening” of government positions.

**Continued on page 26**



*Khadijah, Yehia and Bashar are refugees from Iraq who arrived in Ontario in 2010. Threats of kidnapping and death forced their family to flee Iraq.*



*Executive director Eunice Valenzuela, left, and board chair Marlene Epp pose at the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support’s anniversary banquet on April 21 at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, Ont.*

community outreach, education and a refugee clinic, among others programs and services.

Through the years, the coalition has helped more than 2,000 refugee families, assisting anyone who comes through its doors to make a refugee claim. Board chair Marlene Epp and Valenzuela hope it can grow, as the needs do not seem to be decreasing, and new laws in the

making will make it more difficult for potential claimants to make their cases.

Advocacy with the government in regard to laws is also fraught with uncertainty, as new legislation is questioning charity status for organizations that do advocacy work along with work such as supporting refugee claimants.

Valenzuela hopes that Canadians will have their biases against refugees changed. Many of them were leaders and teachers in their home countries, and in many cases it was because they expressed their ideas that forced them to flee. They have gifts and skills to bring to Canadian society, she says, rather than being a drain on social programs, as they are often described.

Although the work is difficult—one day recently three families were deported even though there was danger for them in their home country—the coalition’s employees, board and many volunteers feel that their efforts are worth it.

Noting that Jesus was a refugee himself when his family fled to Egypt shortly after his birth, Valenzuela points out that the prophets continually call for God’s people to “care for the stranger within their gates.”

### Hospitality . . . from page 25

But in a May 12 letter to the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper, Kenney said of the health program changes, “What is changing is that bogus refugees, including those whose claims have been rejected, will no longer receive, at taxpayer expense, enhanced services such as eye and dental coverage that are unavailable to many Canadians.”

In response, Valenzuela says a minister who lumps vulnerable, honest people in with fraudulent claimants is “a bogus minister.”

The health program changes will affect more than just ineligible claimants. Valenzuela talks about people she works with who have survived torture and families that face life and death situations,

causing her to ask, “What right does [Kenney] have to call them bogus?”

In a May speech to the Empire Club in Toronto, Kenney said Canada must avoid the “anti-immigrant sentiment” that is “regrettably” widespread in the U.S. But federal officials often characterize refugees as suspicious people out to skirt laws and take advantage of taxpayers. Valenzuela objects to this injection of “fear” into the public debate.

While the Citizenship and Immigration website says, “Our compassion and fairness are a source of great pride for Canadians,” few refugee claimants will have gleaned that sentiment from Kenney’s comments about them or from the blunt one-page

letter they received about the health cuts.

Canadian Mennonites—many of whom are descendants of refugees, and some of whom are recent refugees themselves—have a strong history of sponsoring global neighbours in need of a safe homeland. At the same time, Wiebe sees the effects of negative messaging about refugees in churches he visits. “That rhetoric is winning these days,” he laments.

As suspicion of refugees grows in Canada, a few of the 10.5 million global refugees will be counting on Mennonite generosity and hospitality remaining intact. ❧

Visit <http://bit.ly/KQhtqn> for a link to a video of a protest to the cuts in Kitchener, Ont.

## ‘We’re sorry’

*Two Mennonite churches offer apology to non-heterosexuals during Pride Winnipeg Parade*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

On June 3, a small group from Little Flowers Community and Hope Mennonite Church joined a crowd of upwards of 20,000 people who came out for the Pride Winnipeg Parade. They carried a simple message: “We’re Sorry.”

“The [‘I’m Sorry’] campaign is an effort to apologize to the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer] community for the ways Christians have mistreated them,” explained Jamie Arpin-Ricci, pastor of Little Flowers. “The goal is to offer an unqualified, sincere apology.”

Although Arpin-Ricci invited several churches from Mennonite Church Manitoba and other denominations to join in, he believes that the short notice probably did not give them enough time to consider the implications. Of the MC Manitoba congregations invited, only Hope Mennonite responded and participated. “A few from the other denominations responded that, for theological reasons, they wouldn’t participate,” he said.

“I heard from some people in our congregation who were interested in participating

and we gave them permission to represent our church,” said Lynell Bergen, pastor of Hope Mennonite. “It is a different thing to say we are sorry that you did not feel welcome than to say we are an affirming church.”

Arpin-Ricci said, “It inspired us in Little Flowers because many of us have good deep friendships within the gay community. We felt [that] regardless of where one stands theologically on the issue of same-sex attraction, there is never a justification for this kind of treatment in the name of Jesus Christ, so we wanted to offer an unqualified apology. Not all participants in this campaign believe the same. There are some who identify as being fully affirming and others who do not.”

The evening before the parade, Arpin-Ricci briefed those who would be participating. “We didn’t want to do things that would not be helpful,” he said. “In many ways, it is a cross-cultural experience. We made the signs together purposefully so that we could collectively approve the messages.” For their efforts, he said, “We received humbling responses as we stood



PHOTO BY KATHY THIESSEN

*Josiah and Mona Neufeld and son Elias of Hope Mennonite Church participate in the I’m Sorry event, part of the Pride Winnipeg Parade last month.*

along the parade [route]. Some came over and told us stories about their experiences with the church.”

“I understand Hope Mennonite and Little Flowers,” said Ken Warkentin, executive director of MC Manitoba. “I understand their frustration and their willingness to be prophetic and call the larger church into the conversation and into action.”

“Some congregations, particularly those who want to be welcoming and affirming, will feel that is the way God is calling them to be faithful and compassionate,” he said. “There are other congregations that understand a biblical mandate that prohibits homosexuality. I want to challenge both groups to be able to say, ‘We might be wrong.’” ❧



# God at work in the World

PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU



*Marge Martens of Saskatoon carefully quilts on a large frame set up at this year's Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan Relief Sale, held June 8 and 9 in Saskatoon. Early estimates from the sale committee suggest that revenue from this year will rival those of the previous year, which were around \$80,000. According to Armin Krahn, the committee has tried for two years to increase advertising in the community, but has not seen significant results. 'It's tough to tell if it makes a difference,' he says. The committee has advertised on radio and in print, and receives a small spot for community events on television.*

MDS PHOTO BY JANET PLENERT



*Tim Prior, a Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteer from Hunta Mennonite Church in northwestern Ontario, cleans out a basement in Thunder Bay, Ont. Prior was one of 44 MDS volunteers who gave a combined total of 1,583 hours of their time working in the flooded city at the headwaters of Lake Superior. Thunder Bay residents were hit by a deluge of rain in late May, which flooded homes and the city's sewer-processing plant. Damage to the pumps caused sewage to back up in more than 2,000 homes. Affected homes had up to a metre of sewage flow into their basements. MDS volunteers worked with the city's Emergency Operations Committee to clean out and sanitize basements.*

# Former MCC workers honoured in Korea

By JOANNE VOTH WITH ANDY LEATHERMAN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Anticipation was high as 25 former Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Korea workers plus spouses and family members took off from three different airports in the U.S. and Canada on May 21 to wend their way back to Korea. They could not even imagine the warm welcome they would receive at the Incheon International Airport, where each traveller received a huge bouquet with handshakes and hugs from former Mennonite Vocational School (MVS) graduates plus many Christian Television Systems (CTS) representatives. A week of experiencing the generosity of the Korean people was just beginning.

The trip was sponsored by CTS in appreciation for MCC's work in Korea from 1951-71, after the CTS chair visited the U.S. in 2011 to see for himself what he had heard about the Mennonites and their contribution to Korea in the aftermath of the Korean War. He offered an open invitation for all former MCC "missionaries" to return to Korea for one week with all expenses paid.

"Welcoming service of gratitude for the Mennonite missionaries," read the banner at a hotel in Seoul, South Korea, featuring 40 church leaders for a dinner sponsored by CTS. There were messages from the president of South Korea and from pastors of some of the biggest churches in the country.

An MVS graduate from Japan gave his testimony at this luncheon and two choirs entertained the group. Everyone expressed so much appreciation for the work of MCC, saying that Korea thanks God for the country's prosperity and is indebted to Christian volunteers who fed and cared for them following the war years.

## Family Child Assistance program praised

One special visit was to the Family Welfare

Association of Korea in Daegu, which is an outgrowth of MCC's Family Child Assistance program established in 1962 through the initial efforts of Roy Bauman.

This program was started when MCC staff realized that the number of institutionalized children was increasing rapidly in spite of the end of the Korean War nine years earlier. It was discovered that many of these children were being placed in orphanages because of their families' extreme poverty and not through war bereavements. The program assisted each family with loans to begin a business, as well as help with living expenses and emergencies, education, medical care and housing, plus food and continuous counselling designed to help a family solve its own problems.

The Daegu Family Welfare Association was established from the seeds of the MCC program in June 1970. The association is now requesting help from Mennonites because of problems in Korean society where peace and conflict mediation training is needed.

## Further highlights

On this trip two MCCers gave Mennonite greetings to the 10,000-member Manna (Methodist) Church in Seoul. The couple was honored with a blessing hymn by the 3,000 attendees in the first of five services. They learned that the congregation is currently training 200 missionaries to enter North Korea upon reunification, to go to every major town and city there to present the gospel of Jesus Christ!

While in Seoul, all of the former MCC workers also visited the Jesus Village Anabaptist Church in Choon Chun, where they received a warm welcome and participated in a worship service, with lunch following.

Later, the group stopped at the office of the Korea Anabaptist Center, where the work of discipleship, peace and commu-

nity is being shared with many Koreans. They also learned about the North East Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute, where director Lee Jae Yong initiates peace seminars in Japan, China and Korea to help transform the existing cultures of animosity and militarism between these countries into a culture of peace and reconciliation.

There were also reunion banquets in Seoul and Daegu provided by MVS graduates. The graduates all stated they will never forget the love they received from MCC workers, which they are emulating in their present ministries. Several times the travelling MCCers sang, "To God be the Glory," to let their hosts know the importance of giving God the credit for all the work done in Korea.

During their week in Korea, the visitors saw the first video representing MCC's work in Korea, provided by pictures donated to CTS. Other videos are forthcoming, including one about the outstanding reception received during their week in Korea. These will be sent to each Korea/MCC worker, even though not all were able to make this trip. A total of 80 volunteers served in Korea over the 20-year period ending in 1971. ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Hikers raise thousands for Camp Valaqua

On a gorgeous June 11, 28 hikers made it to the top of Cox Hill in the Kananaskis Region of Alberta to raise more than \$12,000 for the ministry of Camp Valaqua. Ron Janzen, a long-time volunteer from Pincher Creek, set an individual fundraising record, raising more than \$4,100. Camper numbers are tracking ahead of 2011, with a resurgence of interest in family camp, which is revamped and more retreat-focused for 2012. Director Jon Olfert notes that finances appear positive so far and three new cabins are on site, awaiting drier conditions before they can be moved into permanent spots.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

## GOD AT WORK IN US

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MENNONITE



Mario Snyder is pictured with his second wife, Egda, in 2001.

## Investment in ministry pays off in Argentina

*Missionary remembers Canadian support*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

In 1947, Mario Snyder was an inaugural graduate from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont.

He was born 16 years earlier in Trenque Lauquen, Argentina, where his parents were in charge of an orphanage, making them, he says, “newlyweds with 35 children.” Elvin Snyder of Breslau Mennonite Church, near Kitchener, and Mary Fretz of Wideman Mennonite Church, north of Toronto, were in Argentina under the auspices of the Mennonite Board of Missions, but had returned to Canada on furlough.

During this time their son took the opportunity to finish high school in Canada;

while in Canada, he attended Elmira Mennonite Church, north of Waterloo.

As a young man, Snyder had come to Canada with a vision for his future. He writes that when his father baptized him in 1945, “There, while I was kneeling, I looked up to see the big hands of the one who was baptizing me, and I understood God was saying to me, ‘I want you to serve me, continuing in the steps of your father and complete his work in Argentina.’ So baptism was the moment of my consecration to living for God, and cooperating in the extension of his kingdom.”

He was 17 when he graduated from Rockway and felt the need to continue his

education. But how to pay for it? Somehow the need became known in the Elmira congregation, and eight families entered into a covenant with him. They would pay his way through four years at Goshen College in Indiana if he would make good on his commitment to return to Argentina to do mission work.

The families saw their investment pay dividends. Although his sponsors gave him permission to pastor an Hispanic congregation in Chicago with his first wife, Barbara Snyder, for seven years after graduating from Goshen College, he returned to Argentina for a lifetime of service. She was tragically killed while they were in the United States on furlough in 1956, and Snyder married Egda Schipani in 1967.

When his children were of college age, he convinced them to stay there, telling them that Argentina had a very good educational system and they would be receiving “an excellent preparation for life.”

Now in his 80s, Snyder sees ministry as becoming part of the people to whom one is ministering. He writes: “[A]ccept the practices and culture without exalting the ‘American way of life’ as better. . . . Learn to drink *mate* [South American green tea]; open your home to all good people, and be ready to be on call at any time; and have supper at 8 p.m. or later; be a soccer fan instead of being preoccupied with who wins the World Series.”

He revels in the good work his children and ensuing generations have done in Argentina. All six of his children are married and are serving the Lord in their respective congregations and with their families that total 16 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

“Nobody is sorry for not being able to live in the First World,” he writes. “This indeed is the ‘inheritance’ of the Lord. God has prospered us in all ways. We, too, can say: ‘Every good blessing comes from the Lord.’” The Snyder family is part of the big family of God in Argentina.”

Their lives and ministry are indeed an investment from Canada with long-term dividends. ❧



# Sunday school teacher, 103, had lasting influence

*Charter member reflects on congregation's 75 years*

BY REBEKAH FUNK

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

VANCOUVER

**E**liesabeth Klassen says she's three. "Forget the other hundred years," she says with a laugh, using a magnifying glass to scan familiar faces in old directories from Vancouver's First United Mennonite Church, a congregation she attended from its humble beginnings in 1937.

Klassen is the only surviving charter member, and one of just two women invited to its first "brotherhood" meeting that established a place of worship for Mennonite immigrants who settled in the city's Fraser Street area.

Born March 3, 1909, Klassen was the second-youngest in a family of 10 children. Her family relocated from what is now known as Ukraine to Canada when she was 14, her parents hoping to establish a farm on the Prairies, first in Herbert, Sask., then Winnipeg.

Ultimately, the Klassens settled in British Columbia's Fraser Valley, like many other Mennonite families during the 1930s. Her father had died in the meantime, leaving Klassen to support her mother. She moved to Vancouver at 37, taking housecleaning jobs to earn a living.

Meanwhile, a number of other women found themselves in similar situations. The Mennonite conference established a girls' home in the Fraser Street community to serve the spiritual needs of the growing Mennonite population, according to John Sawatzky, Klassen's nephew.

It wasn't long before the conference sent Jacob Janzen, a pastor from Waterloo, Ont., to start a church for those in the area. A small church building was purchased in 1937, and Reverend Jacob Wiens took over as pastor of the group after the official founding meeting on Dec. 27, which Klassen and her mother attended. Over the years, Klassen says she sang in the choir,

sewed blankets and catered special events with the women's *verein* (association).

However, it's the time she faithfully spent teaching Sunday school that has perhaps had the most lasting imprint. Klassen's memory occasionally evades her when it comes to specific dates, "excusable" she ventures, considering the number of dates she has experienced first-hand over the past century. Yet she can rattle off the names of the girls she taught on Sunday mornings in the 1940s as if it were yesterday. And they remember her. Just a few weeks ago these "girls"—now in their 70s—came to visit their teacher and sing for her.

It's a testament to the importance of Sunday school, says Klassen's niece, Frieda Sawatzky. Not only did these girls gain lifelong friends in each other, but a grounding

in the word of God as well. Sawatzky says her aunt has kept up with her students' lives over the years, gleaning information through letters and visits with mutual friends.

From a congregation of six German-speaking families to the multi-ethnic community it is now, Klassen was a fixture at First's Sunday morning services for just over 60 years, her presence in the fourth pew ever-constant amidst the changing demographics that are inevitable in big-city churches.

Now unable to attend the Sunday morning services, Klassen depends on memories to remind her of the church family she was a part of for so long: a card for her centennial birthday that hangs above her bed, familiar hymns and visits from fellow church members.

Nevertheless, Klassen lives in the present. She has become somewhat of a legend among caregivers and fellow residents at Blenheim Lodge, where she has lived for the past five years, still mobile, quick-witted and in possession of a sunny outlook on life.

All in all, pretty good for a 103-year-old. ❧



*The last surviving founding member of The First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, Eliesabeth Klassen, celebrated her 103rd birthday on March 3. A few weeks later, six women who were her students 60 years ago went to visit her at Blenheim Lodge and sang her favourite hymns. Pictured from left to right, front row: Lucy Meyer, Eliesabeth Klassen, Marie Penner and Margie Ewert; and back row: Elfrieda Klassen, Margaret Ewert, Helga Stobbe and Elvira Guenther.*

## ARTBEAT

# Herald Press publishes Yoder's writings on death penalty

*Late renowned theologian opposed 'cultic sacrificial rite'*

BY STEVE SHENK  
MennoMedia

The late Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder authored 25 books, inspiring many others to write their own books and research papers about him and his ideas.

Yoder, who died in 1997 at the age of 70, was best-known—especially beyond Mennonite circles—for his 1972 book, *The Politics of Jesus*.

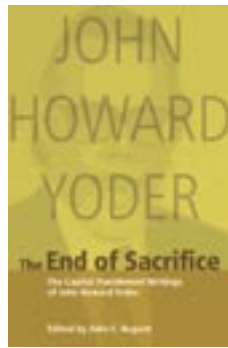
A standard work in many colleges and seminaries, the book makes a strong case for the Anabaptist view of Jesus' radical critique of society.

Now there is a book by and about Yoder. John Nugent, a scholar of Yoder's ideas, has researched all the written materials left by Yoder on the subject of capital punishment. Nugent's new book, published by Herald Press in late 2011, is titled *The End of Sacrifice: The Capital Punishment Writings of John Howard Yoder*.

Yoder, who taught at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Notre Dame University, both in Indiana, strongly opposed the death penalty. Nugent's book brings together four decades of Yoder's published and unpublished writings on the topic. "He engaged in sophisticated biblical, sociological and historical analysis in order to demonstrate that from ancient society until today capital punishment is an inherently cultic sacrificial rite," Nugent says.

Since the death of Jesus brought a decisive end to all sacrifices for sin, Yoder argued, Christians should proclaim the abolition of the death penalty, and its advocates should no longer claim biblical validation for using it.

In doing so, Yoder also made a persuasive



case for proactive Christian witness to the state. He called the church to proclaim the end of sacrifice to public officials who are responsible for carrying out capital punishment. "John Howard Yoder was unique in how he brings together both the biblical and sociological roots of the

practice of capital punishment," Nugent says. "Many Christian works focus on the former, whereas other works focus exclusively on the latter."

Nugent, a professor of Old Testament at his alma mater, Great Lakes Christian College in Lansing, Mich., first became interested in Yoder when he took a course on Yoder's ideas taught by Stanley Hauerwas, a leading Yoder scholar at Duke Divinity School.

Later, at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich., Nugent wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on "Old Testament contributions to ecclesiology: Engaging and extending the insights of John Howard Yoder." The paper was published last fall by Cascade Books as *The Politics of Yahweh*.

"Yoder showed me that the lordship of Christ applies to all aspects of life," Nugent says, "and that his lordship requires a re-assessment, and often a reworking, of all areas of thought and practice." ❧

## New book challenges Mennonites to widen the circle

*Multiple voices offer glimpses of Anabaptist-inspired discipleship*

Herald Press

It's no secret that in recent years there has been a growing interest in the Anabaptist tradition in North America. In an increasingly patriotic and politically polarized culture, the third way of Anabaptism has been received as a life-giving alternative.

*Widening the Circle: Experiments in Christian Discipleship*, released by Herald Press in the fall of 2011, tells the stories of 19 different individuals or communities that have been inspired by the Anabaptist tradition and the Mennonite church. But the stories and analyses, shared in the first person, are not just a pat on the back for humble

Mennonites. Instead, they wrestle mightily with the institutional church, both expressing gratitude and calling for renewed radicalism.

In the first chapter, activist and scholar Vincent Harding says that Mennonites must "take all the risks that are involved in getting into familial relationships . . . [where we are] messy and connected and involved and angry and

sorrowful and everything else that deeply engaged people are supposed to get. . . . The connections created out of struggle are not easily overcome."

Editor Joanna Shenk sought writers who understand the importance of this familial



tension. Although not all of the chapter authors identify themselves as Mennonite, all have been shaped by the Anabaptist tradition.

In the book's 248 pages, readers engage three waves of discipleship movements:

- **THE FIRST** wave of the 1950s and '60s includes the work of Vincent and Rosemarie Harding in Atlanta, Ga.; the birth and growth of Reba Place Fellowship near Chicago, Ill.; and the founding of racially diverse Lee Heights Community Church in Cleveland, Ohio.

- **THE SECOND** wave of the '70s and '80s includes stories from the Sojourners community in Washington, D.C.; the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams around the world; and community-based healthcare at Maple City Health Care Center, Goshen, Ind.

- **THE THIRD** wave of the '90s to the present includes reflections on the combination of Franciscan and Anabaptist traditions at Little Flowers Community, Winnipeg; perspectives on Mennonite

Voluntary Service; a call to environmental justice from New Jersey; the creation of Third Way Community in St. Paul, Minn.; and solidarity with immigrants at Alterna in Lagrange, Ga.

"Many Christians are rediscovering living in community, sharing life with the poor, and seeking to love even their enemies," André Gingerich Stoner shares in chapter six. "Even though we may think of these as uniquely Mennonite concerns, we Mennonites didn't make this stuff up. We shouldn't be surprised that whenever people read the Bible and try to take Jesus seriously, they come to this place."

As Anabaptist-minded people, as followers of Jesus, Mennonites have a call to discipleship always before them. Through these stories of formation, readers are compelled to consider their own formative experiences. At a time when the North American church is experiencing many shifts, this book is an offering of hope, providing glimpses of what the future church can look like. ☞

## An emotional journey

*Book chronicles caring for a loved one with dementia*

BY MELODIE DAVIS  
MennoMedia

Ginnie Horst Burkholder, author of the recently released memoir, *Relentless Goodbye*, was only in her 40s when she first felt that something wasn't right with her husband Nelson. A small group at church was doing a personality test just for fun, and it was obvious that Nelson needed much more help than warranted for the simple activity. She just blamed it on poor sleep.

And why not? Ginnie and Nelson had built what she felt was a wonderful life together in Canton, Ohio. They were both elementary school teachers near her hometown of Rittman; had two wonderful children, Amy and Eric; and enjoyed the typical activities of a young family: gardening, remodelling a fixer-upper, hot dog roasts and volleyball in the backyard, and attending worship at First Mennonite, Canton, every Sunday.

However, when Nelson continued to have difficulty sleeping and performing tasks that once were second nature, they started looking for answers. So began the months and years of doctors' visits, specialists' exams, and long afternoons in waiting rooms. Eventually, Nelson's illness was diagnosed as Lewy body dementia (LBD), a multi-system form of dementia that affects people's cognitive, physical, sleep and behavioural functions. Those with LBD suffer a "slow and sure decline to eventual helplessness," says Burkholder.

She describes both the path to diagnosis and the ensuing journey in her book, *Relentless Goodbye: Grief and Love in the Shadow of Dementia*, released on May 31 by Herald Press, the book imprint of MennoMedia.

"This book didn't start out to be a book," she says. "My writing was simply my tool for processing the changes that were mandated by LBD, and the emotions

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by Elsie Rempel

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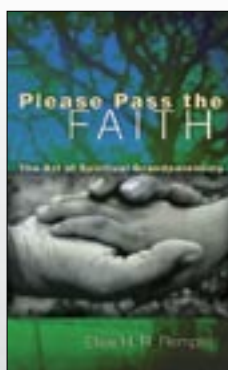
Author Elsie Rempel draws from real life and Christian formation experts to help adults foster relationships with children and youth. She also offers practical ideas for integrating children and youth into church life—all the while nurturing one's own spiritual life as an elder.

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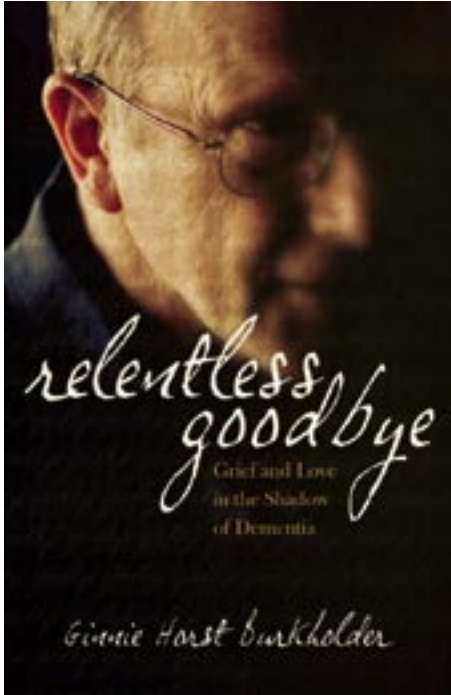
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they triggered as dreams and expectations scattered and fell away." In her stories, she outlines the long, relentlessly pounding journey of living with dementia, about the laughter that bubbles up from hearing a word misused and the grief that settles like dust again after the laughter has stopped.

Burkholder first started recounting her emotional journey through journal entries on the website for the Lewy Body Dementia Association ([www.lbda.org](http://www.lbda.org)). Her writings connected with many other caregivers, and from there, grew into a book.

By writing *Relentless Goodbye*, she hopes people will be enlightened about some of the challenges brought to the lives and marriages of anyone giving major care to a spouse or loved one with dementia. Yet anyone who is a caregiver will identify with the emotional toll of caregiving that Burkholder describes. The book also includes study questions for personal or group use.

"Many how-to books talk about the practical issues of living with dementia," Burkholder notes. "But few people are willing to talk [in print] about the emotional journey loved ones are abducted into taking. I hope this book will help other caregivers know they are not alone." ❧

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VIEWPOINT

# The responsibility of youth

BY DAVID ZENTNER

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID ZENTNER



*David Zentner was part of a team from Bethany College, Hepburn, Sask., that visited the Lac La Ronge Indian Band community at Hall Lake, Sask.*

**F**or all the youths and young adults that I have talked to, it seems that most of our knowledge of Canada's history with indigenous issues depended on our school teachers. In my part of northeast Calgary, I guess it wasn't a priority for them. I had a very limited awareness about our country's residential schools and the impact on Canada's Indigenous Peoples until I finished high school.

Perhaps it had not been taught in school, or perhaps I could not remember learning it because I didn't feel like it had

The history of Indigenous Peoples is a part of every Canadian's history. While it is easy to cling to the "comforting" fact that we played no direct role in the assimilation and isolation of Indigenous Peoples during the residential school era, we young people must acknowledge that we feel the unintended benefits of our nation's history. The freedom many Canadians feel has been gained at the expense of others. It was as first nation communities were pushed from their land that we could claim it as our own.

"Why do young people need to be

*It is vital for younger people to know the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, to continue building bridges through listening, understanding, apologizing and moving forward together.*

any impact on me. I'm not sure whether the lack of education on the topic, or the practically contagious apathy towards it, is more disconcerting.

Interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians was inevitable within the course of Canadian history, and eventually led to the creation of residential and day schools. Separating nearly entire generations of children from parents is not inconsequential. The traditional way of life and the lives of thousands of individuals and families have been profoundly and tragically impacted by these interactions.

involved? Why us?" we may ask. I want very badly to write that within the church there is no more reason for young people to be involved in this process than anyone else. We are all equally called to work for peace and justice. The events that must be reconciled may even be fresher in the memories of those elders among us.

Yet it is so important for young adults to be involved. We are sometimes subtly, but always inevitably, becoming leaders of the church, government, families and our own communities. That is the significance of young people in seeking peace

in this relationship. Real reconciliation—like that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is working towards—must work its way through entire populations and generations to truly be effective. Peace does not happen overnight or without a struggle.

It is vital for younger people to know the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, to continue building bridges through listening, understanding, apologizing and moving forward together. Young adults also have the unique responsibility to pass on a message of peace, acceptance and love to the next generation.

Teachers cannot glance over a part of our history that affects so many Canadians so deeply and painfully. It is only when relationships are being built, and there is true cross-community connection and appreciation for each other, that the past of all Canadians can be reconciled, and the future can be hopeful

and peaceful.

It is also important for us as young Mennonites to be present at TRC events, to listen, learn and accept responsibility for the hurt that has been caused because Mennonites were involved in the operation of residential schools in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. Through listening to the stories and experiences of Canada's Indigenous Peoples, whose lives have been affected, we can develop new connections and relationships, and contribute to a united, peaceful future together. ✎

*David Zentner is from Calgary, where he attends Abbeydale Christian Fellowship. He is currently working as a summer intern at Mennonite Central Committee Alberta, leading a team of young people to South Africa in July. After spending two years at Bethany College, Hepburn, Sask., he now studies education and biology at the University of Lethbridge, Alta.*

## Seeding new relationships

*Community gardens foster relationships with new immigrants*

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor

Spring and summertime means that it's time to till the soil, plant seeds, tend to the garden and, hopefully, watch the plants grow. For a few Ontario young adults, their community gardens mean a lot more.

In the Victoria Hills area of Kitchener, Ont., an area that is populated mainly by immigrant groups and sees a great deal of violence, there are two community gardens run by Christians.

Brandi and Nathan Thorpe, 23 and 28, respectively, who both are graduates of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, are gardeners at the Victoria Hills Community Garden and helped pioneer a second one at Hazelglen Alliance Church, where they attend. There is currently just one plot at the church, but they hope to expand it to more than 15 in the future for the churchgoers and community to make use of.

Andrew Wiebe, 28, who attends Breslau Mennonite Church, works at the community gardens and coordinated the set-up of new plots this year.

The point of the gardens, they say, is to create a safe space for people in their community to gather and to get to know one another better. While they plant rhubarb, parsley, onions, potatoes, spinach, garlic, tomatoes, melons, squash, and a whole host of other fruits and vegetables, long-time Canadians connect with diverse groups of immigrants from China, Sudan, Burma Myanmar, Iran, Iraq and Turkey, among other countries.

"I have a Kurdish friend and we talk about the best practices for growing different things," Wiebe says. "I learn a lot from him, so we really connect around the garden."

The Thorpes have invited friends from

PHOTO BY BRANDI THORPE



*Nathan Thorpe gathers fresh spinach for his evening meal from Victoria Hills Community Garden, Kitchener, Ont.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW WIEBE



Andrew Wiebe

*'We live in a community with a dozen or two different people groups. When it comes to gardening, it's so easy to get to know your neighbour and to remove that fear.'*  
(Brandi Thorpe)

the garden over for tea and they have reciprocated. The couple recently spent a weekend at a lake with an Iranian couple.

Because there are so many different people groups in Kitchener, there is a tendency for people to stick with their own group and not branch out, Nathan says. "People, including myself, have a trend towards staying with their own kind and doing what's familiar. This garden and many other things encourage people to interact with one another in a peaceful activity."

"It allows a consistent space for us to share our lives together," Brandi adds.

According to the Thorpes and Wiebe, the gardens are also about promoting peace in a broken neighbourhood.

"One of the major obstacles in most peace work is ignorance of the other," Brandi says, citing, "fear of other religions and people groups. In order to remove that, you have to know who the other is. We live in a community with a dozen or two different people groups. When it comes to gardening, it's so easy to get to know your neighbour and to remove that fear."

"I think it's a good way to work for peace in the neighbourhood," Wiebe says. "We have some inter-ethnic enmity, so I see this as a good way of crossing some of the cultural barriers and helping people in friendship across these barriers."

Wiebe does this, in part, by teaching neighbourhood children about gardening.

Finally, the Thorpes find spiritual parallels in their work in the gardens.

"I have been amazed, year after year, the amount of spiritual parallels that relate to gardening," Nathan says.

"It all comes down to the fact that God loves us," Brandi notes. "We do what we do because God loves us."

The community gardens function because of volunteers and donations. They have received a couple of municipal government grants and local businesses donate tools. They sometimes borrow equipment from people in the neighbourhood.

And for the people in this typically low-income area of town, the community gardens also help lower food costs. ☘

## Seeing children as part of the church

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices

A new kind of Christianity is spreading across the globe, and the Mennonite church can be a leading voice in discerning what that means for how Christians pass on their faith to their children, according to a researcher of children's spirituality.

"People have realized that the old paradigm doesn't work," says Dave Csinos, a doctoral student in practical theology at Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto and author of the 2011 book, *Children's Ministry That Fits: Beyond*

*One-Size-Fits-All Approaches to Nurturing Children's Spirituality*. "There's a sense of trying to create a new paradigm, but we're in this shifting middle time where the new paradigm hasn't fully emerged yet and there isn't a consensus of what it is. . . . And we don't know what to teach young people because, in a sense, we're learning it for ourselves."

Csinos says that amidst all of this, the Mennonite church is something of an "oddball." While conversations about things

like nonviolence and social justice are happening in the emerging church, they are not new conversations for Mennonites. “It’s a denomination and tradition that a lot of people are looking to right now,” he says. “People are realizing that Anabaptists have a lot to offer this new paradigm that’s emerging.”

Csinos was one of the key organizers of Children, Youth and a New Kind of Christianity, a conference that took place in May in Washington, D.C., where hundreds of church leaders gathered to talk about the spiritual formation of young people and children.

Csinos believes that in the past, when it came to passing on the faith to children, there was too much of an emphasis among Christians on passing a particular type of faith or a particular set of beliefs. “It’s a lot of cognitive knowledge, in my opinion,” he says, “and there’s a sense that once children know that Jesus died for them, then they’ve crossed the threshold.”

When the emerging church began looking at what it means to be a Christian, or to believe and yet have doubts, those conversations were not getting translated to children and youths.

Csinos says that as Mennonites think

denominations are looking at to lead the way.

“People are looking to Anabaptists and finding a wealth of insight,” Csinos says. “If we can become adept at passing on that authentic faith to young people, then we can really drive the boat here. As a denomination, we would be poised to help others.”

• **THIRD, THE** way Mennonites understand children is going to affect the way they teach them.

“If we see them as little devils, then we’re going to focus on teaching them the right way to live,” Csinos says. “But if we see them as innocent little beings, which is how middle-class society typically views children, we won’t deal with the complexities of being a child.”

### ***Finding a middle ground***

A middle ground needs to be struck, where children are viewed like anyone else: beings whose sinfulness can be overcome by God’s grace.

Barb Smith-Morrison, pastor at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, Ont., attended the conference and says that much of what she heard resonated with her experience as a mother and church leader.

*A middle ground needs to be struck, where children are viewed like anyone else: beings whose sinfulness can be overcome by God’s grace.*

and talk about what it means to pass on their faith to children in 2012, there are three main things to keep in mind:

• **FIRST, THE** Mennonite church got its start as a radical, countercultural church.

“We should be radical in the way that we are raising our children,” Csinos says, giving the example of a family he knows that does not purchase Nestlé products because they do not agree with some of the company’s business practices. That sort of boycott can be an opportunity for adults to speak with their children about what their beliefs are as Christians and how those beliefs ought to be lived out.

• **SECOND, AS** Anabaptists, Mennonites are part of a tradition that other

“Our children have the capacity to have very lively faiths and very lively imaginations, which is what our world needs, I think,” she says. “Our children already have relationships with God. They don’t need us to come and introduce them to God, they need us to nourish that sense of the spirit that’s alive in them. We need to create spaces that aren’t about ‘we’ and ‘them,’ but space that is really about us together.”

Csinos agrees. Ultimately, children should be invited to be a part of the church community, rather than simply sequestered in church basements to learn Bible lessons so that they one day “become one of us.”

“It’s about having them be a part of the community,” Csinos says, “rubbing shoulders with them and walking the journey together.” ☸

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNOMEDIA



*Pictured at the Children, Youth and a New Kind of Christianity conference in May are, from left to right: author Rebecca Seiling of Waterloo, Ont.; Amy Gingerich of Cleveland, Ohio, who led a workshop on ‘Teaching peace to children’; keynote speaker Tony Campolo; and David Csinos of Toronto, who founded and planned the conference.*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Oct. 12-14:** Women's retreat weekend at Camp Squeah. Theme: "Simply majestic." Speaker: Jackie Ayer, family literacy coordinator for Chilliwack Community Services.

### Alberta

**Oct. 12-13:** Mennonite Church Alberta festival, hosted by First Mennonite Church, Edmonton. More

details to follow.

**Oct. 16-18:** Pastors/spouses retreat at Camp Valaqua. For more information, contact Tim Wiebe-Neufeld at 780-436-3431 or twimmmmer@aol.com.

### Manitoba

**July 21:** Tractor Trek fundraiser for Eden Foundation's mental health recovery programs. Breakfast buffet at Reinland Community Centre, at 7:30 p.m. Trek begins at 10 a.m. in Reinland, travelling through Rosengart, Neuhorts,

Rosetown, Kronsthal and Blumenort, and finishing at the Greta Hotspot Festival. To register, call 204-325-5355 or toll-free 1-866-895-2919. For more information, visit [www.edenhealth.mb.ca](http://www.edenhealth.mb.ca).

**Aug. 28:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Club.

**Sept. 28-29:** CMU fall festival.

**Oct. 16-17:** J.J. Thiessen Lectures at CMU.

### Ontario

**July 22:** Male Chorus Gospel Sing, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805 or Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

**July 28:** 1812 Historic Peace Church Niagara Bike Tour; beginning at The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, at 9 a.m. For more information, or to register, call 905-646-3161 or visit [www.mcco.ca/1812biketour/registration](http://www.mcco.ca/1812biketour/registration).

**Aug. 10, 13, 15, 17-19:** Petrichor, a new play by Erin Brandenburg about a family of Mennonite migrant farm

workers in southern Ontario, is being performed six times at the Factory Theatre Mainstage, Toronto, as part of SummerWords, a juried theatre and arts festival. For more information, visit [www.summerworks.ca/2012/](http://www.summerworks.ca/2012/).

**Aug. 12:** Third annual Contemporary Music Sing, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805 or Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

**Aug. 12:** Reesor reunion picnic, at Niagara-on-the-Lake, at 11 a.m. For more informations and directions, call 905-468-7029.

**Aug. 25:** Fourth annual Sacred Harp All-Day Sing, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail Gillian Inksetter at [gillian@inksetter.com](mailto:gillian@inksetter.com).

**To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**



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*Lyndsie and Phil (Future home owners)*



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## Staff change

### New ministry studies prof named at CMU

Ph.D. candidate Andrew Dyck has been named as assistant professor of ministry studies at Canadian Mennonite University. This new position is jointly funded by Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Canada and the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba. Dyck will teach or give leadership in the area of spiritual formation, worship, preaching, ministry supervision, evangelism, leadership development, and pastoral care and counselling. In addition, he will serve as a resource person for the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference.

—Canadian Mennonite University



**Dyck**



## Classifieds

### Altona Mennonite Church 50th Anniversary Celebration and Homecoming

August 11 & 12, 2012

All members, friends and former members are invited to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of AMC. Come to enjoy visiting, reminiscing, eating and worshipping together.

Registration takes place Saturday afternoon at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre. To register, or for further information contact the church office at (204) 324-6773. Registration forms are available at [www.amc.net](http://www.amc.net). Email [amc@mts.net](mailto:amc@mts.net) or [dhregehr@yahoo.ca](mailto:dhregehr@yahoo.ca) or [rekrahn@mts.net](mailto:rekrahn@mts.net)

## Employment Opportunities

**BERGTHAL MENNONITE CHURCH** is seeking an **INTENTIONAL INTERIM PASTOR**, beginning September 1, 2012, flexible start time.

We are a rural Anabaptist Mennonite church located 20 min from Didsbury, AB and 45 min to Calgary AB. There is a newly renovated manse available on the church property. Bergthal will have an assessment done to help guide the interim work. Along with the general congregational ministry responsibilities, this 18 - 24 month position will help us in establishing our future.

Please send applications to David Derksen  
Box 546, Didsbury AB T0M 0W0  
Email: [dsderks@telus.net](mailto:dsderks@telus.net)  
Phone# 403 335-4509

### LIVE-IN MANAGER POSITION JOB POSTING

Menno Court - a 178 unit non-profit, low income, seniors apartment complex in South Vancouver, is owned and operated by the Mennonite Seniors Citizens Society of B.C. - requires a Christian couple for the live-in manager position.

#### Position Description:

-The position is responsible for all typical manager duties (e.g. rent collection, renting out units, managing tenant disputes, supervising cleaning staff, processing invoices, liaising with trades people, purchasing supplies, et cetera).

#### Position Requirements:

-The successful candidate couple will have apartment management experience or work experience that demonstrates an ability to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of this position competently; the couple will also have good inter-personal skills and be self-motivated.

-A strong knowledge of the BC Residential Tenancy Act; candidates who demonstrate the ability to quickly become familiar with the Tenancy Act will also be considered.

-Ability to use Outlook, Excel and Word.

-Fluency in English; reasonable fluency in Cantonese and/or Mandarin would be an asset.

-Must be available to respond to urgent calls during evenings and nights from Sunday evenings to Friday afternoon.

-Preference will be given to candidates who have the ability to perform some repair/maintenance work.

#### Compensation:

-Annual starting salary will be in the range of \$48k to \$50k and be based on the successful candidate's proven experience.

-A one-bedroom unit with a monthly rent of \$440 is provided.

The start date is scheduled to be **September 1, 2012**.

Resumes should be emailed to the attention of:  
The Management Committee, at [fbuhr@shaw.ca](mailto:fbuhr@shaw.ca)

Only applicants suitable for this position will be contacted.

First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake, a small body of believers in northern BC, is looking for a **PART TIME OR FULL TIME SERVANT LEADER PASTOR**. We desire to find a person who shares our vision and will work with us to fulfill it. Our ideal candidate will have an exceptional ability to inspire discipleship, outreach, and a desire to embrace our community, while holding firm to sound biblical doctrine. Our candidate will agree with the Confession of Faith in the Mennonite Perspective. Please send your resume to FMC c/o Wilf Dueck [wedueck@telus.net](mailto:wedueck@telus.net) or Ph 250-692-3455 Cell 250-692-6454

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Communitas Supportive Care Society

Communitas is seeking a visionary Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will be responsible for the health and performance of this complex, multi-location organization, the success of its operations, and strategic planning. Communitas Supportive Care Society (Communitas) is a non-profit, faith-based social services agency providing care in communities in Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, North Vancouver Island and the Okanagan. Our organization provides various resources to persons living and dealing with mental, physical and/or emotional disabilities. Communitas commits itself to work with individuals who have been marginalized and stigmatized by the society around them. We support and empower people from all walks of life, regardless of faith, social standing, race, or ethnicity.

The CEO will focus on internal and external aspects of organizational health, guiding ongoing operations and future growth, while also establishing key long-term relationships with partners and stakeholders that enhance the organization's reputation and viability.

The ideal candidate will have a personal commitment to serve and dedication to the Christian principles, values and mission of the organization; in addition the candidate will have an understanding of development and monitoring strategies that ensure the long-term financial viability of the organization. The candidate will be enthusiastic about working in a not-for-profit organization that walks alongside people with disabilities.

The CEO will lead, evaluate, and oversee staff in a role of support and encouragement that will promote a culture that reflects the organization's values and encourages good performance. He or she will serve as the primary spokesperson and representative for the organization and will effectively advocate, build partnerships and achieve complex objectives in consultation with a Board and diverse stakeholders. The CEO will be a trusted team leader and developer with experience in change management and risk management that will advance the mission of Communitas.

For a full job description and to apply, visit our website at [www.CommunitasCare.com](http://www.CommunitasCare.com). In addition to completing an application, resumes should be sent to: Henry Wiens, Chair, Board Transition Committee, Email: [HenryWiens@CommunitasCare.com](mailto:HenryWiens@CommunitasCare.com) or Fax: 604.850.2634. Applications will be accepted through September 30, 2012. All interested candidates are welcome to apply, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.





*Eddie Bearinger, left, who organized the volunteers who built the MCC Ontario building at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, Ont., in 1963, receives one of two MCC symbol medallions from the front of the building from Rick Cober Bauman, executive director.*

# MCC closes doors on old 50 Kent



*Only empty shelves were left behind.*



*Bob Nally, left, bought the Zip electric bike donated by Bob Shantz, right, at the MCC Ontario Tailgate Party.*



*Staff and volunteers serve soup at the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario Tailgate Party, June 21, celebrating almost 50 years at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, just before the building was dismantled. Due to thunderstorms, the party was moved into the former material resources warehouse. The evening included prayers, a new song written by Joanne Bender of Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, and the auction of a pick-up truck, an electric bike and several yard maintenance power tools donated by MTD. The tenants of 50 Kent, including the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union branch and the offices of MCC Ontario, Mennonite Foundation of Canada and Mennonite World Conference, are now housed in several nearby leased buildings while 50 Kent is being redeveloped.*